

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Chelfham Senior School**

Bere Alston

LEA area: Devon

Unique Reference Number: 113616

Headteacher: Mrs J Marks

Reporting inspector: Dr R L Dawson  
T12117

Dates of inspection: 11-16 May 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 401151

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## Information about the school

Type of school	- Special
Type of control	- Independent
Age range of pupils	- 11-19 years
Gender of pupils	- Male
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Appropriate authority:	- Board of Directors (Independent school)
Name of managing director:	- Dr R Burland

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Mrs G Anderson, Lay Ins		Attendance Partnership with parents and the community
Mr G Essex	English Modern foreign language	Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development Efficiency Residential Post 16
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## Main findings

1. Chelfham Senior School provides education and care for boys aged 11 to 19 years who have very severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and have had poor educational experiences in their previous schooling. The school's many strengths combine to provide its pupils and students with very beneficial educational, care and community experiences which enable them to make very good progress in their emotional and behavioural development as well as making satisfactory progress in their formal learning. Pupils feel secure and happy in the school. The school gives good value for money.

*2. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters makes it inappropriate to judge their attainments against age related national expectations or averages. The report does however give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take into account information provided in pupils= Statements of Special Educational Needs and in annual reviews.*

3. During their time at the school the majority of pupils and students across all abilities make satisfactory progress in their academic learning. They make at least satisfactory progress in five out of six lessons and in over one third they make good, and sometimes very good, progress. In view of their severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, and poor prior educational experiences the overall progress pupils make over time and in lessons is a notable achievement on the part of the school.

4. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science pupils and students make satisfactory progress over time. In English lessons progress is rarely unsatisfactory and is often good. They make at least satisfactory progress in nine out of ten lessons in mathematics and they make good or better progress in four out of ten lessons. Progress in lessons in science is never less than satisfactory and is good, and often very good, in over one half. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all lessons in history and religious education. The progress made by pupils and students in lessons in art is unsatisfactory in two out of seven lesson and their progress over time is poor. The progress made by pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 in information technology is never less than good and is often very good. The progress of Post-16 students in lessons in information technology ranges from unsatisfactory to good. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in lessons in geography and music but generally their progress in physical education lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils and students make satisfactory progress over time in design technology.

5. There is a very wide range of attainment among pupils and students across and within all stages so that, for example, some of the younger pupils have higher levels of attainments than do some older students and this is particularly the case in English and mathematics. In reading, for example, while a significant minority of pupils are still developing basic reading skills others are reading at or near levels appropriate for their age. Very few read fiction for pleasure and most are unable to use books independently either for pleasure or for seeking information. While the ability of some pupils and students to undertake, organise and present written work is very limited, some Key Stage 4 pupils and Post-16 students can produce good pieces of extended creative writing. At all stages many pupils and students are able to listen attentively and to take turns in discussion to some extent. In mathematics higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 are able to multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places, convert fractions into percentages, solve simple algebraic equations and make good use of calculators. At Key Stage

4 they are able to round up numbers to three significant figures, to multiply fractions and calculate the volume of common three dimensional shapes. At the Post-16 level the attainments of students are more limited although most are able to tell the time, make use of money and have basic number skills. In science, at Key Stage 3 most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of plants and animal and understand the mutual relationship between insects and flowers. At Key Stage 4 most know the major organs of the body and where they are and can explain blood circulation. Higher attaining pupils at this stage also know the parts of the heart and know that the lungs oxygenate blood. Most know about the digestive system, know that body energy is derived from carbohydrates and are able to calculate the energy used in different sports. They can classify common materials and know that metals conduct electricity. Post-16 students are able to describe food-chains, name farm animals, understand what they need to live healthily, and are skilled in handling and caring for animals. In the recent Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations nine pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieved a least a pass level in either mathematics or science. Four of these achieved a merit level in at least one of these subjects, one gained a distinction level in science and another pupil gained a distinction in both subjects.

6. In art, the general knowledge of pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 of the work of famous artists is poor. Most pupils and students are able to produce basic observational drawings using pencil or charcoal, using shading and colour and although pupils at Key Stage 4 are able to produce sharply expressive work, most Post-16 students are unable to work independently. In geography Key Stage 3 pupils can locate major North American cities and use some correct geographical vocabulary. Key Stage 4 pupils know the main features of rivers and the more able understand something of their economic and transportation importance. In history pupils at the end of key stage can use primary sources to help them to understand historical events while those at Key stage 4 can use, and assess the validity, of a wider range of sources. Although they can read some words and phrases in French, the attainments of pupils at Key Stage 3 in modern foreign languages are very low in all respects. In music Key Stage 3 pupils can sing in key and in time and recognise the sound made by some of the common instruments. Pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 develop sufficient ball and racket skills in physical education to play football and badminton although they sometimes find playing with others difficult. In religious education pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are able to consider good and evil and realise that these are present in many everyday situations. By the end of Key Stage 3 they are aware of the main aspects of the Muslim and Jewish faiths and by the end of Key Stage 4 are aware of the customs of a number of other religions. In design technology pupils and students are able to use a range of hand and power tools to make a range of products to their own designs and in reference to their own capabilities. Most pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and some students are able to use computer word processing and data base programmes and higher attaining pupils can access the Internet.

7. The attitudes of pupils and students to learning is good. Their response to learning is at least satisfactory in more than five out of six lessons and in two out of three it is good or very good. They behave well in and around the school and show respect for each other and for the staff. The quality of the relationships in both the residential and school setting is good. Pupils and students have open, constructive and respectful relationships with staff through which they develop trust and confidence. They make very good progress in their personal development. They come to know what is right and what is wrong. They are open, friendly and polite towards visitors. They learn to accept responsibility for their own actions and develop mature

attitudes towards others and show appropriate respect for property. In view of the very serious nature of their behavioural and emotional difficulties on admission to the school, the good behaviour and positive attitudes shown by the great majority of pupils and students represents a significant achievement on the part of the school.

8. Attendance is good. The rate of attendance is above that for schools of a similar type nationally and the rate for unauthorised attendance is below that found nationally. Pupils and students arrive at lessons on time. Exclusions are rare and the five exclusions during the current academic year were not typical and occurred in response to one specific incident.

9. In view of the expertise and skills required to successfully teach pupils with such extreme special needs that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in nine out of ten lessons, and is good or very good in over one half, is a significant achievement by the school. In science, history, information technology and religious education the quality of teaching in lessons is never less than satisfactory and rarely unsatisfactory in lessons in English in which the quality of teaching is at least good in more than one half of lessons. While in one out of ten lessons in mathematics the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory it is good or very good in six out of ten. In science teaching is good in over one half of lessons and is good or very good in three quarters of lessons. The quality of teaching in art is at least satisfactory in six out of seven lessons and is good or very good in three out of seven. In geography teaching is at least satisfactory in five out of six lessons and is usually good. In both music and physical education while teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory in most lessons it is satisfactory. Of the five lessons observed in information technology the quality of teaching was very good in three. Through their role in monitoring and maintaining good behaviour and supporting individual work, classroom support staff make a positive and significant contribution to the quality of teaching.

10. In all cases teachers and support staff have positive, supportive and respectful relationships with pupils. They manage and control the behaviour of pupils very effectively and have high expectations of learning and behaviour. Lessons start and finish on time and pupils and students work throughout lessons. Where teaching is at its best teachers plan for lessons well with close reference to the specific difficulties of individual pupils or student and provide the support and encouragement necessary for them to make progress and achieve success. They encourage pupils or students to think for themselves and to work independently. In those lessons where the quality of teaching is less than satisfactory lesson planning is often poor, work set is not sufficiently challenging, time is wasted, misbehaviour develops and is then poorly managed.

11. The overall breadth, balance, and relevance of the whole curriculum is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and is very good at the Post 16 stage. All required National Curriculum subjects are taught at Key Stages 3 and 4 although the programmes of study are not followed fully in art, modern foreign language, music and physical education. The school's planning to secure continuity and progression in the learning of pupils and students both within and across the Key Stages and Post-16 is poor. Because the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are incomplete the entitlement of all pupils to the full curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 is not assured.

12. Cross-curricula links are poor for pupils and students. Little attention is given to ways in which subjects can consolidate, extend and contribute to learning in other subject areas. The

curriculum, however, is supplemented by a wide range of extra curricular activities which enrich the educational, social and personal experiences of pupils. The school's provision for the arts overall is unsatisfactory. There is an effective and appropriate programme, which includes careers advice and work experience, to prepare pupils and students for life after school at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. The equality of access to the opportunities offered by the curriculum is good at Key Stage 3 and Post-16 and broadly satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Formalised homework is not used widely or regularly and, given the nature of the pupils' and students' difficulties, this is appropriate. Most pupils, however, do take part voluntarily in structured learning activities in their out of school time.

13. While staff use a range of assessment and recording procedures to monitor attainments and progress they do not adequately monitor pupils' attainments and progress within the National Curriculum. Nor do they assure continuity and progression in pupils' and students' learning both within subjects and over time. A new procedure has recently been put in place but its effectiveness has yet to be tested in practice. At an informal level all teaching staff know the learning and behavioural characteristics of pupils and students very well and utilise this very effectively in their teaching.

14. While the school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development that made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

15. The school has highly effective procedures to monitor and promote discipline and good behaviour. Personal targets for behavioural improvement are identified for all pupils and students. They are helped to achieve these targets through a well developed and effective reward system and significant staff support. The school also has very effective procedures to monitor and promote good attendance and the personal and social progress and development of pupils and students.

16. The school's arrangements and procedure for child protection are of a very high quality. The health and safety of pupils and students, however, is at risk in both design technology rooms where safety working areas are not clearly marked, electrically powered machinery is unsafe and there are no dust extractors. During the inspection, in the Key Stage 3 and 4 main teaching block, routes from fire exits were not always clear and some fire escape doors were difficult to open.

17. The very high quality of the residential provision and overall care of pupils and students is a strength of school and makes an important and significant contribution to the quality of education provided and to the significant improvements in behaviour.

18. The level of parental involvement in their child's learning, particularly their academic learning, is low. Similarly, while the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school few do so. Parent involvement is impeded by a number of fixed factors, such as home or family difficulties and the very extensive catchment area. Formal and structured procedures for providing parents with information about the general work of the school are limited and there is no annual report for parents on the work of the school.

19. The school successfully achieves its aim to actively promote the involvement and participation of pupils and students in the life of the local community both as consumers and contributors to it. The school's work to develop leisure and social skills through its links with

the community enriches the experiences of pupils and students and is a strength of the school.

20. The school is well led. In conjunction with the heads of education and care, the principal leads the school with commitment and purpose. The senior management team have all been appointed recently, the longest in post for only four terms and the most recent for only one term. There is substantial evidence that since their appointments there has been significant improvement in the school's structural procedures and in the quality of the residential and educational provision. Staff share a common sense of purpose and commitment to secure the maximum well being and development of pupils and students.

21. While there is much informal, and some formal, monitoring of subject delivery and effectiveness the procedures are not sufficiently systematic to assure pupils = full entitlement to the National Curriculum at either Key Stage, class or individual level. Similarly, the monitoring of teaching quality is also largely informal and a systematic and consistent procedure to assure and promote the quality of teaching is not in place. The monitoring role and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently emphasised nor actively undertaken. The procedures for the management of behaviour, however, are closely monitored and evaluated. There are also weaknesses in staff communications and line management in the Post-16 provision which are reducing effective communications between teaching and care staff and cohesion and cross-curricular links within the curriculum offered. The residential care provision on both sites is well managed.

22. The school development plan is directly linked to the school =s mission statement and aims. These are very appropriate to the needs of pupils and students and the school is notably successful in achieving its aims.

23. As an independent limited company the school has a directorate as opposed to a governing body. The directorate group is well informed about the work of the school and the directorate have used a number of independent consultants to evaluate the work of the school. Currently, however there is no systematic or structured school managed procedures or permanent independent group to critically monitor and evaluate the work of the school in an ongoing way.

24. The day to day administration of the school is effective and contributes to the orderly school environment. The school provides equality of opportunity for all of its pupils and students. The school is not meeting its statutory obligations through pupils = Statements of Special Educational Need to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in art, music and a modern foreign language.

25. Overall the number, qualifications and experience of teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 and at the Post-16 is good. The level of staffing is high overall and particularly in the school =s residential provision at both sites. The good qualified teacher-pupil ratio and instructor student ratio enables class sizes of only five or six pupils. There is a good level of classroom support at both sites. The high ratio of all types of staff to pupils and students is appropriate and necessary given the very severe nature of the difficulties of most pupils and students.

26. While there is a wide range of subject expertise to support a broad and balanced curriculum. there is, however, insufficient expertise for the effective teaching of music at Key

Stage 3 and a modern foreign language at Key Stages 3 and 4. A range of training opportunities, within the school and out of the school, are provided for staff. Educational staff training and development, however, is not sufficiently linked to the school development plan and there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to extend subject expertise or improve their management of the curriculum.

27. Despite some weaknesses the overall standard of educational accommodation at both school sites is satisfactory. There is no library, the art room is too small, the music room is not adequately sound proofed, the design and technology workshops on both sites present health and safety risks and the gymnasium lacks storage space. At the Post-16 site the classrooms which are used for teaching core skills are too small.

28. The residential accommodation on both sites is of a very high standard. Nearly all pupils and students have their own comfortable and attractive single bedrooms. The accommodation is arranged to enable different levels of supervision according to individual needs. The grounds of both sites are pleasant and provide a quiet and relaxing atmosphere and support the taught curriculum.

29. Overall the resources available to support learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. They are good in respect of information technology but those for science, history, geography and music are insufficient to assure the effective delivery of the curriculum. There are adequate learning resources available for the effective delivery of the Post-16 curriculum and those available for life skills and environmental studies are good.

30. Financial planning is good and there is a direct link to the school development plan. Until recently financial control was insecure but satisfactory procedures are now in place. Fees are calculated systematically, are differentiated according to identified individual needs, and are tied to the expenditure proposals to meet those needs. Very adequate funds are made available for the purchase of educational and non-educational resources and equipment. Staff are deployed and managed efficiently. Good use is made of both teaching and non-teaching accommodation. The school's administrative procedures provide sound support for the efficient management of the school.

31. In view of the school's many strengths and the positive impact it has upon the emotional and behavioural development of its pupils and students the school is judged to provide very good value for money.

## Key issues for action

32. The directorate and senior management team should give attention to the following points in their continuing efforts to raise standards and the quality of work of the school:

Improve and implement the school's procedures for curricular planning and delivery so as to:

- C. assure the continuity and progression of pupils' and students' learning within and across all subjects, Key Stages and Post-16 courses. At Key Stages 3 and 4 this should be through the close linking of curriculum content to National Curriculum levels of attainment;
- C. assure that the full requirements of the National Curriculum are met and provided for those pupils for whom it is required;
- C. capitalise upon opportunities for cross curricular links and learning to enhance pupil and student learning.

Improve and implement the school's current procedures for the assessment of pupils' and students' attainment and progress in learning so as to:

- C. provide an accessible, effective, and consistent system that will inform planning for teaching and learning;
- C. monitor pupils' attainments and progress across all attainment targets in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education;
- C. monitor effectively continuity and progression in pupils' and students' learning both within subjects and over time.

Put in place systematic, effective and school based procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school with particular reference to:

- C. the delivery of the curriculum and the implementation of procedures for the assessment of learning;
- C. the quality of teaching;
- C. improve the school's provision for pupils' and students' spiritual and cultural development and the quality of the school's provisions for the arts;
- C. improve staff communications and line management in the Post-16 provision so as to achieve more effective communications between teaching and care staff and cohesion and cross-curricular links within the curriculum offered;
- C. assure the health and safety of pupils and students throughout the school.

## **Introduction**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1.Chelfham Senior School is an independent residential school providing education for up to 65 boys, aged 11 to 19 years, who have very severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and whose needs cannot be met within their local community in day time educational provision. At the time of the inspection there were 61 boys on roll and all pupils had statements of special educational need. Prior to their admission most had been excluded from at least one school, with over 80% having been excluded or transferred from special schools for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school specialises in working with pupils and students exhibiting bizarre and obsessive behaviours and those having difficulties in acquiring appropriate social skills. Some have specifically diagnosed difficulties, such as Asperger=s, Gilles de la Tourette=s or William=s syndrome. On admission to the school the educational attainments of most pupils are well below that expected for pupils of their age particularly in the core skills of literacy and numeracy.

1.Most pupils attend the school in line with the normal school year but 17 are resident at the school for 52 weeks each year and a further 5 have respite provision during the holidays. Pupils attend from very extensive catchment area, from Cornwall to the west, Essex to the east, and Yorkshire and Lancashire to the north. Nearly one half of pupils in the 11 to 16 age range and two thirds of the Post 16 students are either the subject of a full care order or have the close involvement of a social worker in the family home. At the time of the inspection there were 3 pupils or students from ethnic minorities backgrounds.

1.The school operates on two separate sites, both in very isolated rural settings, some 11 miles apart. One is situated near the village of Bere Alston in Devon and provides education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years. The other is situated near the town of Tavistock and provides continuing education for those students aged 16 to 19 years who are unable to move on at the end of their schooling to employment, further education or training without a high level of support. This provision was only opened in September 1996. All three members of the school's senior management team, including the principal, have been in post for four terms or less.

1.The school=s mission statement is to provide a caring and consistent learning environment in which pupils and students feel safe and valued and are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Within this mission the school=s stated main aim is: to provide a secure, homely and understanding environment in which each boy can realise his full capabilities and become a happier individual, ready to adjust successfully to life =s demands. The continuing education department identifies a further main aim directly focused upon the particular needs of its students to provide communication and numeracy skills, vocational training, care and life skills, to those students who, because of their disability or their degree of learning difficulty, would not be able to receive it in other settings. From these generalised statements of overall intent the school has identified the following specific aims:

C. to foster a positive ethos which enhances self-esteem by celebrating and rewarding success and progress;

- C. to promote a culture in which students feel safe, secure and listened to;
- C. to set clear and consistent boundaries and expectations which will provide students with a framework within which to learn to take responsibility for the control of their own behaviour;
- C. to provide access to a broad, balanced and coherent 24 hour curriculum which addresses the individual physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of each student;
- C. to provide a high level of child care where a personal interest is taken in each student =s physical, emotional and spiritual well being;
- C. to help remedy students= emotional and behavioural difficulties through appropriate behaviour management, counselling and therapeutic intervention;
- C. to empower and support all staff in accepting shared responsibility for the well being and education of students in our care;
- C. to recognise the importance of a student=s physical environment by providing attractive and well maintained accommodation which reflects a student =s need for both privacy and shared activity;
- C. to provide efficient support services, good management and sound business practice to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- C. to place an emphasis on developing and maintaining positive working relationships with pupils, parents/carers, social services departments, LEA and other professionals;
- C. to actively promote our students= involvement and participation in the life of the local community both as consumers and contributors.

## Key indicators

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5
	National comparative data	8.5
Unauthorised absence	School	2
	National comparative data	2.6

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	5

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	54
Satisfactory or better	91
Less than satisfactory	9

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils and students at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

37. All pupils and students enter the school having been formally assessed as having very severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and these difficulties can severely impede learning. All have had poor educational experiences in their previous schooling. On admission to the school the educational attainments of most are well below that expected for pupils and students of their age particularly in the core skills of literacy and numeracy. The emotional and behavioural difficulties of most Post-16 students are of an extreme nature and have a negative impact upon their learning.

38. Examinations of pupils' and students' work, Statements of Special Educational Need, individual education plans and those other teacher records available show that during their time in the school and in relation to their prior attainments, the majority of pupils and students across all abilities make satisfactory progress in their academic learning. In lessons they make at least satisfactory progress in five out of six lessons and in over one third they make good, and sometimes very good, progress. The proportion of lessons where academic progress in lessons is least satisfactory is in those for Key Stage 3 pupils. Most pupils are admitted to the school while they are Key Stage 3 and consequently as a group have spent least time at the school. Even within this Key Stage, however, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in one out of three lessons. The progress made by Post 16 students is good or very good nearly one half of lessons. The good progress made by some pupils is demonstrated by their achievements in the recent Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations. Nine pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieved a least a pass level in either mathematics or science, four achieved a merit level in at least one of these subjects, one gained a distinction level in science and another gained a distinction in both subjects. Whilst nationally 38% of all pupils in similar schools obtained a pass level of A to G in at least one GCSE examinations and 9% obtained passes in five subjects or more, in view of the severity of their difficulties and low attainments on entry to the school, the achievements of these pupils illustrates clearly the good progress they have made while at the school.

39. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science pupils and students make satisfactory progress over time. Progress in lessons in science is never less than satisfactory and is good, and often very good, in over one half. In English lessons progress is rarely unsatisfactory and is often good. They make at least satisfactory progress in nine out of ten lessons in mathematics they make good or better progress in four out of ten lessons. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all lessons in history and religious education. The progress made by pupils and students in lessons in art is unsatisfactory in two out of seven lesson and their progress over time is poor. The progress made by pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 in information technology is never less than good and is often very good while the progress made by Post-16 students varies from unsatisfactory to good. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in lessons in geography and music but the progress they make in physical education lessons is usually unsatisfactory. Too few lessons in design and technology were observed to make valid judgements about the progress in lessons but evidence from other sources shows that pupils and students make satisfactory progress over time.

40. Due to the nature of their difficulties and previous educational experiences in most subjects there is a very wide range of attainment among pupils and students across and within all stages so that, for example some Key Stage 3 pupils have higher levels of attainments than do some Post-16 students and vice-versa. This wide variation in levels of attainment is found very much so in English. In reading, for example, while a significant minority of pupils are still developing basic reading skills others are reading at or near levels appropriate for their age. Those pupils and students who came to the school as non-readers are able to make use of phonics to attempt to read new words. Of those who can read very few read fiction for pleasure in their own time those who are able and do can talk about the characters and events of stories and enjoy reading. Most, however, are unable to use books independently either for pleasure or for seeking information. Similarly pupils and students differ widely in their ability to undertake, organise and present written work, some having very limited skills. Some Key Stage 4 pupils and Post-16 students, however, can produce good pieces of extended creative writing. At all stages many pupils and students are able to some extent to listen attentively and to take turns in discussion, although not consistently, with the level of skill generally being higher as they get older, particularly in terms of self-confidence, audibility, and the range of vocabulary used.

41. The range of attainment of pupils and students in mathematics is also very wide so that some Key Stage 3 pupils have higher levels of attainments than some pupils at Key Stage 4 or at Post-16. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 are able to multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places, convert fractions into percentages, solve simple algebraic equations and make good use of calculators. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 are able to round up numbers to three significant figures to arrive at estimates for multiplication or division, to multiply fractions and calculate the volume of common three dimensional shapes. At the Post-16 level the attainments of students are more limited although most are able to tell the time, make use of money and have basic number skills.

42. In science, by the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of plants and animals. They can make and label simple drawings of the parts of flowers, understand the mutual relationship between insects and flowers, and know that animals are vertebrates or invertebrates. By the end of Key Stage 4 most know the major organs of the body and where they are. They can explain blood circulation and understand the function of the heart and different blood vessels while higher attaining pupils also know the parts of the heart and know that the lungs oxygenate blood. Most know about the digestive system and the role and functions of different teeth. They are able to calculate the energy used in different sports and know that body energy is derived from the carbohydrates in food. They can classify common materials and know that metals conduct electricity. Post-16 students are able to conduct a simple test for acidity and describe food-chains in the sea and on land. They can name farm animals and understand what they need to live healthily and to reproduce. Students are skilled in handling and caring for pets and farm animals.

43. In art, while pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 know about some famous artists, their general knowledge of artists and its use in informing their own work is poor. Pupils at both Key Stages are able to produce basic observational drawings using pencil or charcoal, using shading and colour, and those at Key Stage 4 are able to produce sharply expressive work. Their creative capabilities, however are not being developed effectively. Post-16 students have a similar range of attainments but they are not able to work independently and need to be given direction in order to develop their ideas. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to

locate major North American cities and use some correct geographical vocabulary. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have accurate knowledge of the main features of rivers and the more able can use that knowledge to consider the economic and transportation importance of major rivers such as the River Rhine. In history pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 can use primary pictorial sources to inform their conclusions about historical events while those at Key Stage 4 can use both written and pictorial sources and consider their validity as evidence. Although they can read some words and phrases in French, the attainments of pupils at Key Stage 3 in modern foreign languages are very low in all respects. In music Key Stage 3 pupils can sing in key and in time and recognise the sound made by some of the common instruments. Pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 develop sufficient ball and racket skills in physical education to play football and badminton although they sometimes find playing with others difficult. In religious education pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are able to consider good and evil and realise that these are present in many everyday situations. By the end of Key Stage 3 they are aware of the main aspects of the Muslim and Jewish faiths and by the end of Key Stage 4 are aware of the customs of a number of other religions. In design technology pupils and students are able to use a range of hand and power tools to make a range of products to their own designs and in reference to their own capabilities. Most pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and some students are able to use computer word processing and data base programmes and higher attaining pupils can access the Internet.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

44. All pupils and students come to the school with very severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many exhibit bizarre and obsessive behaviours, some of which are of an aggressive nature, and have significant difficulties in acquiring appropriate social skills. Some have specifically diagnosed difficulties, such as Asperger=s, Gilles de la Tourette=s or William=s syndrome. Prior to their admission most had been excluded from at least one school, with over 80% having been excluded or transferred from special schools for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.

45. The attitude of the great majority of pupils and students to their learning is good. Despite their difficulties the great majority settle quickly to work in lessons, many showing good levels of concentration which enables them to complete set tasks, in many cases to a high standard of presentation. They are generally quiet and attentive, listening to and following instructions well. While the capacity for independent study of many is limited they are willing to ask for and accept help from teachers and support staff and in some subjects such as science, IT and horticultural studies, pupils and students are directly encouraged to work independently. Although examples can be found in some subjects, such as music and physical education, there are fewer opportunities for them to learn to work collaboratively with others which, by the nature of their special needs, many find difficult.

46. The behaviour of pupils and students in and around the school and in the residential settings is good. Although there are times when their difficulties lead some to behave inappropriately, most pupils and students for most of the time, are considerate and polite to others. They are open, friendly and polite towards visitors. They generally follow the school=s daily routines and code of conduct closely. They show respect for the school environment and resources, both educational and residential, and resources and treat with care with very little damage occurring. They come to know what is right and what is wrong. Overall they behave responsibly and in a sensible manner during any free time and after school activities.

Mealtimes are pleasant, relaxed social occasions enjoyed by all. There were no examples of racial disharmony observed during the inspection week. Exclusions are rare in the school and the 5 exclusions during this academic year were not typical and occurred in response to one specific incident.

47. Pupils and students have open, positive and constructive relationships with all staff, based upon genuine mutual respect. These relationships promote and maintain pupils' and students' trust in others, confidence in themselves and the very positive attitudes they develop towards improving their behaviour and their academic work. Many also develop good friendships with each other and share in leisure time activities. Many come to consider and empathise with the feelings of others and are able, in religious education for example, to consider the values of others in a mature way. They are generally supportive of each other and, in group discussions in personal and social education and life skills sessions show a sensitive appreciation of the difficulties of others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves. Those who act as representatives on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and collect and present the views of those they represent. They have helped to raise funds for charity and a number help voluntarily at local facilities for elderly and disabled people. They like the school and value the improvement in their behaviour and emotional well being it helps them to achieve, many being able to articulate their feelings in this respect very clearly.

1. In view of very serious nature of their behavioural and emotional difficulties on admission to the school, the good behaviour and positive attitudes shown by the great majority of pupils and students represents a significant achievement on the part of the school.

### **Attendance**

49. Attendance is good at 93%. This is above that for schools of a similar type. The rate for unauthorised attendance is below that for schools of a similar type nationally. Pupils and students arrive at lessons on time and this contributes to their opportunities for learning.

## **Quality of education provided**

### **Teaching**

50. The school provides education for pupils and students who have very severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. The great majority have been excluded or transferred from other special schools for pupils with related difficulties. Many exhibit bizarre and obsessive behaviours and lack appropriate social skills. Most have attainments well below that expected for pupils of a similar age when they enter the school. The expertise and skills demanded of teachers in such a context, particularly in the management of pupil and student behaviours, are high. It is therefore a very significant achievement by the school's teaching staff that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in nine out of ten lessons. It is good in nearly two out of ten lessons and is very good in a further one out of six so that in total the quality of teaching is good or very good in over one half of all lessons. These proportions are broadly similar across Key Stages 3 and 4 but the proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching is very good rises to one in four in the continuing education department. In science, history, information technology and religious education the quality of teaching in lessons is never less than satisfactory. In English the quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good, in more than one half of all lessons and is rarely unsatisfactory. While in one out of ten lessons

in mathematics the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory it is good or very good in six out of ten. In science teaching is good in over one half of lessons and is good or very good in three quarters of lessons. The quality of teaching in art is at least satisfactory in six out of seven lessons and is good or very good in three out of seven. In geography teaching is at least satisfactory in five out of six lessons and is usually good. Although teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory in music and physical education lessons in most lessons it is satisfactory. Of the five lessons observed in information technology the quality of teaching in three was very good. Too few lessons were observed in modern foreign languages and design and technology for judgements to be made.

51. In all cases teachers and support staff have positive, supportive and respectful relationships with pupils. In almost all lessons teachers and other staff manage and control the behaviour of pupils very effectively. A high standard of discipline and behaviour is expected in all lessons. Staff are very skilful in using the school's formal reward system consistently which they support with frequent and well directed praise and guidance. Well established rules and routines and generally unobtrusive and non-confrontational management strategies also serve to provide an appropriate environment for good teaching and learning to take place. Lessons invariably start and finish on time and teachers ensure that most pupils remain on task throughout lessons. Although teachers often do not always have specialist training in the subjects they teach their command of the subject knowledge is generally adequate for the level at which they teach.

52. Where teaching is at its best teachers plan for lessons well with close reference to the specific difficulties of individual pupils or students. They have high but appropriate expectations of what pupils or students can learn and provide the support and encouragement necessary for them to make progress and achieve success. They take care to ensure that pupils or students know exactly what they are to do and learn in lessons and maintain a brisk pace and changes of activity, often achieving a sense of fun, to maintain pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and make good use of questioning to challenge and extend pupils' and students' learning. They encourage pupils or students to think for themselves and to be able to work independently. In those lessons where the quality of teaching is less than satisfactory lesson planning is often poor, work set is not sufficiently challenging, time is wasted, misbehaviour develops and is then poorly managed.

53. In most lessons, through their role in monitoring and maintaining good behaviour and supporting individual work, classroom support staff make a positive and significant contribution to the quality of teaching and to the overall quality of education provided. Their contribution in lessons is maximised when teachers provide them with detailed guidance of what is expected of them. The very high quality of the residential provision and overall care of pupils and students out of school makes an important and significant contribution to the quality of education provided through both the development of positive behaviour, the direct support of learning and the additional learning opportunities provided.

54. Although fully developed schemes of work are not in place for all subjects teachers = medium and short term curricular planning is generally satisfactory. They use a range of assessment and recording procedures to monitor pupils = attainments and progress. These procedures, however, do not monitor pupils = attainments and progress within the National Curriculum in sufficiently small steps or in an easily accessible format that can be used to direct lesson planning, particularly on an individual basis. Learning outcomes for whole

learning groups are well identified within lesson plans and the format used includes an assessment of each individual learner against them. These, however, are not always completed or drawn together to provide an ongoing overview. At an informal level, both teaching and support staff know the learning characteristics and difficulties of all pupils or students very well and utilise this very effectively in their teaching. Formalised homework is not used widely or regularly and, given the nature of the pupils' and students' difficulties, this is appropriate. Most pupils, however, do take part voluntarily in structured learning activities in their out of school time.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

1. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and is relevant to the special needs of the pupils and students. The breadth and balance is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and is very good at Post-16. The range of subjects is supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities so that overall pupils and student benefit there are a large number of appropriate educational, social and personal experiences. Policy statements together with schemes of work have been put in place recently although the schemes for science, art, modern foreign languages, music, and physical education are unsatisfactory. Compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, for those pupils for whom these form a part of their Statement of Special Educational Need, is not assured in art, music and the modern foreign language offered. The Post-16 curriculum is very relevant to the preparation of students for the next stage of their lives, especially those programmes promoting living and independence skills. Currently there are few opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 4 to take external examinations other than Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations in the core subjects. The school's plans to address this weakness are at an advanced stage for all subjects. Post-16 students take Royal Society of Arts examinations in a variety of independent living skills as and when they are ready and able to be entered.

1. The school addresses the stated special educational needs of its pupils and students well. Where there are pupils or students who have exceptional needs then highly detailed plans are put into place, most particularly in the care provision. Not all teachers and instructors take these exceptional special needs into account in lesson planning and teaching and, in some cases in relation to Post-16 students, not all are not fully informed about special plans put in place for students by care staff.

1. Cross-curricula links are under-developed and poor. Very little consideration given to how subjects may be linked to, or enhance learning, in other subjects, for example there is no planning on how all subjects can systematically contribute to pupils' and students' attainments in literacy, numeracy and information technology. The various subject areas making up the Post 16 curriculum have developed and are taught in considerable isolation from each other.

1. The school has recently developed and tried several systems to assess and record the attainment and progress of pupils and students. From these experiences a new procedure has recently been put in place but its effectiveness has yet to be tested in practice. The planning, assessment and monitoring procedures currently in place do not assure continuity and progress in pupils' learning either within subjects, across the curriculum or across year groups and key stages. Although staff on both sites have full access to pupils' records these shortcomings prevent the maximisation of continuity in pupils' learning as they move from Key Stage 4 and

through the Post-16 curriculum. The school's procedures do not assure that pupils or students will receive all elements of the curriculum intended at each appropriate stage. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainments within subjects are newly introduced and are not implemented consistently across subjects. While some teachers do have effective formal assessment and recording procedures in place, generally the use of such procedures to inform teaching and curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. All teaching staff, however, at an informal level have a very good understanding and knowledge of their pupils' or students' learning characteristics and use this understanding and knowledge very effectively to guide their day to day teaching and planning.

1. There are effective programmes in place to prepare older pupils and students for life after school. For Key Stage 4 pupils these include, as appropriate, the direct teaching of learning skills, careers advice and work experience. Post-16 students are provided with extra support to consolidate and develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required to live as independently as possible, such as basic literacy and numeracy, work simulations and carefully planned excursions into colleges, work places and shops.

60. The school's provision for the arts is unsatisfactory. While the school organises visits to local musical and cultural events these are limited in number and range. Other activities which might contribute to pupils' and students' appreciation of the arts, both within and out of the school, are very limited. The school recognises that this is an area in which the school could do more to the benefit of pupils and students.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

1. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils and students receives little effective consideration either in the curriculum or in the general life of the school. There is no specific reference to it in the aims of the school or in other documentation. Daily assemblies focus mainly on the provision of public positive feedback by staff about pupils' and students' behaviours and achievements and are not designed to provide opportunities for quiet reflection or to promote insight into spiritual values and beliefs.

1. The moral and social development of pupils, on the other hand, is fundamental to the work of the school and it is very successful in implementing its aims for both. There is a very strong framework of values which provides an effective moral code for the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think about their behaviour and its consequences. Rules and the reasons for rules are respected by pupils and students and they are learning to handle their emotions and their feelings about themselves and other people through the very skilful and sensitive support provided by all staff. There is a strong sense of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community and incidents or problems which arise, both during and after school, are discussed openly and honestly. The systematic reward system used strongly supports and motivates pupils. It clearly identifies what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. It operates in conjunction with a 'Stop and think' strategy and numerous examples of the strategy being used successfully were observed during the inspection.

1. Much that is said and written for the pupils and students highlights the need for them to develop social responsibility, both within and outside the school. A good example of their awareness of this aspect was observed in a meeting of the Post-16 School Council. The students' representatives raised issues about teasing, about the observance of rules in the living

areas and about the incidence of excessive noise. Staff present at the meeting suggested that, although they could look into the complaints, the students themselves were in the best position to tackle such problems which they set about doing. Minutes of the meeting of the Key Stage 3 and 4 School Council also show pupils' representatives taking part in discussions on the responsibilities of pupils; one pupil, for example, recommended that a pupil be appointed as a club monitor to oversee the reopening of their recreational facility.

64. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is unsatisfactory. Extra-curricular trips with a cultural purpose, for example, visits to the theatre and to a local music festival, are organised but the number and range of activities with a major cultural focus are limited. Within the school there is an inadequate cultural contribution to the curriculum from art, music, drama and dance. There are few displays throughout the school to raise pupils' and students awareness of either the western cultural tradition or that of other traditions. Whilst there is a policy statement related to multicultural issues it is focused mainly upon the avoidance of racial discrimination within the school. A few examples were seen in some lessons of references to other cultures but an appreciation of other cultural traditions, for example in the books available, is not apparent.

### **Support, guidance and pupils = welfare**

65. All staff show a great commitment to the individual needs of pupils and students and provide an ethos where the pupils feel respected and supported. Staff make themselves available to pupils and show considerable patience in dealing with the challenges that the pupils present. Staff are very aware of the pupils = past difficulties and backgrounds and are prepared to offer the pupils a safe environment and seek to praise their achievements. Pupils feel secure and happy in the school.

66. The school=s support and monitoring of the pupils = and students' personal and behavioural development is very good. Pupils and students develop a good understanding of themselves, their difficulties and their relationships with others, particularly through the newly established personal and social education course and the life skills and leavers courses at all key stages. Records of social development kept by the care staff are thorough and regularly monitored. Each pupil has an individual education plan which includes targets for specific social and life skills. The monitoring and support of pupils = academic progress, however, is less well developed and is not secure.

67. The school is very effective in promoting and maintaining good behaviour. Teachers, care and support staff have high and consistent expectations for good behaviour both in and out of class. Personal targets for behavioural improvement are identified for all pupils and students and they are helped to achieve these through the consistent implementation of a closely structured reward system and significant staff support. Pupils and students are keen to behave well. The reward system for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils enables them to gain privileges and extra spending money. Privileges include the many activities that are offered by the residential care staff and the opportunity to participate in these is highly motivating to pupils. Pupils feel that this system is fair and predictable and helps them to identify what is good behaviour and to gain reward when they act accordingly. When misbehaviour occurs, particularly when it is of a disruptive nature, it is managed well by staff. It is not allowed to interfere with other pupils learning and the pupil concerned is well supported to enable them to get back on task quickly. Although pupils and students report that some bullying does occur, they feel secure

enough to report any incidents to staff knowing that they will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The staff provide very good role models for the behaviours they seek to promote in pupils and students.

68. Attendance is good and any non attendance is followed up quickly and dealt with efficiently. Exclusions of any kind in the school have been rare in the past. Five boys, however, were excluded during the last academic year as a result of the same specific incident. One boy is at present on a fixed term exclusion.

69. The procedures for child protection are very good. Staff have received recent appropriate training and are clear about how to report any concerns. The school maintains regular contact with outside agencies. The school promotes the physical well-being of its pupils well. The food provided is of good quality. First aid and medical procedures are satisfactory. There are some health and safety concerns. Fire exit routes in the Key Stages 3 and 4 teaching block are not kept clear at all times and fire escape doors are always easy to open. Neither of the two design technology rooms are fitted with extractor fans although power sanding equipment is used, safety areas for the use of fixed power tools are not marked, and the wiring and emergency stop switches present risks.

### **Residential provision**

70. The school has full residential provision for its pupils and students on both sites. Because of the different age groups provided for by the two sites each follows different routines, such as those for early mornings, evenings and weekends, designed to be appropriate for the age group catered for. Although they operate separately in these respects there is much in common between the overall ethos and outcomes and impact upon the pupils and students. At both sites, for example, they show considerable confidence in the arrangements for boarding. They are offered an exceptionally wide range of high quality activities, both sporting, social and particularly for outdoor pursuits, and both sites are generously funded for these activities.

71. The care staff are committed to securing the well being of pupils. They work well together and provide pupils and students with high quality personal and social support. This excellent support is enhanced considerably by the many detailed recording systems available to monitor the personal and social development of pupils and students and to inform the work of staff. The range of systems available enables staff to select and use the system which is most appropriate system in reference to a particular pupil or student. These detailed records, most of which are now successfully computerised and accessible from either site, enable the care staff to establish short and longer term plans that successfully enable pupils and students to make significant personal, social and behavioural progress. Pupils and students are fully involved in the setting of these targets which are often firmly linked, through individual education and care plans, to educational objectives. Although a relatively large number of targets are set, they are realistic and attainable and pupils and students say that they value the contribution the plans make to their overall improvements. Each pupil and student has a key worker who collects and co-ordinates information for the individual pupil or student and is the adult responsible for their first line of support. Staff, particularly the key workers, meet pupils and students frequently to order to discuss their behavioural and personal progress. Pupils and students value these meetings and, together with their parents, value the relationships they develop with key workers. These relationships contribute very positively to the implementation, review and success of the individualised plans. Pupils express gratitude for

the commitment of the boarding staff, particularly that of the head of care.

72. To ensure continuity and to maximise effectiveness in the management of pupils and students, at staff changeover points at the beginning and end of the school day, a structured procedure ensures that any relevant information concerning individual pupils or students is made known to the incoming staff. In the start of day assemblies for Key Stage 3 and 4 care staff announce any positive behaviour demonstrated by pupils while in the residential provision. Where there are negative behaviours to report these are noted in written form for the teachers concerned. This practice gives pupils a positive rather than a negative start to the day. For Post-16 students the linking of the educational and care management programmes is less secure. Communication between and within the teaching and care staff groups at this site is not always effective, well managed or secure.

73. Fire drills are held regularly, including night-times. Pupils are individually and collectively shown the escape routes and the muster points and careful records are kept of the pupils to whom this instruction has been given. Within the residential accommodation health and safety matters are well dealt with and the Inspectors saw no unsafe practice.

74. The head of care has devised and set in place, with the support of his colleagues, a system for residential care that contributes significantly to the personal, social and educational development of pupils and students and which is a significant strength of the school.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

75. Two of the school's main aims emphasise the importance of shared responsibility and positive working relationships with parents or carers. The achievement of these aims is impeded by a number of fixed factors, such as home or family difficulties related to the nature of the primary special needs of pupils and students and the very extensive catchment area. Of those parents and carers who responded to the parents' questionnaire agree that the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school with only one in ten disagreeing. Where parents or carers are willing to become involved in their child's learning the emphasis is usually upon the child's emotional and behavioural development rather than his educational development. In line with this finding, those few parents who attended the parents' meeting reported that they had regular useful contact with care staff but would welcome more contact with the teaching staff. Two out of three parents responding to the questionnaire, however, agree that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught with again only one in ten disagreeing. Similarly two out of three also agree that the school keeps them well informed about their child(ren)'s progress with only one in eight disagreeing. One pupil and one parent at the parents' meeting, however, reported that sometimes they have not been informed of important factors affecting their child until well after they have been resolved. Parents are invited to the annual reviews of special need statements, are involved with setting targets and, where they are unable to attend, minutes of the review are sent to them. Overall the actual level of parental involvement in their child's learning, particularly their academic learning, is low.

76. Formal and structured procedures for providing parents with information about the general work of the school are limited. There is a comprehensive school prospectus and news letter for parents has been introduced recently, produced by students, although this is only in relation to the continuing education department. There is no annual report for parents on the work of

the school.

1.The school successfully achieves its aim to actively promote the involvement and participation of pupils and students in the life of the local community both as consumers and contributors to it. The school's work to develop leisure and social skills through its links with the community enriches the experiences of pupils and students and is a strength of the school. A wide and diverse range of activities is arranged regularly including life saving, fencing, deep sea fishing, bog running, rock climbing, ice skating, swimming, and use of the nearby moors. Some pupils attend adventure scouts and Royal Marine Cadets. A skills profile assesses the suitability of the pupil to the activity. Sound and useful links are established with local colleges. Work experience is available for older pupils and students for whom it is suitable with a range of placements which, on occasions have led to offers of employment. A greater understanding of society and the nature of citizenship is promoted through many of these activities. Pupils are learning to help and support others through charitable and other activities.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

1.The school is well led and the principal provides a clear direction for the school. In conjunction with the heads of education and care, the principal leads the school with commitment and purpose. These three comprise the senior management team. At the time of the inspection the principal had been in post for only four terms, the head of care for only two terms and the head of education for only one term. There is substantial evidence from a range of sources that, on taking up her appointment, the principal initiated a wide range of changes which have significantly improved the school's structural procedures. Following the appointment of the head of care the quality of the residential provision has improved and similarly the appointment of the head of education more recently has brought about a more structured and coherent approach to the school's educational provision, most notably at Key Stages 3 and 4. Although the senior management team, and particularly the principal, have had to take a range of decisive actions without always gaining support of all staff there is sense of common purpose and commitment among staff based upon the provision of a highly beneficial educational and care experience for pupils and students.

1.The formulation of the school mission statement, aims and development plan were undertaken by the school's managing director and principal in order to bring about as quickly as possible a number of important changes judged to be necessary as a result of independent evaluations of the school's work. The school development plan is directly derived from and linked to the school's mission statement and aims. It identifies a broad band of targets, responsibilities and time scale for implementation and is in its first cycle of implementation. Although staff support these initiatives in their general thrust staff were not sufficiently involved in their formulation to assure their continuing support through a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. Both the mission statement and the aims derived from it, however, are very appropriate to the needs of its pupils and students and the school is notably successful in the achievement of its aims.

1.An appropriate schedule of meetings of whole staff, teaching and care, is in place and all meetings are minuted. A school council made up of pupil and student representatives, chaired

alternatively by the heads of education and care, meets fortnightly and provides pupils and students with a structured opportunity to express their views and influence the running of the school. Within the Post-16 provision, however, weaknesses in staff communications and line management are resulting in a lack of managed cohesion in the provision as a whole. Examples of this are the poorly structured co-ordination of the contributions of the care and teaching staff and the relative isolation of subjects and subject teachers within the delivery of the curriculum. The residential care provision on both sites is very well managed.

1. While there is much informal, and some formal, monitoring of subject delivery and effectiveness the procedures are not sufficiently systematic to assure pupils = full entitlement to the National Curriculum at either Key Stage, class or individual level. Similarly, the monitoring of teaching quality is also largely informal and a systematic and consistent procedure to assure and promote the quality of teaching is not in place. The monitoring role and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently emphasised nor actively undertaken. The procedures for the management of behaviour, however, are closely and effectively monitored and evaluated.

1. The school is an independent school operating as a limited company and as such there is no governing body. The managing director, another director and the principal form a directorate group to oversee the work of the school. The directors, particularly the managing director who is also the school=s educational psychologist, know about the work of the school in some detail. There are fortnightly scheduled meetings of the managing director and the principal and half termly meetings of the directorate to which the principal presents a written report. There are currently no systematic or structured within-school procedures or regularised independent group to critically monitor and evaluate the work of the school on a quality assurance basis. Over the past two years, however, the directorate have used a number of independent consultants to evaluate the work of the school, including the quality of teaching through lesson observations, and these have proved to be very effective in the identifying the school=s strengths, weakness and priorities for action and the school's management team has responded well to these.

1. The day to day administration of the school is effective and contributes to the orderly school environment. Well established routines, adopted and understood by all staff and known and followed by pupils, also contribute to the smooth running of the school.

84. The school has a wide range of appropriate policy statements in place. The school provides equality of opportunity for all of its pupils and students. In not fulfilling the requirements of the National Curriculum in art, music and a modern foreign language the school is not meeting the statutory obligations for those pupils whose Statements of Special Educational Need specify that they should receive the National Curriculum.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

85. The level of staffing is high overall and particularly in the school=s residential provision at both sites. The good qualified teacher-pupil ratio at Key Stages 3 and 4 enables class sizes of only five or six pupils. The three qualified teachers in the continuing education department are supplemented by five unqualified teachers and all work as instructors. This ensures class sizes are maintained at five students. Teachers and instructors are provided with a good level of classroom support at both sites. Although classroom assistants consult with teachers about

lesson activities and participate satisfactorily in the teaching of lessons, they are not sufficiently involved in the planning and preparation of lessons with teachers. While most teachers and instructors have been appointed in the last two years most have sufficient relevant experience, particularly in working with pupils and students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The qualified teachers at both sites possess a wide range of subject expertise appropriate to supporting a broad and balanced curriculum. There is strength in the expertise for teaching of science and this is particularly effectively utilised for Post 16 students through the teaching of horticulture and animal husbandry. Other instructors have a range of good skills, for example in building and construction, to enable suitable vocational experiences and training for independence to be taught effectively. There is, however, insufficient expertise for the effective teaching of music at Key Stage 3 and a modern foreign language at Key Stages 3 and 4.

86. There is a very high ratio of residential care staff for the number of pupils and students on both sites and their deployment ensures that there is always an adequate level of staffing for pupils at any given time, for example there are waking and sleeping in duty staff every night on both sites. This high ratio of care staff to pupils and students is appropriate and necessary given the very severe nature of the difficulties of most pupils. While the head of care does not have a recognised qualification in care, he has a diploma in applied social sciences and other advanced and relevant qualifications, is very experienced and is currently taking the course in the Advanced Management of Care. In general the care staff are well qualified and those few not yet qualified are engaged in achieving appropriate accreditation. Care staff are assisted in their duties by a good number of support workers who, whilst not formally qualified, have access to training and eventual accreditation.

87. The arrangement for the professional development of staff overall are satisfactory. The school provides an annual training programme for all its staff and they have an option to receive support for attending external courses. Whilst the emphasis upon developing knowledge and skills concerning pupils welfare and personal development, for example, training in behaviour management, special educational needs, child protection and first aid, is appropriate there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to extend subject expertise or improve their management of the curriculum. This is in contrast to the advanced planning in place for care staff to begin a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 course that will enhance their expertise and qualifications. The skills of care staff are developed through in-house training, utilising outside specialists where necessary. Recent training has included child protection procedures and requirements, first aid, the use of restraint and managing challenging and aggressive behaviour taking this course. The school is improving its induction programme for new teachers, instructors and classroom support staff, for example through the provision of mentors, although the revised programme is not yet fully in place. The induction of residential social workers is coordinated by the head of care, is systematic and effective. Teacher appraisal is not yet established fully although a beginning has been made and one teacher has now had an appropriately structured appraisal. Care staff receive regular supervision feedback from their line managers.

88. The overall standard of educational accommodation at both school sites is satisfactory. Classrooms and workshops used for teaching Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are mostly adequate in size. There are, however, some weaknesses in this provision. There is no library and this impacts on the scope pupils have to extend their interests as well as acquire skills for independent learning. The art room is too small and lacks sufficient storage and display space.

The music room is not adequately sound proofed and sounds during lessons intrude into other lessons. The design and technology workshops do not have provision for dust extraction, risk areas are not clearly marked and electrical fittings present risk. There is no storage area for large gymnastic equipment in the gymnasium and this restricts the range of experiences offered to pupils in physical education. The Post 16 classrooms used for teaching core skills are too small.

89. The residential accommodation on both sites is of a high standard. It is very clean and tidy. Nearly all pupils and students have their own single bedrooms which they are allowed to personalise and generally do. Rooms are comfortable, warm, attractively decorated and provided with good quality furniture. The accommodation is arranged into grouped areas to enable different levels of supervision, according to each pupil's or student's needs, for example one area operates as a self contained flat to develop the independent living skills of those preparing to leave. Each group of bedrooms has its own common room and dining room. Toilet and bathing facilities are in line with Educational Premises Regulations 1996 and are generally appropriate with only one bathroom area requiring some upgrading and this is already scheduled for refurbishment. The grounds of both sites are pleasant and provide a quiet and relaxing ambiance. The site grounds for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils include a small football pitch, a large hardcourt play and exercise area., adventure play equipment and a summer swimming pool. The Post 16 site provides a large market garden area and animal enclosures which provide students with a wide range of very beneficial learning experiences.

90. Overall the resources available to support learning are adequate. There is a satisfactory number and range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and other reading materials. English, mathematics and science each have schemes and resources to support their curriculum although the range of equipment in both mathematics and science is limited. Provision for information technology is good and this will be improved still further when a consignment of recently ordered personal computers arrive. The learning resources available to teach history, geography, music and religious education at Key Stages 3 and 4 are limited, for example there are too few artifacts and equipment such as globes and large maps to maximise pupils learning. On both sites the design and technology workshops require suitable workbenches and art has only very basic materials available to pupils or students

### **The efficiency of the school**

91. No documents relating to long-term financial planning or to minuted discussions of the annual budget plan were made available during the inspection. The school development plan, however, includes the costing of proposed developments and these are clearly linked both to the aims of the school and to strategic issues, such as the changing population of the school. The school charges different levels of fees according to the particular needs of pupils and students on an individual basis. Prior to the offer of a place at the school a care and education plan is drawn up to assess the costs of providing for the identified needs of the possible pupil or student. This plan is then used to determine the fees to be charged for that pupil or student. Thus fees are calculated systematically, are differentiated according to identified needs, and are tied to the expenditure proposals to meet those needs.

92. Funds for the purchase of educational and non-educational resources and equipment are very adequate and are delegated to several budget holders to enhance the effectiveness of targeted spending at the point of delivery. An improved system for the analysis of expenditure,

through an increased number of available codes, has been introduced recently and is proving to be effective. Good use is made of accommodation, both teaching and non-teaching, at both sites. Staffing, which includes a very high proportion of care staff, is well matched to the particular needs of pupils and students and staff are deployed and used efficiently in all departments.

93. Several important changes have been made recently to improve the school's financial systems. Monthly budget reports which monitor expenditure under various headings are now in place. Inventories of stock and resources have also been drawn up recently. A useful manual of management and financial procedures is now in place, and the school's administrative procedures provide sound support for the management of the school. The major spending decisions which have been made have been effective in extending the field of the school's operations and in improving the quality of provision made.

94. In view of the school's many strengths and the positive impact it has upon the emotional and behavioural development of its pupils and students the school is judged to provide good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **English, mathematics and science**

#### **English**

95. There is a very wide range of attainment in English at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and at Post-16. In reading, for example, while there is a significant minority of pupils who are still in the early stages of developing their basic reading skills others are reading at levels which are at or near those appropriate for their age. Pupils = writing also shows great variety in the ability to organise and present their work and in the different forms of writing which they can tackle. Some older pupils, however, are producing good pieces of extended creative writing and, in the Continuing Education Department's own newspaper, the *AKilworthy Times*, some Post-16 students contribute interesting pieces of writing on a variety of subjects. In oral work, the ability of pupils and students to listen is often affected by the nature of their difficulties but examples of pupils listening very carefully to others, both to staff and their peers, were observed, particularly in those lessons focused upon the development of listening skills and in group discussions. Many pupils and students are able to talk confidently, although their contributions may often be inappropriate. Excellent examples of the ability of some to express their ideas and give their opinions in a mature and sensible way were observed in discussion and, in particular, in a School Council meeting in the Continuing Education Department.

96. Within this picture of very varied levels of attainment, there is clear evidence of steady and, in many cases, good progress in all three National Curriculum attainment targets. Several pupils whose records show that they arrived at the school as non-readers were heard reading and clearly had a developing awareness of the use of phonics, for example sounding out initial letters and combinations of letters to help them read unfamiliar words. They enjoy their reading and are able to talk about the characters and events of stories. By Key Stage 4, with only one or two exceptions, pupils have greatly improved both their accuracy and understanding when they read, not only in their English lessons but also, for example, in reading history and geography textbooks and in science. Pupils = progress in using books independently for pleasure, to find information or to extend their knowledge by individual research, however, is limited and is unsatisfactory. In discussion, pupils were generally unable to talk about books which they were reading outside their course work and very few were reading fiction for pleasure in their own time. Good progress is seen in the written work of pupils. Presentation skills, the quality of handwriting, the spelling of common words and the organisation of their writing all show improvement over time although the use of punctuation continues to be erratic. In speaking and listening, most pupils are learning to listen and to take turns in discussion, although not consistently. There is a clear pattern of improvement in the speech of pupils as they move through the school. Confidence, audibility, the range of vocabulary used and grammar all show appropriate development through the age range.

97. Pupils = response to their English lessons is predominantly good. Despite their difficulties, they persevere with their basic skills and work well on their own. Their ability to concentrate and co-operate in oral work is variable but many examples of courtesy and a mature response in class discussions were noted in all areas of the curriculum during the inspection.

98. The teaching of English is good. Pupils are managed very effectively. For the younger

classes, knowledge of the teaching of basic skills is of a high order. At all stages, there are particular strengths in the quality of the rapport with pupils and in the use of prompts and praise to encourage them. Expectations of what pupils of differing abilities can do are appropriate and individual support is skilfully targeted. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution, particularly to literacy support.

99. Long-term planning shows adequate coverage of the range and key skills of each of the National Curriculum attainment targets but there is insufficient reference both here and in the termly planning to the Programmes of Study and Level Descriptions for continuity in pupils = learning to be assured. The assessment of pupils = reading skills is good but their progress in speaking and listening and in their writing is inadequately monitored. The arrangements for the monitoring and support for teaching and curriculum development are unsatisfactory at both sites. Resources are adequate for Key Stages 3 and 4 but there is currently a very limited range of appropriate reading materials available for Post-16 students. The absence of a library for the Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils has an adverse effect on pupils = reading habits. Books are not effectively organised for easy access by pupils nor are they attractively displayed to encourage use, particularly the reading of fiction.

## **Mathematics**

100. In reference to their difficulties pupils and students make satisfactory, and some make good, progress in mathematics during their time at the school. In lessons, pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 make at least satisfactory progress in seven out of eight lessons and in three out of eight they make good, and sometimes very good, progress. The progress of Post-16 students in lessons is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good. Due to the nature of their difficulties and previous educational experiences the range of attainment of pupils and students is very wide so that, for example, some Key Stage 3 pupils have higher levels of attainments than some pupils at Key Stage 4 or Post-16 students. At Key Stage 3, while lower attaining pupils are able to name some common two dimensional shapes, such as a square, they are only just beginning to learn to distinguish them from three dimensional shapes, for example a cube. Higher attaining pupils, however, are able to multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places, convert fractions into percentages, solve simple algebraic equations and make good use of calculators. Similar variations in attainment are found at Key Stage 4 with some lower attaining pupils able to recall their six times multiplication while higher attaining pupils are able to round up numbers to three significant figures to arrive at estimates for multiplication or division, can multiply fractions and are able calculate the volume of common three dimensional shapes. In the recent Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations two pupils achieved pass levels, two achieved a pass with merit and another gained a pass with distinction. At the Post-16 level there is generally less variation between student attainments. Most are able to tell the time, make use of money, add coins up to make fixed totals, have some basic number skills including simple multiplication, and have an awareness that graphs are a way of presenting information.

101. The response to learning in lessons by pupils and students is at least satisfactory in eight out of ten lessons. Although their responses are unsatisfactory or poor in one out of four lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 it is good in one half and very good in a further one fifth. The response of Post-16 students is never less than good and is often very good. Where the response of pupils is unsatisfactory or poor, pupils do not settle down to work at the start of lessons, are or become disaffected with each other, and lessons are disrupted. Generally,

however, pupils and students want to learn and try hard to do so, listen attentively, participate readily in discussions and question and answer sessions and are proud of their achievements. They behave well and respond positively to the teacher.

102. The quality of teaching in lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 is at least satisfactory in six out of seven lessons and for Post-16 students it is never less than good and is often very good. Teachers and instructors manage pupils' and students' behaviour skilfully. They have sufficient command of the subject for the level at which they teach. They have appropriate expectations of what pupils and students can learn, plan lessons and identify the intended learning outcomes well, use questions and discussion to assess and extend learning, and provide the support and encouragement necessary for pupils and students to achieve. Although all have a detailed knowledge of the attainments and learning characteristics of pupils and students and teaching groups are small and setted, the major teaching method used is whole class teaching rather than fully individualised, although the latter is achieved to some extent though individualised tasks and support provided.

103. There are separate schemes of work for each Key Stage and Post-16 and those for Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils address all National Curriculum Attainment Targets and follow the Programmes of Study. The curriculum followed by Post-16 students is very relevant to their particular needs and focuses very much on the functional mathematics students will need after they leave the school, such as basic number skills and the use of money and measurement. A commercially available checklist is used as the main assessment and recording system. This is not entirely appropriate as the steps used in the checklist are not sufficiently broken down to meet the particular needs of these pupils and students and consequently its usefulness to inform planning or teaching is limited. Because of the lack of a coherent whole school programme of work supported by a fully effective assessment procedure the continuity and progress of pupils' learning and progress is difficult to monitor and is not assured. Cross curricular links are neither planned for nor exploited. A useful subject handbook is in place. It specifies clearly the aims for the subject with specific reference to the emotional and behavioural difficulties of pupils and students and also identifies specific aims for teaching. There is no mathematics specialist, including the co-ordinator, on the staff and there has been little targeted training for staff in the subject although curriculum development meetings for the subject have been introduced recently. The co-ordinator is also the co-ordinator for another core and foundation subject. Resources are barely adequate and not readily accessible for spontaneous use by pupils, students or staff. There is no specialist room and displays in classrooms and around the school to stimulate interest or to celebrate achievement in the subject are poor.

## **Science**

104. Pupils and students are satisfactory, and some make good progress, in science during their time at the school. In lessons they never make less than satisfactory progress. They make good progress in over one third of lessons and very good progress in a further third. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have acquired a sound knowledge and understanding of plants and animals. They can, for example, apply their knowledge of plants when investigating the structure of different wild flowers and identify key components such as petal, anther and ovary. They make and label simple drawings illustrating the parts of a flower. Pupils also understand the mutual relationship between insects and flowers; that plants help us breathe and that this relates somehow to carbon dioxide. Pupils know that animals are grouped according

to whether they have a backbone or not and some remember these are vertebrates or invertebrates. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils know the major organs of the body and correctly identify their locations. They explain blood circulation and understand the function of the heart and different blood vessels. Higher attaining pupils can name the parts of the heart correctly and know that the lungs are where blood is charged with oxygen. Pupils are able to name the organs of the digestive system. They know that teeth are shaped specifically for different functions, for example, that molars are for breaking down food and incisors are for cutting food and understand why herbivores and carnivores need different teeth. They know that muscles contract when functioning and are able to use formulae to calculate the force and work used by different sports people. Pupils know that energy is derived from the carbohydrates in food and proteins sustain muscle, promoting growth and repair. They can classify materials by various properties such as metals, wood or glass and know that metals act as conductors of electricity. Pupils understand the need for a switch to control a circuit. In the recent Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations three pupils achieved pass levels, three achieved a pass with merit and three more gained a pass with distinction. Post-16 students are able to conduct a simple test for acidity and describe food-chains in the sea and on land. They can name farm animals and have developed a good understanding of their needs for survival. Students are skilled in handling and caring for pets and farm animals. They have a good understanding of animal health and reproduction.

105. At Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. They show a commitment to the objectives of their science lessons and are well motivated to contribute to a lively discussion of scientific matters. For example, the investigation of wild flowers produces a fascination as to how a large bee could possibly extract nectar from such a tiny flower. Pupils enjoy the challenge in the activities and try hard to present their work well. At Key Stage 4 pupils are usually settled and attentive. They work reasonably independently and respond best to work which involves some investigation, such as examining the teeth in various animal skulls, but their motivation soon flags when work is solely textbook based. Post-16 students are interested in and concerned for the animals they help look after. They sustain their concentration for short periods only but they make good gains in self-confidence and organisation skills when working with the animals.

106. Science teaching is consistently good. Teachers are well qualified and demonstrate a good expertise at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is evident in clear explanations and well planned work such as the investigations of wild flowers and skulls to promote pupils' understanding. At Post-16 there is very good skill applied to exploiting the farm's resources for a wide range of learning contexts in life processes, growth and well-being. Opportunities to practise number and reading skills are used well here. Teachers have high expectations for a positive attitude to work and good behaviour. Activities are appropriately challenging, particularly the practical work of investigations and experiments. This is very good at Post-16 in the management of the animals which motivates and places high demands upon each student. Lesson planning is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Learning objectives are clearly stated and linked to the National Curriculum. Plans are not yet embedded sufficiently in a full and detailed scheme of work although teachers do sometimes make obvious how a lesson links to previous and future topics. Activities at Post-16 are planned well to promote students' independence and vocational preparation. In the course of lessons teachers explain facts clearly and use questioning well to help pupils and students develop understanding. Teachers work individually with pupils and use classroom assistants satisfactorily in this respect. However, classroom assistants are not

used effectively in the planning and development of work for groups and individuals. Where practical work with animals or investigating is part of the lesson this is an effective method to stimulate pupils' interest and learning. Pupils and students are managed well. Teachers are firm in their expectation for good behaviour and have the relationship with pupils that gains their trust and cooperation. Good use is made of time. Lessons are often busy and productive. This is a very good feature in the use of time and resources at Post-16. Teachers are always diligent in checking the accuracy and quality of pupils' work in the course of lessons. They listen carefully to what pupils are saying and quickly pick up any mistakes in pupils' or students' written work. Pupils are praised for their good efforts and are consistently rewarded for meeting expectations.

107. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced. The science scheme of work for the whole school is not yet complete and therefore the planning of pupils work is unsatisfactory in achieving a smooth development of learning from the beginning of Key Stage 3 to the end of Key Stage 4. The scheme of work for Post-16 students is good. The school is aware there is insufficient time given to science at Key Stage 3 and plans to match national recommendations soon. The time allocated at Key Stage 4 has been increased significantly to allow pupils to study for a Certificate of Achievement and GCSE level accreditation. There is no satisfactory system in place for assessing pupils' attainments in science at Key Stages 3 and 4. While there have been some improvements in the development of science following the recent appointment of a specialist, the coordinating role is not well defined. The time given for the management of science is not protected from competing demands and this is exacerbated by an overload of responsibility for other subjects. The range of science materials and equipment is unsatisfactory and the laboratory is under-developed in relation to conducting experiments and investigations. As yet, it lacks the artifacts and displays that would contribute to a stimulating environment in which to discover and learn about science.

## **Other subjects or courses**

### **Art**

108. Pupils make poor progress over time in art throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and students' progress at the Post-16 level is unsatisfactory. In the course of lessons at Key Stage 3 progress is observed to be good in relation to pupils improving their attitudes and behaviour from antipathy towards having an interest in accomplishing a well finished composition. This is clearly related to planned activities which pupils find interesting and challenging and where new learning occurs. This particularly happens where pupils have to think about the positive and negative shapes in their drawings and use oil pastels in an experimental way to add colour and shade to their work. Over time, however, pupils produce work that lacks a consistent development of ideas, techniques and skills with a range of materials. While they have heard of some famous artists they have a poor general knowledge of artists and world art. Their portfolios of work reveal an overly academic approach, for example the theory of colour is dealt with by producing a colour wheel. What is learned about the primary and secondary colours is not well exploited or extended in follow-on activities beyond a single simple study using a restricted palette of blues and greens. Pupils are able to produce basic observational drawings using pencil or charcoal. They can use shading to express volume and can experiment with colours to achieve some interesting effects. While progress in lessons at Key Stage 4 is more satisfactory their acquisition of knowledge of proportions is not well consolidated. They have seen examples of the work of well known artists such as Rembrandt

and Van Gogh but they have not studied or incorporated these or that of other artists into their own work. Pupils have not developed their ideas and techniques effectively, for example, the acquisition of knowledge of proportions is not well consolidated. A scrutiny of work in their folders shows a lack of consistency and challenge in progressing ideas imaginatively. There is some exploration of line and texture without this being extended in more elaborate ways. The best work is in pencil portraits which, while untutored, are sharply expressive in the natural use of line and marks. These show creative capabilities that are not being developed effectively. Progress in lessons for Post-16 students varies between satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Post-16 students are able to make observational drawings of people, objects and landscape. They can work with a range of materials, such as pencil and paints, mix colours and control the tonal range of a colour. Their work, however, lacks the firm focus clearly stated learning objectives would give to it. They do not work independently in an effective manner and are unable to progress their ideas satisfactorily without being given direction.

109. During the inspection art was taught to pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 by a supply teacher brought in to cover for their usual teacher whose unavoidable absence began at the start of the inspection. This was unsettling for most pupils. Whilst at the start of lessons pupils were often poorly behaved, the perseverance and good management skills of the teacher eventually secured pupils' interest and motivation and many became quite enthusiastic about their work and took pride in their finished work. While Post-16 students show some interest in drawing and painting, they are not able to concentrate consistently for more than a short period of time although they do express a sense of achievement in what they produce.

110. As noted above during the course of the inspection a supply teacher covered for the absence of the Key Stage 3 and 4 art teacher. The quality of teaching at these Key Stages 3 was good in over half the lessons observed and never less than satisfactory. Teaching at the Post-16 stage, however, is generally unsatisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teacher demonstrates very good subject knowledge, for example, in the experimental use of colour and in talking about key visual elements such as shape. At Post-16 the teacher fails to set out clear learning objectives. High expectations are set and achieved, particularly regarding positive attitudes to work and good behaviour at Key Stages 3 and 4. Where pupils are required to think about their drawings and explore the materials they are using the challenge is good. Those activities where pupils are simply cutting out and sticking, however, are not extending them effectively. The expectations placed on Post-16 students are very low. They work slowly and without a clear sense of direction. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the supply teacher does not have a scheme of work to follow but has made satisfactory contingency plans for most lessons. However, at Post-16 lesson planning lacks a statement of clear objectives and teaching methods and this is poor. The teacher at Key Stages 3 and 4 is strong in persevering with pupils to achieve positive attitudes and behaviour. Most lessons are made accessible by the use of good exemplars and by demonstrating techniques. At Post-16 the amount of engagement with students in the course of a lesson is unsatisfactory. There is some discussion of possible areas of exploration for students but this lacks a necessary direction for them. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are well managed and the teacher usually achieves good discipline. At Post-16, however, students are not managed effectively in terms of promoting their productivity in lessons. Lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 are mostly busy while there is a lack of pace in lessons for post-16 students who are disengaged from activities for considerable periods of the lesson. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teacher maintains a regular oversight on each pupil's work and positive comments and praise are used appropriately to sustain pupils' confidence and interest. At post-16 there is insufficient evaluation of students' work.

111. There are weaknesses in the art curriculum and it does not fulfill the National Curriculum programme of study. There is a very limited coverage of using a range of materials and developing different creative techniques. Insufficient emphasis is placed upon the work of artists and art work from a range of cultures. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and students have little opportunity to acquire an investigative and experimental approach to develop and refine their ideas and practical work. The scheme of work is not sufficiently detailed at Key Stages 3 and 4 as well as Post-16. Consequently the programme of study from the beginning of Key Stage 3 onwards lacks coherence and the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in art. The accommodation for Key Stages 3 and 4 for art is poor. The room is too small and this restricts the scope of pupils' art work in terms of scale and the materials that can be used. Resources for art are unsatisfactory at both sites. There is a limited range of materials available to pupils and students.

## **Geography**

112. Lessons were observed in only Key Stages 3 and 4. Geography has only been taught consistently during this academic year and pupils have a low base of knowledge and skills. Progress overall is satisfactory. Younger pupils in Key Stage 3 are able to use an atlas to locate the major continents and oceans and by the end of the Key Stage they are able to locate major cities of North America. They are able to use some correct geographical vocabulary but are not yet skilled in drawing conclusions from their observations of non-directive information, for example after watching a video film of Australia. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have accurate knowledge of the main features of rivers and the more able can use that knowledge to consider the economic and transportation importance of major rivers such as the River Rhine.

113. Pupils' response to their lessons is good overall. They settle quickly to their lessons, complete set tasks diligently and usually with good quality presentation of their maps and written work. They have a purposeful attitude to their work and the majority are keen to participate. Behaviour overall is good because the pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn.

114. The quality of teaching is overall good although there is some unsatisfactory teaching. This occurs when the behaviour management of the teacher is not sufficiently effective to maintain the concentration of all pupils and learning time was lost. When teaching is good lessons have clear and achievable objectives which are then taught with a good range of aids such as video, texts and atlas. Teachers keep up a good pace of learning and pupils are motivated through the interest and enthusiasm of the teacher. Behaviour management is good and based on calm, clear and high expectations.

115. The subject has a new and comprehensive scheme of work which has not yet been fully implemented. At present there is no monitoring of the delivery of the subject to ensure a continuity of experience for each pupil as they move through the school. The assessment system is also very recent and not yet used to inform future planning for progress. The learning resources available are inadequate to give pupils an appropriate width of experience in geography.

## **History**

116. Lessons in history were observed in only Key Stages 3 and 4. Progress over time in this

subject is satisfactory and in some lessons observed pupil progress in acquiring knowledge was good. Pupils' progress in developing the skills and concepts of the subject is satisfactory. Younger pupils in Key Stage 3 are able to recall events such as the story of the Princes in the Tower. They also realise that they can find out information from contemporary sources such as paintings. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can use these sources to gain accurate information and some pupils are beginning to come to conclusions from that evidence. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are able to use contemporary sources, both written and pictorial and consider the validity of the evidence. In their work on the slave trade they show that they are also able to empathise with people in the past.

117. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are invariably good or very good. They are enthusiastic about the subject, very attentive and show good concentration. This means they are able to gain an accurate understanding of the teachers explanations and they are able to share their ideas in group discussions. They complete all written tasks with very neat presentation and are rightly proud of their work.

118. The overall quality of teaching is good with examples of very good teaching. Lessons are well planned and clearly based on past work in the module. Each lesson has clear, achievable learning targets for the pupils and the learning resources are well selected to match those targets. The subject is taught with great enthusiasm which the pupils pick up and each lesson becomes a busy and active learning experience for them. Teachers are skilful in using questions to check out each pupil's understanding during the lesson. Behaviour management is good.

119. The subject has a scheme of work which ensures coverage of the factual content of the national curriculum programmes of study. It is not, however, detailed to ensure that the concepts and skills of the subject are developed as pupils move through the school. There is little consideration given to the continuity of experience for individual pupils nor for how the work could be planned for pupils to make progress. The assessment system is very new and does not yet form a basis for future planning. There is a lack of artefacts and other learning resources to enrich the pupils learning experience in the subject.

### **Modern Foreign Languages (French)**

120. Due to timetabling constraints it was possible to observe only one lesson of French, in Key Stage 3, during the inspection. Evidence from other sources, for example pupils' written work in the subject, was also scrutinised. From the limited evidence available, the level of pupils' performance in the attainment targets of listening and responding, speaking, reading and responding and writing in the language is very low. In the lesson observed their understanding of the spoken language was very limited. They required considerable repetition and prompting in English to grasp simple commands or questions. Their knowledge and retention of vocabulary were very uneven. They lacked the confidence to speak in French, other than in one-word or very brief phrases and their pronunciation was difficult to follow. In their written work, they can copy single words and phrases correctly. They can read words and phrases in French and can match numbers, labels and pictures of common objects with satisfactory accuracy.

121. French is taught to Key Stage 3 pupils for one period per week. In the lesson observed, pupils' concentration was uneven and their co-operation limited. Teaching made very little

use of the target language and insufficient opportunities were provided for the practice and reinforcement of oral skills. Some degree of co-operation was achieved, however, by steady encouragement and by the imaginative use of resources for a brief question and answer exchange. The planning of the subject is rudimentary, focusing on a short list of skills to be covered in the limited time available, as is the scheme of assessment. Learning resources are barely adequate for the range of activities attempted and they are insufficient for the National Curriculum's Programme of Study to be fully addressed. The aims and direction for the subject are unclear. The co-ordinator has not yet received sufficient support to plan the effective development of the subject.

## **Music**

122. Only three lessons at Key Stage 3 were observed. Pupils can sing in key and in time. Many can sing in tune and enjoy themselves at times. Pupils can recognise the sound made by some of the common instruments and a few can distinguish the style of music played, for example South African and Maori music. Pupils' progress is usually satisfactory, for example when learning a new song. Pupils behave badly in lessons and take a long time to settle. These features limit the opportunities for more progress as does the lack of challenge in the lessons. Some of the pupils do try hard and others eventually start to work at times. There is not enough challenge and fun in some of the lessons so that pupils become bored or behave badly.

123. The teaching of music is usually satisfactory although the teaching often lacks challenge and excitement and even when developing pupils' appreciation of music the teacher tends to give them the answers to how they feel about the various types of music rather than exploring and articulating their feelings. When the teaching involves supporting pupils who are trying to pick out tunes on the keyboards by ear or by letter notation the support and encouragement provided is better. The teacher shows considerable patience with the difficult and demanding pupils and there were some satisfying results when some pupils learned a new song.

124. The scheme of work for music is unsatisfactory and does not cover many of the requirements for the National Curriculum. There are limited opportunities for pupils to enjoy making music, although they have benefited recently from the introduction of some keyboard instruments. The delivery of music is restricted by a lack of the full range of the usual musical instruments. Other rooms in buildings, away from the classroom where music is taught, house a piano and better quality drums and other instruments are based in a therapy room. There is, however, little access for these instruments to be used for classes. The classroom where music takes place is poorly insulated so that other classes are bothered by even quite small amounts of sound. The equipment, accommodation and resources for music are insufficient and severely limit the extent to which pupils can enjoy a wider range of musical experiences in more suitable surroundings.

## **Physical education**

125. Due to timetabling constraints there were few opportunities to observe physical education lessons although the lessons observed included both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils have appropriate skills in football and badminton. They sometimes find co-operative skills difficult but in the main can trap, dribble and kick balls effectively, and can hit a shuttlecock with

some accuracy. When following instruction from the teacher pupils can make acceptable progress and some work hard to consolidate their developing skills.

126. The teaching of physical education is usually satisfactory. Control of the lessons is sometimes unsatisfactory so that there is some misbehaviour, including threatening conduct between pupils, that is not always corrected by the teacher. The scheme of work for the subject is not sufficiently developed and fails to provide a wide range of opportunities for physical development. There is not enough time allocated to the subject although there is plenty of time for informal games during out of school time. Classes are small and the doubling up of groups or even whole school games periods is necessary to provide fully viable numbers for some team games. The school occasionally plays other groups for team games.

127. There is a gymnasium which also serves as the school hall. This has very poor acoustics which make it very noisy, exacerbates pupils' misbehaviour, and makes the control of the pupils more difficult. There is insufficient storage space and the school lacks larger gym equipment. Although the teacher is a qualified trampoline instructor the school does not have a trampoline. There is an adequate supply of small games equipment.

### **Religious education**

128. Religious education was observed at Key Stages 3 and 4. Progress in religious education is satisfactory. Younger pupils are able to consider good and evil and realise that there are good and bad elements in many everyday situations. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have knowledge of the main aspects of the Muslim and Jewish faiths. Pupils at Key Stage 4 who are learning about the customs of different religions are able to consider what it would be like to have a Halal or Kosher diet. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are satisfactory. They listen carefully, show interest and participate in the discussions well. There are good relationships between the pupils and the pupils and teacher hence behaviour is invariably good. Work is completed diligently.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher is not a specialist but has worked well to develop the subject planning in a short time. Lessons have clear and achievable objectives which are well matched to pupil ability and interest. There is good behaviour management and a calm, working atmosphere is engendered which helps all pupils concentrate and progress. The subject has a brief and recently introduced scheme of work. It does not yet ensure a balanced curriculum in the subject and there is no consideration given as to how there is to be continuity of learning for pupils as they move through the school. The assessment system is also new and is not yet an effective tool to help teachers to plan for progression for individual pupils. There is a scarcity of learning resources in the subject to assist teachers to give pupils the width of experience they need.

### **Design technology**

130. Due to the unavoidable absence of the subject co-ordinator and teacher for Key Stages 3 and 4 and timetabling constraints only one lesson, in food technology, for Key Stages 3 and 4 and one Post-16 lesson were observed. In both of these lessons pupils and students made satisfactory progress. Examinations of teacher records, pupils' and students' work, design portfolios and displays show that, whilst there is a very wide range of attainments between

those of similar ages, they also make satisfactory progress over time. Pupils and students make a range of products, for example letter racks, electronic hand-control testers, and bird boxes, to their own designs and in reference to their individual capabilities. At both key stages the attainments of some pupils of the design process is quite limited but some show in their work a developing understanding of the design realisation process and are able to draw in isometric projection. For Post-16 students while their ability to engage in formal design realisation is limited they nevertheless successfully design and produce products from their own ideas, for example one student had designed and was successfully making, with some support, a very unique and personalised chess set. There is evidence of their abilities to use a range of hand and power tools and of their awareness of movement mechanisms and structural forces. In the two lessons observed pupils and students were keen and enthusiastic about their work.

131. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the teacher comments made show that that pupils and students are expected to work and to produce work of good quality. The curriculum offered and scheme of work at Key Stages 3 and 4 addresses both National Curriculum Attainment targets and the Programme of Study and the Post-16 curriculum is related closely to both pupils' and students' needs and their capabilities. Short term planning is focused upon termly projects. A commercially available checklist is used to assess and monitor pupils' attainments and progress over time at Key Stages 3 and 4 but for Post-16 students a very much more detailed, informative and useful teacher developed procedure is used. Resources are generally adequate for the curriculum offered but both workshops are lacking permanent work benches. The workshops used on both sites present a number of safety issues. There is no dust extractor in either although power sanders and other dust producing tools are used. There are no safety area markings around fixed power tools and the electrical connections and switches on some present risks to safety.

### **Information technology**

132. Pupils and students usually make very good progress in lessons. They enjoy improving their keyboard skills and are able to solve many of the problems that arise during word processing by themselves or with only little help. Most pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are able to use computers with ease and many can work quite quickly. Higher attaining pupils at both Key Stages can access the Internet and one pupil has set up his own web site. They can use word processing and data base programmes and are able to manipulate text and manipulate imported clip art with confidence. Work is assessed by an on-going process and, although the subject has only been taught discretely since January of this year, some pupils have been assessed as being ready to take external accreditation soon. The range of attainments for post-16 students is very wide although most are working at their own pace towards RSA examinations. Those students who have co-ordinational difficulties with co-ordination are able to play a variety of games that help to develop their co-ordinational skills. Other students are able to enter their own behaviour progress on a matrix and others can edit and correct, without any prompting from teachers, any word processing which they have written.

133. Pupils and students behave very well in lessons and have productive relationships with their teachers. They listen attentively to their teachers, show sustained concentration in their work and tackle new problems with confidence. Pupils and students are able to explain what they are doing and are pleased with their achievements.

134. The quality of teaching in lessons is never less than satisfactory and is usually very good.

Teachers present pupils and students with a series of well planned challenges. They have clear expectations for pupils and students to work as independently as possible and provide very good constructive support them to do so no matter what their level of attainment. While there are good schemes of work for both Key Stages and post-16 students, little has been done to establish cross-curricula links between other subjects and information technology. There is no partnership between the pupils and students at the two sites and this is a disappointment as both of the teachers are doing interesting work.

135. Information technology is well resourced on both sites with modern up to date computers, some of which can make inter-net connections, and scanners and colour printers. There are an adequate number of word processing and desk top publishing programmes available but there are insufficient in-house data bases to enable effective independent research into topics of the pupils' or students' own learning. Generally the accommodation is adequate but the specialist room for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils has very poor ventilation.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

136. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors during the week beginning 11th May 1998. The Registered Inspector and one of the inspection team held a meeting with five parents. The points raised at this meeting and by the parents who responded to a parents = questionnaire were considered during the inspection. During preliminary visits to the school meetings were held with the Principal, the Managing Director, teaching staff and care staff to discuss the nature and conduct of the inspection.

137. In the course of the inspection the inspection team observed over 52 hours of teaching and learning during all or part of a total of 79 lessons. A further 20 hours were spent in a range of activities directly related to pupils = attainments, progress and development including observations of breakfasts, registration periods, assemblies, lunch times, breaks and after school activities. An additional 12 hours of inspection time was spent travelling between the schools two sites. Inspectors held informal discussions with groups of pupils and with individual pupils. Pupils were heard reading. A representative sample of pupils = work, statements and records was examined. Meetings and discussions were held with the Principal, the heads of education and care, members of the teaching, care, educational support and administrative staff, the Managing Director and the financial director. The school provided inspectors with a comprehensive and well ordered set of documents which were analysed before and during the inspection. Documents scrutinised included policy and planning documents, teacher planning files, assessment records, budget figures, records of attendance, and minutes of staff, senior management team and directorate meetings. Judgements of the school=s performance as a whole were discussed soon after the inspection with the senior management team and the managing director.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school=s register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y13	61	61	61	0

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.7

#### Education support staff (YR - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	348

#### [Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	0
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Average teaching group size	KS3	5.5
	KS4	5.5
	Post 16	5

### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1997/1998
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Total income	944603
Total expenditure	1702272
Expenditure per pupils	9200
Balance brought forward from previous year	-757669
Balance carried forward to next year	-757669

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent	64
Number of questionnaires	32

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	7.7	73.1	7.7	11.5	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	19.2	50.0	23.1	7.4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17.9	50.0	21.4	10.7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)=s progress	25.0	46.4	14.3	14.3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	25.9	51.9	22.2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily	46.4	53.6	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	10.5	42.1	26.3	21.1	0
The school=s values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32.1	60.7	7.1	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	35.7	50.0	14.3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	40.7	48.1	11.1	0	0