

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Oakwood School**  
Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique Reference Number: 107184

Headteacher: Mr J R Irwin

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Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708319

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special – Adolescent Psychiatric Unit

Type of control: County

Age range of pupils: 11-18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Oakwood Centre  
Northern General Hospital  
Herries Road  
Sheffield  
S5 7AU

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Caborn

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Michael Whitaker Registered Inspector	Science Design and technology Information technology Physical education Integration	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Efficiency
Gillian Barker Lay Inspector	Equal Opportunities Community Links	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnerships with parents and the community The curriculum and assessment
Michael Wright	Mathematics Modern Foreign Language Art Music	
Mary Last	Key Stage 4 English History Geography Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- .An excellent ethos has been created where there is a clear emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and enabling them to succeed.
- .The headteacher, well supported by the deputy has provided very good leadership for the school. Clear priorities for development have been identified and financial control and planning enable developments to occur allowing pupils to make greater progress.
- .The quality of teaching is predominantly good because teachers have very good subject knowledge and classroom management skills.
- .Teaching staff are very successful in combining their responsibilities in relation to the subjects of the curriculum with their wider roles within the overall unit. This provides a very effective learning environment enabling good progress to be made.
- .Very good use is made of teachers' expertise and support from classroom assistants.

### § Where the school has weaknesses

I.Lesson plans do not clearly identify specifically what pupils are expected to learn in relation to the subjects. It is therefore difficult for teachers to record accurately the progress made by pupils or to plan future targets.

II.Reports to parents lack detail about what pupils have learned in subjects and the progress they have made.

III.Governors are not fully involved in the formal monitoring of the curriculum or teaching.

IV.Targets in the school development plan do not always relate closely to the intended impact on pupils learning.

The weaknesses are heavily outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the Action Plan sent to parents or guardians.

§

### § How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection. All of the key issues raised in the last report have been addressed. The curriculum has developed considerably and the specialist staff have been appointed to aid this. Accommodation has been improved to provide an additional class base, a library, and specialist areas for food technology, design technology, information technology and science. These developments have helped to raise the status of the subjects and improve pupils' attitudes. As a result progress has improved. There is a clear beginning and end to the school day and routines for registration have been established. The balance of time devoted by teaching staff to the subjects of the curriculum and to their other responsibilities within the unit has been reviewed. The balance is now good. Other developments have included the introduction of the National Literacy strategy. The high quality of leadership and teaching mean that the school is very well placed to develop further.

§

### Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 16	§	Key
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		
English:	B	<i>very good</i>	A
listening and speaking	B	<i>good</i>	B
reading	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
writing	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Mathematics	B	<i>poor</i>	E
Science	A		
Personal, social and health Education (PSHE)			

*\*IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs*

Pupils of all levels of attainment make rapid progress when they enter Oakwood School. The majority have missed significant amounts of time from mainstream school and are under achieving on entry. The good quality of teaching at Oakwood School quickly changes pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, they value education and the quality of relationships they develop and good progress occurs over a short period of time in most subjects taught. Progress in personal, social and health education, which is central to the work of the school, is very good. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Progress in relation to targets set in individual education plans is also good although these are largely concerned with social and behavioural issues. Targets in relation to individual progress in the subjects of the curriculum in terms of learning objectives are not sufficiently clear and therefore progress in these areas is difficult for the school to measure effectively.

§ **Quality of teaching**

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
11 – 16 years	Good	Information technology, art, science, design technology	
Post-16	Good		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good		

The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. In 3 per cent of lessons it was excellent, in 17 per cent it was very good, in 57 per cent it was good and in 23 per cent it was satisfactory.

Teaching is particularly effective where teachers have specialist knowledge or expertise, for example, in art, science, design technology and information technology. However, in all subjects seen, teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the social and emotional needs of the pupils. The management of pupils is also a particularly effective element of all teaching, where pupils with even the most complex of problems usually behave well and work hard.

Even in the best lessons, however, teachers do not clearly identify the subject specific learning objectives for individual pupils and it is therefore difficult for them to record the progress made and use this information for future planning.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses*

## § Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour in school is good. Pupils settle quickly to work and any incidents are well managed.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is no unauthorised absence although pupils miss a number of lessons because of clinical factors. Pupils are punctual to lessons.
Ethos*	Excellent. Pupils have developed much more positive attitudes to work, and the school is committed to raising standards. Relationships are very good, though occasionally volatile.
Leadership and management	Very good leadership is provided by the head and deputy. Co-ordinators have developed their subjects effectively.
Curriculum	Good. Broad, balanced and relevant. The National Curriculum elements complement the total curriculum well.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good overall. Promoting pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in a broader society is fundamental to the aims of the school and many opportunities are provided for reflection and personal development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There are good levels of teaching and non-teaching staff. Resources and accommodation are good.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money. The high quality of teaching, positive attitudes of the pupils and good progress made ensures that good quality education occurs at a reasonable cost.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## § The parents' views of the school

§ What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is approachable.</li><li>• There is a highly committed staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school's approach to homework.</li><li>• The standards of behaviour.</li><li>• The details provided in reports.</li></ul>

The inspectors agreed with the positive statements of the parents. They found behaviour to be good within the school environment. Although homework is provided appropriately, some parents are unaware of the system. The parents were right to require more detail in reports.

## · **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise standards further and improve the amount of progress pupils are able to make, staff and governors should address the following key issues:

- (1) Improve the amount of progress pupils are able to make in the subjects of the curriculum by:
  - (a) ensuring that lessons have clear learning objectives for individual pupils which indicate precisely what they are expected to learn in relation to the subject being taught in each lesson. (see paragraphs 30, 32, 34)
  - (b) Recording pupils' progress in relation to the learning objectives so that future objectives build clearly on the earlier successes of pupils or ensure that objectives are covered again where necessary. (see paragraph 34)
- (1) Improve the quality of reports to parents ensuring that statements about progress in relation to the subjects of the curriculum are clear about precisely what has been learned in each subject. (see paragraph 51)

In addition to the above key issues, the head and governors should consider the following issues for inclusion in the Action Plan.

- (2) Develop the role of the governing body in monitoring the curriculum and teaching more systematically.
- (3) Link the criteria for evaluating the improvements identified in the school development plan more closely to the intended impact on pupils learning. (see paragraphs 56 and 58)

(2) **INTRODUCTION**

(2) **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 Oakwood school is designated a hospital special school and is maintained by Sheffield Local Education Authority. Although not required to, the pupils, wherever possible, follow the breadth and balance of the National Curriculum. Pupils attending the school come from a wide geographical area covering Barnsley, Doncaster, North Derbyshire, Rotherham and Sheffield. They have been admitted as patients to Oakwood Young Peoples' Centre due to a complex range of acute and severe emotional behavioural difficulties. Admissions to and discharges from the Centre and, therefore to the school, are controlled by the consultant psychiatrist. This includes short-term suspensions. The Centre has a residential capability, for up to thirteen patients, which is managed by the clinical and nursing team. The teaching staff work as an integral part of the multi professional team.
- 2 At the time of the inspection, there were 28 pupils on roll (16 boys' ad 12 girls). One pupil is black. Three pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs and all have special educational needs. Those without statements are placed at Stage 3 of the "Code of Practice" (DFE, 1994) on admission. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school provides make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age related expectation. Many have been excluded from mainstream and special schools and their progress has been impaired by extended periods of non-attendance. A significant number show signs of under achievement on admission. The pupils ages are between 12 and 17 but the majority is located towards the end of Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4 and Post-16. There is a high level of pupil turnover with planned admissions and discharges occurring throughout the academic year. Emergency admissions are a regular feature and the school does not operate an extended school year.
- 3 In order to achieve the planned changes and improvements, the pupils follow a carefully balanced programme of education and therapy. The pupils exhibit a wide range of ability and attainment on entry. A major aim and priority of the school is to reintegrate all pupils into the most appropriate next stage of education or training. Such reintegration follows an average period of six months which ranges from a period of assessment of six weeks to over twelve months. Successful reintegration is a strong feature of the school.
- 4 The school has identified current key targets for development, which have been agreed by the governing body, as follows:
  - to produce a literacy policy by the end of the academic year 1998/99;
  - to establish a joint validation board with another special school for accreditation of attainment in Key Skills;
  - to consolidate and improve the quality of teaching through an agreed framework of lesson observations, systematic feedback to staff and informed programme of staff development;
  - to increase the involvement of parents through improved formal communication and increased opportunities for informal contact.

5 **Key indicators**

5 **Attendance**

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

Authorised	School	13.9
Absence	National comparative data	11
Unauthorised	School	0.0
Absence	National comparative data	9

5 **Exclusions**

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

Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

5 **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is: %

Very good or better	20
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

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

### 5 **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### 5 **Attainment and progress**

- 1 It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.
- 2 Pupils enter the school at various times during their school careers. Most have experienced some difficulties in mainstream schools because of their emotional and psychiatric problems. They are all under-achieving on entry to the school. The very positive ethos created in Oakwood School, together with the high quality of teaching and very good leadership, develops positive attitudes amongst pupils who begin to value education again. As a result, they all make rapid, good progress in most subjects of the curriculum and very good progress in relation to personal, social and health education. Progress in relation to targets in individual education plans, largely concerned with social and behavioural issues is also good.
- 3 Although all pupils make rapid and good progress in relation to the subjects of the curriculum, the absence of clear individual targets related to learning objectives in each subject reduces the amount of progress they can make overtime. It is difficult for teachers to assess and record gains in knowledge and understanding in a way which can inform future teaching and enable pupils to build progressively on their learning over any extended period.
- 4 In English, in both key stages, all pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in writing. Satisfactory progress is made in reading. Many pupils lack confidence in speaking and listening when they enter the school. They are reluctant to enter into discussion, often, but the high quality of teaching and non-teaching support develops their self-confidence and with encouragement they contribute to staff discussions and speak with self-assurance about their work. For example a reluctant reader in Key Stage 4 went on to explain, why he felt an author had used varieties of fish within a poem, to the whole group.
- 5 Progress in writing is good. Although many lower attainers in both key stages continue to have difficulty with basic punctuation, they develop their ability to complete worksheets, write short pieces of text or simple sentences. Higher attainers make good progress in a wide range of activities. They develop their ability to write poems expressing their thought and beliefs and they develop their writing using imagination well when writing articles for a teenage magazine. Extended writing is developed when describing, for example, the working conditions of mill hands. They make good use of computers to draft and re-draft their work.
- 6 Progress in reading is satisfactory. All pupils recognise the importance of reading for study purposes and many higher attaining pupils have very well developed skills and can read and understand a variety of texts. They use resources such as reference books, dictionaries and computers to research their work. Lower attaining pupils are more reluctant to read. Many enter the school with a history of literacy problems and have great difficulties with both reading and writing. Their progress is good overall and they receive good support and encouragement in class and through individual help; however, further progress is limited by the lack of specific literacy targets on individual educational plans.
- 7 Records for reading and other related activities are regularly completed and include analyses of strengths and weaknesses, but teachers do not use them effectively to identify the next steps of learning so that pupils are better equipped with the technical strategies to improve reading and understanding.
- 8 All pupils make good progress in mathematics in both key stages. The level of attainment is very wide, ranging from pupils who develop their ability to add single numbers, to those who are following General Certificate of Secondary Education courses. Higher attaining pupils develop and extend their ability to use multiplication tables and percentages. They can explore ratios in investigative work with increased confidence

using their knowledge of number effectively to solve problems. They develop their ability to handle data using computers effectively when developing spreadsheets, or using block graphs, histograms and pie charts. Estimating skills develop well and pupils can use calculators to check their estimates.

- 9 All pupils make good progress in science. They develop positive attitudes to the subject and as a result make good gains in their knowledge and understanding in both key stages. They develop their understanding of the solar system through practical work which stimulates and interests them. In studying plants they make very good progress in their knowledge of photosynthesis. They know that plants are producers and that animals are consumers. They develop their knowledge and understanding of ecosystems and of populations within ecosystems. They learn about blood systems and develop their knowledge of breathing and respiration. Good opportunities are provided for investigative work and through this pupils of all ages develop their understanding of controlling variables and the need to establish fair tests.
- 10 Very good teaching and resources lead to very good progress in information technology. Pupils develop their word processing skills when following accredited courses. They develop their skills and knowledge in creating new documents, recalling existing documents, using different fonts, copying and pasting and mounting texts. They are able to create posters, write poems and create information sheets. They develop their ability to handle data producing spreadsheets to show height, weight and reach. They use desktop publishing to create newsletters and can use a digital camera to good effect. Control elements of the subject are less well developed although evident in design technology. The pupils' very good progress is used effectively to support learning in a number of subjects.
- 11 Progress is good in design and technology, art and history. Progress in physical education is satisfactory but good in outdoor pursuits. Progress in music, and religious education is satisfactory.

- 16  
16 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
- 12 The behaviour of teenagers on the school premises is good. Even those who have difficulty in sustaining concentration manage to produce completed work of a satisfactory standard. Their attitude to work, once their interest has been engaged, is positive.
- 13 Friendliness and mutual respect between staff and teenagers are a characteristic of the atmosphere of the school. Teenagers listen to one another, they are prepared to accept one another and where necessary to co-operate actively with one another. They are capable of expressing reflective comment on their own situation and that of others. The merit system is understood and appreciated.
- 14 The school premises and resources are treated with respect. Good quality equipment and resources are not abused.
- 15 The standards displayed by those who participate in work experience are highly commended by employers. It is clear that teenagers both enjoy and value the opportunity to engage in activities where they may raise funds for charities or the school, as they write about these with interest and enthusiasm.
- 16 Opportunities to exercise leadership roles in for instance, charring and acting as secretary in the community meeting are offered and teenagers respond positively to what could be a somewhat daunting challenge. These opportunities contribute to their sound personal development.
- 17 There are no school based exclusions or suspensions and it is the Governing Body's policy to avoid these. However, some pupils are suspended from the residential provision and as a result miss some school work.

22 **Attendance**

- 18 Since the last inspection, registration has been introduced into the school's routine and is taken at set times, morning and afternoon. Punctuality was an issue at the last inspection; this is no longer the case.

19 All absence is authorised and is largely due to clinical considerations. No class observed had full attendance during the week of the inspection.

## 24 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 24 **Teaching**

20 The quality of teaching is predominantly good, sometimes very good, occasionally excellent and never unsatisfactory. It is a strength of the school and is a significant factor in the good progress made by pupils. During the inspection, 3 per cent of teaching was excellent, 17 per cent was very good, 57 per cent was good and 23 per cent was satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

21 Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this has been considerably enhanced since the last inspection through the further development of more specialist teaching, for example, in science, information technology, art and design and technology. This has been achieved without significantly undermining the basic principle of the importance of tutor groups. Teachers use their knowledge of subjects well to motivate and enthuse pupils. This is extremely successful in changing pupils' attitudes to learning and enabling them to value subjects, particularly where they had experienced lack of success previously. For example, in design and technology the teacher uses his knowledge well to ensure that pupils are successful when making clocks or security boxes. He skilfully provides advice, support and materials so that pupils can design and make objects which they value. In science, the teacher uses her subject knowledge well when challenging pupils to identify how to make an experiment to create a fair test by developing a control experiment. The result is that pupils are pleased with their understanding and keen to see the outcome of the experiment.

22 Teachers have high expectations of pupils which also has a positive effect on their rapid progress. Expectations are particularly high in relation to behaviour and attitudes to learning and these have been very successful in creating an environment where pupils want to learn. Although expectations are high in relation to academic improvements, in most lessons learning objectives are insufficiently clear, concentrating too much on teaching objectives or lesson structure and not enough on what pupils are expected to learn. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to accurately record the gains pupils make in their knowledge and understanding or to use this successfully in future teaching. Teachers are aware of the need to have clearer, more measurable objectives for subjects and there were improvements in this during the inspection. Planning is, despite this weakness, generally good. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and teachers use their detailed knowledge of pupils' circumstances well to group them and to manage their behaviour. Resources are always clearly identified in the planning and are readily available during lessons. This helps to minimise any potential difficulties, for example care is taken before physical education lessons to ensure that all equipment needed for lessons is accessible to pupils and clear instructions can be given about its use, when circuit training or playing unihock.

23 A good range of classroom organisation and methods is used to maintain pupils' interest. In almost every lesson, there is a whole group introduction which brings the class together and settles them for learning. Good use is made of questioning to check pupils understanding. For example, in the science, lessons already referred to the teacher carefully checked pupils recollection of the process of photosynthesis enabling them to demonstrate their knowledge whilst at the same time skilfully settling the group after a difficult period in the residential area. Introductions are usually followed by individual or group work, for example in information technology lessons when individuals work independently and with success on aspects that particularly interest them. The groups then generally come together to recap the work they have covered. The absence of clear learning objectives for individuals means that opportunities are missed to reinforce precisely what they have learned during the lesson rather than what they have done.

24 The management of pupils is a strength of the teaching and is very good. Often teachers have to deal with potentially volatile situations following difficulties outside the school environment but part of the total provision. For example, if some pupils enter the school angry or distressed following the morning community

meetings. Routines in school are very well established and relationships are very good. As a result, teachers are able to quickly defuse situations and get pupils working. They use their knowledge of pupils to bring them back into the work in hand effectively. This management of pupils is an integral part of the ethos of the school and an indication of the success achieved by teachers in creating a climate for learning, despite all the other factors affecting the lives of the pupils.

- 25 The absence of subject-specific individual learning objectives is a weakness in the use of assessment although teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils' emotional and social needs is used very effectively. Overall, therefore, the quality and use of day to day assessment is satisfactory but could be developed in relation to academic targets. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning in a number of subjects and pupils often request additional work to catch up if they have missed lessons through other appointments. Some parents are unnecessarily concerned about homework.

30

### 30 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 26 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Great care is taken to ensure that the entitlement of pupils to follow National Curriculum programmes of study is maintained. This enables links with mainstream schools. For many pupils, it helps the reintegration process. The balanced curriculum is achieved through the sensitive blending of an entitlement curriculum, a range of individually designed options, work and community experiences and a well-designed therapy programme. All subjects including personal social development, modern foreign languages and religious education are offered where appropriate.

The personal and social development programme is central to the work of the school and includes reference to sex and drugs education and the establishment of good relationships. Curriculum planning provides continuity and progression. The school builds on its knowledge of mainstream practice and ensures, through its good links with mainstream schools and its use of baseline assessments, that work is matched to the assessed needs of pupils. Planning ensures that pupils are challenged and great care is taken to plan transition to the next stage of education by providing ongoing support and study opportunities. Some use is made of homework, although this is not yet fully consistent in all subjects. Where it is used well it has a marked impact on the progress made by the pupils, for example in information technology. The strong links established with mainstream schools are effectively used to extend the range of curriculum opportunities available for Key Stage 4 pupils. One good current example of this process is in the development of shared German lessons for one pupil by developing an internet link with a local secondary school.

- 27 The curriculum is effectively managed and subject co-ordinators are involved in the development of their subjects. Curriculum policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects with periodic reviews carefully planned. This is achieved in collaboration with all of the staff and in the context of a curriculum development plan which reflects the needs of the whole school. In the context of the whole unit, good attention is paid to the special educational needs, social background, ethnicity and level of attainment of all pupils in order to ensure that they are all able to make good progress even in the short term. These aspects of development are well catered for in the developing individual education plans and individual care plans. However, at present the targets in these plans are too broad. Curriculum time is used well through a successful blending of National Curriculum taught time, options time and therapy time. The needs of the pupils are met within the context of the total provision. There are no dissaplications from the National Curriculum. All staff ensure that appropriate attention is paid to the development of cross curricular-links including drama, careers education life skills and citizenship. Care needs to be taken in this area to ensure that appropriate links with literacy and numeracy not missed.

- 28 A range of extra curricular clubs is provided which include art, craft, sports and music. Support is provided to help pupils fulfil their homework commitments.

- 29 Assessment procedures are adequate and generally well maintained in personal files, record of achievement folders, folders of work, as in art, in the subject assessment sheets and in behavioural assessment records. The staff know their pupils very well and use their assessment knowledge when teaching in lessons. However, objectives in written lesson plans do not clearly identify what pupils should learn. Information recorded and the teachers' good knowledge of the pupils is effectively used to inform meetings with parents, interim reviews

and where appropriate annual review meetings. The lack of detail means that, as yet, assessment procedures cannot be fully used to inform planning, particularly in English and Mathematics.

- 30 The Code of Practice is appropriately implemented. When appropriate, annual review assessments and procedures are correctly implemented.
- 31 Pupils are well supported when they follow externally validated courses or sit externally validated examination courses. Staff are constantly seeking to develop a range of externally validated courses which suit the particular mode of attendance at Oakwood School. In particular, they are currently examining a range of short modular courses to match the planned art curriculum. In this context, post 16 students are provided with opportunities to independently manage their study time and to follow individually planned externally validated courses leading to examinations. These assessment courses are often initiated by mainstream schools before the pupil is admitted to the school. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in developing the academic curriculum and in establishing a wider range of assessment.
- 32 Equal opportunities are a core principle of the school's provision and as such reflected in all it provides. The organisation of the curriculum, the development of individual education and care plans, the care to prevent any denigration of individuals, the desire to enable pupils to reach out to the community in a variety of ways, all exemplify this. Every effort is made to offer positive role models and opportunities to teenagers and to meet their particular needs by for instance utilising teaching resources from outside the school if necessary. The appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) since the last inspection has made it possible to offer more specialist help to those with learning difficulties. No teenager is debarred from any activity apart from clinical considerations.

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

- 33 The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is good. The curriculum embodies clear values. Pupils are regularly encouraged to reflect on their own and other's lives and beliefs. This reflection is regularly facilitated through the daily community meetings when all pupils join together to express their concerns and feelings; pupils respect each others' contributions and listen with respect and interest often showing support and understanding in their spoken responses. Teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to express their feelings in lessons through discussion, and writing. For example, in history, pupils deepened their understanding of conditions during World War 1 by reading the poems of Wilfred Owen and looking at artefacts from the war which belonged to the teacher's grandfather. This created a moving link to the war through someone they all know well. Ministers, representing various faiths, visit the school regularly and pupils can request a meeting to discuss relevant issues with them. Other visitors to school have included people with disabilities who have spoken openly and directly to the pupils about successes they have achieved, despite their physical difficulties, this enabling pupils to view disabilities in a positive light.
- 34 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Many of the pupils are admitted to the school with difficulties concerning relationships and inappropriate behaviour. Individually drawn care plans, together with targets in educational plans, focus upon strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and thus prepare them for the next stages of their lives. A very good emphasis is placed upon right and wrong both in individual work with pupils and in materials used in lessons. For example, pupils at Key Stage 4 were shocked by the way mill workers were exploited in the eighteenth century and could identify the moral issues of exploitation. The values of honesty and fairness are stressed and in lessons, pupils frequently display respect for the rules of the school and try hard to abide by them. Those who find this difficult receive very good support from teachers and care staff through the very well structured way in which adults work together. The flexible structure of the school day and the curriculum entitles pupils or staff to call group meetings whenever an issue needs immediate discussion; this very effective system ensures that problems and dilemmas are aired with minimum delay and resolved as swiftly as possible.
- 35 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. There are many opportunities for personal development

through the range of tutorials, counselling and developmental work undertaken by all staff. During the inspection, pupils' social behaviour was very good; they frequently worked well together in lessons, listened politely to each other with respect and helped each other or staff without being asked. The school makes very good provision for social activities which support the curriculum, including visits to local places of interest such as museums and art galleries. Pupils play well together in team games. The choir affords valuable opportunities for pupils to support and help others by practising carols for Christmas and touring the hospital wards performing them to other residents. They also use their musical skills to raise money for under privileged children.

36 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils deepen their understanding of the lives of others through a good range of texts in English and through relevant topics in history, geography, art and religious education. An appreciation of the natural world is fostered through field trips in geography, such as, studying local rivers or rocky outcrops. There is appropriate coverage of the multicultural nature of society through religious education where the world's major faiths are explored and discussed.

#### 41 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

37 The school makes every effort to tailor its educational provision to the needs of individual teenagers and to enable them to enjoy the work they undertake. They are involved in drawing up learning plans and establishing aims. These can sometimes lack clarity, however, and would gain from pin-pointing specific skills and areas of work.

38 Exposure to a wide range of activities helps teenagers to explore their talents and enables them to profit from an effective work experience and careers education programme.

39 Care is taken to ensure that the move back into the mainstream is as smooth as possible and is supported by the SENCO working alongside the pupil if necessary.

40 Praise and celebration of work is sensibly used to encourage and promote learning. Good records of achievement and experience are produced which are validated and include attractive certificates.

41 The main aim of the school is to build up teenagers' self-esteem and to enable them to become responsible well-balanced individuals. Behavioural management is therefore designed to allow teenagers to explore and come to terms with their own feelings. The main forum for this is the Community Meeting where issues are aired fully and, as far as possible, resolved. The fact that anyone may call an emergency meeting, in addition to the daily meeting, and all are encouraged to have a say, means that teenagers learn how to use discussion to resolve hurt. Poor behaviour is dealt with quickly in this way. Merit systems are used to reward good behaviour and all teenagers have a mini-team of adults to whom they may refer on all matters. Staff are highly skilled in enabling pupils to control and understand their own behaviour. Support staff are well deployed and there is regular and effective liaison with medical staff who can be called in if needed.

42 The school is properly aware of health and safety issues and has appropriate arrangements for risk assessment and monitoring. Two slight areas of concern were referred to the Headteacher from the inspection.

43 There is a thorough life skills course in place.

44 All staff have training in child protection procedures and the named teacher has well-developed links with the Authority's team. Parents and carers are informed about child protection in the Parent Pack and the Prospectus.

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

45 The school is in the process of refining and developing its partnership with parents and carers. At present, it is sometimes difficult for parents to distinguish between the functions of the therapeutic unit and the school and

this can make it hard for them to support fully the educational work of the school. A joint working group, which includes two parents, has developed a parent pack of information which is about to be revised and updated. The newly developed multi-family groups have resulted in training sessions for staff and are clearly helping those who attend to understand the teenagers' experiences better, while offering support and care to those under stress. The fact that the school is open to contact by parents and indeed invites this is very much appreciated as was shown by the meeting with parents and the questionnaire responses.

- 46 Some parents do take advantage of the SENCO's invitation to information sessions on the learning needs of their teenagers on admission to the school, but as yet the school has not put in place a simple booklet outlining its approaches and the teaching methods employed. The introduction of newsletters in February of this year is a good start in this direction. Reports to parents are encouraging but do not give parents a clear picture of what is taught against what is achieved. The fact that open afternoons to discuss reports are well attended suggests there is a desire to know more. Parents have recently been invited to help in the school.
- 47 Parents are involved on the Governing Body of the school and give valuable support in helping with fund-raising events which produce a healthy school fund. There are also social events such as the presentation of Records of Achievement folders at a coffee morning.
- 48 Very good use is made of the resources offered by the community. All teenagers are encouraged to take part in a wide-ranging work experience scheme which results in a worthwhile boost to their morale while enhancing their travel and personal skills. Visits in support of the curriculum are extensive, allowing teenagers to test themselves in different situations; rock climbing for example resulting in good, reflective written accounts. The staff are untiring in their efforts to organise stimulating events such as writing workshops run by a visiting author, visits to outpatients to sing in the waiting areas, helping in an old peoples' home, which allows the teenagers to explore their own abilities, understand social responsibilities and contribute to the welfare of others.

## 53 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 53 **Leadership and management**

- 49 The quality of leadership and management is very good. This has been maintained and developed since the last inspection and has a positive effect on pupils' progress.
- 50 The staff of the school and the governors have a clear understanding of the functions of the school within the overall unit. They have developed a shared sense of purpose and educational directions which complements the overall purpose of the provisions. The school staff work hard and successfully as part of an integrated team to help pupils to overcome their difficulties. They meet their aims in providing a secure and caring educational environment in which pupils can begin to make academic progress whilst addressing their other difficulties. There is a clear focus on raising educational attainment and re-discovering positive attitudes towards education. All school staff have clear areas of responsibility for academic and pastoral support for pupils and they work effectively together to enable pupils to make good progress, both in relation to the subjects of the curriculum and in their personal development. Despite clear areas of responsibility, teamwork is an important and effective feature of the management of the school.
- 51 Teaching and curriculum development is supported and monitored by the head teacher and deputy head. Visits to observe teaching have recently been introduced and the analysis of strengths and weaknesses is beginning to be used to develop training. Subject co-ordinators plan the curriculum for teachers and monitor the planning but not the teaching in a formal way although the nature of the teaching means that co-ordinators are aware of any difficulties. The Governing Body does not have any formal systems for monitoring teaching and curriculum development. They do, however, receive reports and presentations from subject co-ordinators and the head teacher. Some governors visit classrooms for a variety of purposes, but there is no formal programme of monitoring.
- 52 The schools aims, values and policies are evident throughout. An excellent ethos has been created where

everyone is valued and there is a clear commitment to meeting the needs of pupils. They have developed positive attitudes and relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; they enjoy the sense of security it provides and the success it enables them to achieve. The leadership and management of the school has successfully created this climate.

53 The school development plan is a thorough document and has proved effective over a number of years in steering the improvement of the school from one with a very narrow core curriculum supported by options, to a full core curriculum entitlement, supported by other aspects. There is a skeleton long-term plan supported by detailed annual plans. Reviews of progress in relation to annual plans lead to the development of new long-term plans. Well-judged priorities have been identified with clear regard to national and local initiatives and school-based priorities. Costings are included in the plans and responsibilities are clearly identified. Criteria for evaluating to implementation of the plan have been included but often these do not relate closely enough to the intended impact on pupils. The effect on pupils is therefore difficult for the school to evaluate.

54 The school meets all statutory requirements.

55 Very good progress has been made by the school since the last inspection. All key issues have been addressed and the school is better than it was. It is very well placed to improve further.

60

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

56 The school has a good number of appropriately qualified and experienced teaching staff. This has been enhanced since the last inspection through the appointment of teachers to cover a wider range of subjects. The availability and quality of teaching staff is a significant factor in the progress made by pupils. An adequate number of experienced non-teaching staff also make a significant contribution to the progress made. Office staff, the part-time technician, and cleaning staff are also hard working and valued members of the school community.

57 Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. Teaching staff have attended a number of appropriate courses to enable them to enhance the curriculum, for example, in physical education, art, information technology and design and technology. Opportunities are linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan and balanced with the individual needs of teachers. The recently introduced monitoring of teaching by the head teacher and deputy head teacher has further served to provide valuable information about staff training needs. A good range of in-house whole staff training has also been provided to support curriculum development and, where appropriate, this has included non-teaching staff. Appraisal procedures have been completed pending further national developments.

58 The school works very effectively with clinical staff to provide a total professional environment to address the needs of pupils.

59 Since the last inspection, there have been extensive modifications to the school building which have improved the quality of the provision and enhanced the progress made by pupils particularly in information technology, science and design and technology. The provision of a library area has also improved the overall accommodation. As a result of these improvements, the accommodation is now good. The school is well maintained and provides a pleasant and attractive environment further enhanced by the evidence of pupils' work and activities displayed along the corridors and in the teaching bases.

60 The school has continued to improve the quantity and quality of its resources since the last inspection. They are currently good overall in enabling the planned curriculum to be effectively taught.

65

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

61 The school is efficiently and effectively managed. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Good financial planning is in place. There is a clear link between the plans for spending and the priorities identified within the school development plan. All subjects receive a basic allocation linked to individual subject reviews

and additional monies are allocated to fund planned developments, for example information technology and literacy have received additional funding recently. Expenditure is evaluated although the criteria for determining the success of developments are not sufficiently linked to the intended impact on pupils' learning and it is therefore difficult for the school to determine the value for money achieved.

- 62 Procedures for controlling and monitoring the use of finance are very good. Monthly and quarterly returns to the Local Education Authority to audit expenditure indicate good procedures. There has not been a full auditors report since before the last inspection. Staff are clear about their respective responsibilities in relation to expenditure and the school secretary provides good quality information to enable them to fulfil these roles. School administrative procedures are very efficient enabling teaching staff to concentrate on their main role.
- 63 There have been improvements in the use of both teaching and non-teaching staff since the last inspection. Good use is now made of both. There has been an increase in the use of specialist teaching in a number of subjects and this has led to an improvement in the progress of pupils. This has been achieved whilst maintaining the importance of the tutor group and the concept of class tutors in the context of creating a secure, caring environment. Non-teaching staff provide invaluable support in classrooms and throughout the school. A careful analysis of the time-table and the needs of pupils ensures that they are supporting the most necessary circumstances. This is a significant factor in maintaining the learning environment enabling pupils to make good progress, for example, in design and technology where pupils' frustrations can be overcome and success achieved by carefully targeted support, when making clocks.
- 64 The improved accommodation is also put to good use with a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, the science area is time-tabled for practical, investigative work with written work taking place back in class bases. This has served to raise the status of the subject and pupils' attitudes and has led to better progress. Resources are also well prepared, readily available and accessible.
- 65 Pupils enter the school with significant levels of under achievement. They make rapid and good progress, develop positive attitudes to learning and very good relationships. The quality of teaching is good and leadership and management is very good. Although there are no direct comparisons, costs are not high. Consequently the school provides good value for money.

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

70 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

70 **English**

- 66 Pupils make good progress in English at both key stages. This has been maintained since the last inspection. The range of pupils' ability is very wide and higher attaining pupils are working towards GCSE in line with national expectations. However, a significant proportion of pupils have severe difficulties with reading and writing which impede their enjoyment and enthusiasm for lessons. Nevertheless, with good support from teachers, these pupils make good short-term progress in lessons. For example, a pupil in Key Stage 4 was highly dependent upon support from the teacher and the classroom assistant to stay focused upon his work. He refused to read in turn at first but after a few moments volunteered and, despite his obvious difficulties, went on to read several lines from a Ted Hughes poem. Following this, he spontaneously demonstrated his analytical skills by pointing out to the class the naming of several varieties of fish within the poem and why he thought the author had used them. This illustrated very good progress both in English and in self-confidence.
- 67 Throughout the school, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. Upon entry, many are lacking in confidence and reluctant to enter into discussion, but with encouragement and skilled support they contribute to class discussions and speak with self-assurance about their work.
- 68 Progress in reading is satisfactory. All pupils recognise the importance of reading for study purposes and many higher attaining pupils have very well developed skills and can read and understand a variety of texts. They use resources such as reference books, dictionaries and computers to research their work. Lower attaining pupils are more reluctant to read. Many enter the school with a history of literacy problems and have great difficulties with both reading and writing. Their progress is good overall and they receive good support and encouragement in class and through individual help; however, further progress is limited by the lack of specific literacy targets on individual educational plans. Records for reading and other related activities are regularly completed and include analyses of strengths and weaknesses but teachers do not use them effectively to identify the next steps of learning so that pupils are better equipped with the technical strategies to improve reading and understanding.
- 69 Pupils' progress in writing is good overall. Pupils use their skills very effectively for a range of purposes. Lower attaining pupils make good efforts at completing worksheets or writing short pieces of text or simple narrative sentences. Many still experience difficulty with basic punctuation and construction, such as using capital letters, full stops or developing a wider range of vocabulary to enhance their written work. Higher attaining pupils write easily, asking for help only when needed. They use their skills well for a variety of purposes such as writing poems which express their thoughts beliefs and fears, or reproducing extended narrative writing describing, for example, the working conditions of mill hands. Pupils use their imaginations well to write articles suitable for a teenage magazine or their own examples of similes or alliteration. These included 'stink like a skunk' and 'Lovely Laura loves to laugh', which amused and delighted everyone. Pupils make good use of computers to draft and redraft their work resulting in attractive, well-presented text with illustration and well designed borders and headings.
- 70 Pupils' behaviour and response to English is good overall. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their work and tackle tasks with enthusiasm although many are highly dependent upon adult help and need constant encouragement to stay focused upon their work. Most are eager to ask or answer questions and, feel secure in clarifying their understanding of vocabulary. One pupil did this by asking the teacher what she meant by the use of the word 'thereon'. Another pupil confidently offered the suggestion that Ted Hughes wrote 'poems for the Queen' when he could not recall the term 'poet laureate'. Pupils who are emotionally insecure are less confident in lessons, but with excellent encouragement and skilled support from staff, answer questions briefly but accurately. There are some occasions when pupils become distracted from their work and this generally occurs when their literacy difficulties result in them experiencing problems with reading or writing tasks. Overall, however, even those pupils with the most volatile behaviour are biddable, and with adult

encouragement, complete work to the best of their ability. Pupils generally listen well to teachers and each other; the ethos of the school promotes good listening and respect for other people's views and this is well illustrated in English lessons.

- 71 Teaching is at least satisfactory and in over half of lessons it is good. Teachers are totally committed to understanding and meeting the emotional and behavioural needs of their pupils. They put this knowledge to good use in the classroom by demonstrating an empathetic but businesslike approach, recognising difficulties but maintaining clear expectations for work and behaviour. Targets regarding behaviour are specifically addressed in lessons but academic targets are not routinely identified for all pupils resulting in a lack of focus upon the development of literacy skills for some pupils. Nevertheless, lessons are well conceived and appropriate to the interests of the pupils whilst addressing the principles of the National Curriculum. Lessons include a range of activities to maintain pupils' interest often covering listening, speaking, reading, writing, video clips and the use of computers. Teachers frequently create a good atmosphere for learning by the use of humour yet also use the curriculum very effectively to enable pupils' reflection on a broader society. For example, within the current topic, pupils were emotionally moved when identifying the characteristics of poverty.
- 72 Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and skilled in adapting their questions to the pupils' individual abilities, for example, they will use simple straightforward questions for lower attaining or less confident pupils whilst challenging more able pupils by expecting deeper thinking and analysis.
- 73 Within this good teaching, there are two under developed areas which have been recognised by the school. Firstly a lack of clear learning outcomes within lesson planning which prevent teachers from identifying exactly what pupils should know, understand and learn to do as a result of teaching. Secondly, targets within pupils' individual educational plans do not routinely include literacy targets for the significant number of pupils who are ready for, and need them. This omission prevents teachers from identifying pupils' current skills, setting relevant yet achievable steps of learning and clearly recording what skills the pupils have acquired as opposed to what teachers have taught. Homework is appropriately used to support learning.
- 74 Despite this criticism, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Pupils learn to access texts for a range of purposes and the curriculum includes the work of a wide range of authors. Opportunities for writing are very good and pupils are provided with many challenges to write creatively expressing their thoughts and beliefs in poetry and extended writing. The curriculum is enriched by access to local facilities and theatre trips. Through such varied activities the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 75 Assessment is satisfactory and developing. Staff do not currently record the specific information needed to identify the progress that pupils have made. Whilst teachers are supportive in their marking and feedback to pupils, they do not record the skills pupils have acquired. The school has yet to incorporate self-assessment into its recording and reporting procedures.
- 76 The English co-ordinator and the teacher responsible for literacy across the school, have clear strategies for monitoring teachers' coverage of the schemes of work. Classroom observation or the systematic levelling of pupils' work do not currently form part of the monitoring procedures. Accommodation for English is satisfactory and good quality displays illustrate pupils' good progress, as well as encouraging them to read well designed and presented commentary. Resources are satisfactory and used well, they include regular opportunities for pupils to use computers as tools for designing, drafting and improving the presentation of their work. Library facilities are satisfactory.
- 77 The school recognises the importance of maximising pupils' literacy skills and has included a cross curricular approach to literacy in its development planning. It has recently introduced a literacy project to develop and enhance pupils' skills in all aspects of English. Whilst planning for and implementation of this project has been partly effective, the school has yet to ensure that literacy standards are improved and that pupils' progress is consistently monitored. The emphasis is currently on the work of the teachers and the school has recognised

the need to focus upon the individual needs of its pupils in future developments. Despite recent training and a genuine interest in the subject, staff have yet to incorporate opportunities for extending, reinforcing and developing reading, writing and oracy in all aspects of the curriculum.

- 82
- 82     **Mathematics**
- 78     Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 make good progress in mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a wide range of attainment, which extends from pupils who struggle successfully to add together single numbers to pupils who are following General Certificate of Secondary Education courses.
- 79     As pupils moved through the school, they acquire increasing skills, knowledge and understanding. The higher attaining pupils confidently use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, use mental arithmetic skills when calculating work with numbers and use their knowledge to help them in physics lessons when studying velocity.
- 80     All pupils make good progress in developing an understanding of number bonds and in the use of the four rules of number. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of the use of malt vacation tables, percentages, measurement in both weight and length and can work out ratios when doing investigative mathematics a few pupils of the confidence and skills to work in mixed fractions, are aware of the standard index and can calculate using formulae. Pupils can handle data in a variety of ways and some use computers effectively to help in this process, when developing spreadsheets, when printing block graphs, histograms and pie charts. Pupils can calculate using currency. Higher attaining pupils can estimate accurately and use calculators confidently to confirm their estimations. Pupils all make very good progress in setting their work out in a clear and orderly manner in their workbooks.
- 81     As a result of good teaching, pupils have developed an interest in mathematics and they work hard, pay attention, and complete set pieces of work. Some require a few prompts from the teacher. Pupils generally complete set homework and the higher attainers' work hard to complete the work on externally validated exam courses.
- 82     The quality of teaching in mathematics is predominantly good because the teachers have a good command of the subject, and they establish a very positive learning environment where pupils are constantly given feedback on their progress. This has the very significant effect of changing the pupils' attitude to the subject and raising expectations, as a result pupils make good progress at Oakwood School. Teachers know their pupils well and plan carefully to meet the needs of individual is they prepare resources well and ensures continuity and progression. Teachers use a variety of strategies to involve and motivate the pupils and collaborative working of the teachers and the classroom support assistants ensures that the pace learning is always brisk. Good use is made of question and answer sessions to ensure that pupils fully understand what is expected of them. The specific details of learned skills is not always recorded and, as a result, assessment information is not always fully utilised to inform future planning and ensure that the higher attaining pupils, in particular, are consistently appropriately challenged. Although learning objectives are too broad and cannot ensures that assessment can be used to inform planning, the good knowledge the teachers have of the pupils, to some degree offsets this deficiency.
- 83     The mathematics curriculum is broad balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. The curriculum closely matches the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The mathematics curriculum is well supported by a clear policy and adequate scheme of work. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Consistency continuity and progression are secured for pupils by the current use, in some lessons, of a published scheme of work although insufficient work is done to identify and generalise the learned skills. There are few mathematical targets referred to in any of the pupils' individual education plans. Mathematics is well used by the pupils to support the learning in design technology, in science and occasionally during art lessons. Homework is generally provided, completed and effectively marked. Assessment procedures are developing effectively, but as yet they are not effectively used to inform planning in sufficient detail.
- 84     The subject is very well lead by a well-informed and experienced co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has

successfully developed a clear scheme of work and subject policy. The subject development plan ensures that as resources are appropriately matched to the planned curriculum new priorities can be set. The curriculum planning and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator has established the commitment to high achievement, a lively learning environment in which good relationships are fostered to positive reinforcement. Learning resources are appropriate and play a significant part in the progress made by the pupils. There are always efficiently used, by both the class teachers and the classroom support assistants to enhance the learning of the pupils.

## Science

- 85 Pupils of all levels of attainment in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 make good progress in science. The small number of Post-16 students also make good progress. The majority of pupils are significantly underachieving in science when they enter the school and often, initially, have poor attitudes to the subject because of their chequered educational history. Their good, and often rapid progress, is largely due to the good quality of teaching which motivates and stimulates pupils' interest developing more positive attitudes and a desire to improve. The good levels of progress and the good quality provision has improved since the last inspection.
- 86 Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding across a broad range of scientific activities. They develop their understanding of the weather, learning where it is warmest or coldest and explaining why. They can apply this knowledge to explain why snow forms on the top of mountains. For instance, they understand that the solar system consists of the sun, nine planets and their moons and have developed a sound knowledge of the characteristics and features of some planets. They develop their knowledge of what happens to food as it is eaten during work on the digestive system and can draw and label a diagram of the alimentary canal. They learn how to describe the life and water cycles in simple terms and can draw and label diagrams to illustrate their understanding.
- 87 In Key Stage 4, work is extended to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. Investigative and experimental work is used effectively to enhance their understanding, when for example demonstrating how oxygen is produced during photosynthesis. Pupils' knowledge is developed in relation to the human life cycle when they learn about circulation, blood systems and breathing and respiration. They extend their understanding of the solar systems when exploring the rotation of the earth to demonstrate how the length of a day or year is determined. Good progress is made in understanding ecosystems when they explore habitats and communities. Through their study of populations within ecosystems and how animals react to different environments, their understanding is further enhanced. They learn about biotic factors and toxins in everyday life and the circumstances which can lead to food poisoning, for example. Knowledge of pollution of rivers and seas is developed together with an understanding of the green house effect and the importance of recycling materials.
- 88 Teachers have worked very hard to change pupils perception of science. They have largely succeeded. Most pupils, for most of the time, have positive attitudes to the subject. They enjoy the factual understanding they develop and enjoy "doing real science" as they rightly perceive it. They join in lessons with enthusiasm, unless they are troubled by particular personal problems. Most willingly undertake homework to complete units of work prior to assessments. They concentrate well in lessons and will work in pairs to support each other when asked, although this has to be carefully managed by teachers. On occasions investigations requiring co-operation can be difficult in terms of relationships. Behaviour in lessons is generally good.
- 89 The quality of teaching in science is good. The co-ordinator has good knowledge of the subject and she is well supported by the other teacher. The subject knowledge is considerably enhanced by their detailed knowledge of the pupils. This knowledge is used very effectively when questioning pupils about their understanding of photosynthesis, for example. Expectations are high and pupils are challenged, particularly to use appropriate scientific language. Lesson planning is sound. It clearly identifies what pupils are going to do and how lessons are organised. However, it is not always clear what pupils are specifically expected to learn. This makes it difficult to accurately record progress or plan future targets. Classroom management is a strength. The teachers carefully ensure that pupils work in appropriate grouping or individually to minimise any possible conflicts, for example when exploring ecosystems. Resources are carefully selected and readily available so that pupils can get on quickly with their work.

- 90 An appropriate science curriculum has been planned covering all attainment targets and providing pupils with a broad and balanced but relevant experience. A policy and a scheme of work are in place demonstrating the curriculum to be covered and enabling pupils to build on their previous learning if they attend the school for a significant period of time. Short term planning and units of work enable pupils to build on their knowledge over shorter periods. Assessment of pupils' progress is regular and well recorded and acts as a motivating factor for pupils. Clearer, more specific subject-based learning objectives would enable the school to have a clearer picture of the progress made by pupils.
- 91 The subject makes a good contribution to the social and spiritual development of pupils through the opportunities it provides for co-operable working and through the excitement generated through experimental work when for instance studying the solar system.
- 92 The co-ordinator has developed and managed the subject well. She has ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and, importantly, that science has a high status amongst the pupils and that they have positive attitudes. This has a marked effect on the progress they make. Planning is monitored to ensure that everything is covered but the monitoring of teaching is only just developing. This is currently undertaken by the head and deputy and has not been extended to the co-ordinator. There is no written subject development plan but the co-ordinator is aware of priorities. This is currently adequate since the school can afford to fund all areas but would need to be improved if there were competing priorities.
- 93 The school is fortunate to have a science specialist together with another experienced teacher. A small specialist teaching area has been established which is adequate, but importantly, adds to the status of the subject in the minds of the pupils. Resources for the planned curriculum are good. There was no evidence of homework being used to support learning.

## 98 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

- 94 The quality of artwork is a strength of the school. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge understanding and artistic skills during their time at Oakwood School. This has been maintained since the last inspection A few pupils successfully complete externally validated courses and go on to graphic design and art courses at local further education colleges.
- 95 During their time at Oakwood school pupils make good progress exploring a wide range of media including crayons, fabric, paint, clay, printing materials, and become familiar with batik and dye and tie techniques. They maintain personal folders of their work to demonstrate the progress they make.
- 96 Pupils successfully use their skills to draw from direct observations, create landscapes and seascapes, and make a wide variety of patterns using a range of media. They create patterns using printing techniques and when freely working with paint. They control pencils well producing fine line pencils sketches of geometric shapes and portraits. In developing the pieces of work, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the line shape for and texture. When working on landscapes pupils show a good understanding of the works of Turner and Constable. Their pop artwork reflects the influence of Walhol, and on other occasions, they work successfully in the style of Klee, Munch, Picasso, Gaugin and a range of other recognised artists including various aspects of native art.
- 97 Pupils use their artistic skills well to illustrate work in a range of subjects of the curriculum, they often use their computer skills to stylise and develop their initial drawings. Artwork is linked to drama in the production of masks and in history through the study of totem polls, Egyptian art and aboriginal sand prints and mosaics. Pupils develop their skills and make good progress when working in three-dimensions and particularly in developing their pottery work. Pupils develop their skills in modelling and in basic sculpting when creating pieces of work based on the human form. The good progress they make it is a direct outcome from the well-prepared, good teaching they receive.

- 98 Pupils developed very good attitudes to their art lessons due principally to the very positive learning environments created for them by their teachers. This represents very good progress as many of the pupils enter the school with negative views about their competence in the subject. In lessons, they sustain their concentration well and often complete work over several sessions paying great attention to the detail. Pupils following examination courses develop personal study skills and learn to persist. In art lessons, the pupils behave appropriately, are generally polite and courteous and develop good working relationships with their teachers.
- 99 The quality of teaching in art lessons is consistently good because both the teachers and the classroom support assistants are enthusiastic, have an excellent level of subject knowledge and experience, and together create an environment conducive to positive learning. As a result, staff have a positive impact on the attitudes of many pupils, teaching them to realise the quality of skills that they have whilst also encouraging them to refine and developed these skills further. Expectations are consistently high. Planning is clear and resources are well organised accessible and in good condition. Very good use is made of verbal positive reinforcement to raise standards. The good teamwork and planning ensures that the pace of learning is brisk and methods are varied which ensures that pupils are continually reinforced and motivated. Good use is made of individual folders of work and teachers record the experiences that the pupils have enjoyed. Teachers do not yet all consistently record the range of skills demonstrated by the pupils, although they use these assessments to inform their written planning.
- 100 The art curriculum is appropriate broad and balanced and well supported by a clear policy and scheme of work, which is clearly linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences. Assessment strategies are developing effectively and staff are continuously seeking to find externally assessed modules of work which would be particularly appropriate to the short stay placements of pupils at Oakwood School. The development of such modules of work would more clearly demonstrate the levels of skill acquired by the pupils whilst at Oakwood.
- 101 The art curriculum is very positive in the ways in which it reinforces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils develop an understanding of art from a variety of cultures. For example, enjoying developing designs and patterns, which are based on a range of artefacts representing Indian art. They develop aboriginal sand prints patterns based on Islamic designs and create Chinese dragons using a variety of media including large-scale collage.
- 102 The subject is developing well as a result of the leadership of a well-informed co-ordinator who has developed in conjunction with the staff a sound scheme of work. Good support is provided where necessary to ensure that all staff have the confidence to extend the pupils. There is a commitment to high achievement, supported by a subject development plan with clear developmental priorities and targets. The co-ordinator has already begun to monitor the development of the subject through a programme of in-service development and classroom visits and is well placed to develop this further.
- 103 Levels of staffing are appropriate to ensure the delivery of the planned curriculum and good use is made of in-service training both in-house and locally to ensure continued development. The accommodation in base classrooms is adequate. The pottery facilities in the specialist technology room are a useful asset to the work of the school. Learning resources are appropriate and well matched to the planned curriculum. Very efficient use is made of all staff and learning resources. There is no waste of materials. Very efficient use is made of the finished pieces of work to create attractive displays around the school and thus celebrate the high quality of the pupils' work.

#### **108 Design and technology**

- 104 Pupils of all ages make good progress in design and technology. This has been maintained since the last inspection.
- 105 Pupils work hard on individual projects achieving a great deal of success. They often start from a very low

skill level but quickly develop confidence through access to good teaching, a specialist room and good quality equipment. They design a wide range of objects to make, including clocks and safety boxes. With help, they learn how to use a wide range of machinery to produce high quality finished products of which they are proud. Their skills in using electric machinery, including drills and saws, develop well and they are able to use them with increasing accuracy and reduced levels of support. They develop their skills with hand tools using them particularly well to finish off work to a high standard. Design skills are developed, for example, when making a safety box with a fitted alarm where different designs were tried before settling on the most appropriate. In food technology, pupils develop skills in following recipes. They learn how to use equipment such as balances and they develop their estimating ability, for example, when deciding how much margarine to use in flapjacks. Their ability to follow instructions and to understand hygiene and safety issues in the kitchen develops well.

- 106 Pupils enjoy design and technology. They are keen to learn and pleased with their success. They work well independently on projects but opportunities for co-operative work are restricted. They work well with teachers and support staff and behave well, safely and sensibly.
- 107 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use very effectively to support pupils and to enable them to succeed. Expectations of good quality products in all aspects of design and technology are high and this has a positive effect on the progress made by pupils. Resources are always well-prepared, readily available and of good quality. This again has a positive effect on pupils. Teachers record pupils work but do not have clear learning objectives to clearly indicate the skills pupils have developed or the progress they have made.
- 108 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and contributes significantly to the progress made by pupils. Resources, accommodation and staff expertise are good and the subject is well led by the co-ordinator.

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## Geography/History and Religious

### Education

- 109 Religious Education, history and geography are clustered together under the heading of humanities; they are taught through a modular framework with content which is appropriate to pupils needs. In each subject, the main focus is to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the physical features and human and spiritual factors affecting society both past and present. This mix of subjects provides good opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and reflection through a range of appropriate themes identified in the schemes of work. This is an overall improvement since the last inspection.
- 110 No religious education was observed during the inspection, but scrutiny of teachers records, displays and artefacts indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in understanding the world's major faiths. It was not possible to observe geography during the inspection, but similar scrutiny illustrates that pupils make satisfactory progress. For example, work files show accurate and well presented work on the physical and human features of European countries by naming their capitals, currency and populations.
- 111 Four lessons of history were observed. Pupils made good progress in these lessons. They were able to name factors which contributed to Sheffield becoming a major centre for the manufacture of steel and demonstrated their understanding of the introduction of the crucible in the steel making process by accurately drawing and labelling a diagram. Others are able to think about the facts they have read and rewrite them their own words.
- 112 Pupils response to history is good and they behave well. Most are confident in participating in discussions with the teachers and other pupils. However, the enthusiasm for some is limited by their reluctance to read or write due to difficulties with literacy. With good support from teachers they are equally co-operative and make a genuine effort to complete tasks with care.
- 113 Teaching is good in all lessons. Teachers set their lessons into a realistic context by referring to local places of interest which are well known to the pupils. For example, when learning about crucible steel the pupils were able to recall that they had visited a theatre of the same name. They show a secure knowledge of the subject and provide explanations that are easily understood by the pupils. A range of varied activities is well

used to keep pupils on task and teachers make good use of resources to help pupils learn; they include worksheets, video extracts and computer programmes. Teachers pay good attention to the specific language of history by using such terms as 'remuneration', 'thong' and 'scourged'. However, they miss opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary by ensuring that the meaning of all words is understood. For example, the teacher helped a pupil pronounce the word 'piecer' when teaching about fabric manufacturing, but did not encourage them to think of a similar word and fully explore its meaning or explain the implications of the 'piecers' not doing their job properly.

- 114 The humanities curriculum is enhanced by visits to local places of interest such as steel making museums to reinforce pupils' understanding and make the subject meaningful.

## 119 Information technology

- 115 Pupils of all ages make very good progress in information technology. Since the last inspection, the school has created a well-equipped specialist computer room, in addition to equipment already in each classroom, and the newly appointed deputy head has taken responsibility for teaching information technology to support the co-ordinator. As a result, provision is better and pupils make greater progress.
- 116 The majority of pupils enter the school with poor levels of information technology skills. Good access to the facilities and very good teaching leads to rapid progress across a range of skills for all pupils. Many are now successfully following an externally accredited course.
- 117 All pupils make very good progress in their ability to create new documents or recall existing documents. They become very familiar with the skills necessary and as their confidence increases so does their level of success. They use their skills in creative writing to create poems about colour using their computer skills to put colours into their writing. Pupils use desktop publishing skills with increased confidence to produce the school newsletter or to write illustrated books for small children. They develop their ability to use fonts of different sizes to improve the quality of their presentations. In mathematics, pupils increasingly use their skills to create spreadsheets when handling data concerned with the height, weight and reach of classmates. Many have created posters to illustrate a jumble sale or Christmas and they develop their skills when producing repeat patterns for wrapping paper. Modelling skills are developed when using music compact discs to create music to contrast moods and feelings. Control techniques are developed in design and technology using buggies, for example. The use of probes in science is not yet fully developed, although the equipment to extend this is available in school.
- 118 All pupils have very positive attitudes to information technology. They thrive on the access to resources and the high quality teaching which gives them success.
- 119 The school has a system of work logging and the pupils are always keen to know what the next task or challenge is. They develop well as independent learners, being able to set up equipment and use the room on their own. Many ask to use it during their own time to complete work started in other subjects and they have access to the facilities, which they use, during the evenings for homework.
- 120 The quality of teaching is very good. This has a very positive impact on the progress made by pupils. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and of the needs of the pupils. This knowledge is used very effectively to plan individual tasks to enable all pupils to succeed. Very good classroom management techniques avoid potential difficulties by moving pupils around when necessary. The good range of computers enables this to be done easily. Expectations are very high and the teacher challenges pupils to improve their work, for example, when creating storybooks for young children. Assessment is used effectively to record pupils' work and plan future tasks. Relationships are excellent and the teacher uses this effectively to encourage pupils to produce better work.
- 121 The curriculum is well planned. It is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. Planning enables pupils to build systematically on their previous learning as they improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and the teacher. Assessment is built into the teaching programme and acts as a clear motivating factor in encouraging pupils to progress. The accommodation and level of resourcing, both of which have been improved since the last inspection, are significant factors in the attitudes pupils have to the subject and to the progress they make.

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## Modern Foreign Language

- 122 Modern foreign languages were not being taught at the time of the inspection. However, discussion with staff and examination of records and resources confirm that an appropriate foreign language is offered as a guided option to pupils for whom it is appropriate. In the recent past, pupils have followed general certificate of secondary education courses in French. Currently arrangements are being made to provide German lessons by establishing an Internet link with a local secondary school in order to provide an appropriate curriculum

experience for one pupil. There is also evidence to demonstrate that pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 developed an awareness of French as a result of the work they did in a modular European awareness course quite recently. Pupils enjoyed this experience and were able to use a few French words with confidence. The staff of the school are enthusiastic and appropriately qualified to offer courses in French, where appropriate, and are equipped with an appropriate range of resources for the purpose.

## **Music**

- 123 Insufficient music lessons were seen during the inspection to make a judgement on the quality of teaching, however, discussions with staff, observations of some lessons and discussion with some pupils were adequate to ensure that judgements could be made about the progress the pupils make in relation to the taught curriculum. Music therapy plays a significant part in the overall development of the pupils for whom it is offered.
- 124 Although music is a newly developing subject, there is evidence that the pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in their guitar lessons. Pupils can play simple tunes following a 3/4 rhythm, most pupils can play three chords and pupils can sing in time and some in harmony. A number of pupils can keep time when using percussion instruments. In the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching was excellent.
- 125 Pupils enjoy their music sessions both during lessons and in the extra curricular clubs. They sustain their interest in music and in particular in singing with many becoming members of the school choir and practising for this in their own time. One of the highlights of the calendar for the members of the choir is to perform their not insignificant repertoire of festive songs in public. They enjoy visiting the hospital and singing in the wards, when they do this the higher attaining pupils often accompany the singers using electronic keyboards.
- 126 The curriculum is supported by an adequate scheme of work and a series of activity plans to cover the four week modules of work. There is no formalised assessment procedure but pupils do receive a competence certificate at the end of each module of work, which demonstrates the skills that they have acquired.
- 127 There is a very competent and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has developed the subject effectively and at a pace appropriate to the pupils. Staffing levels are appropriate to deliver the current planned curriculum, accommodation is adequate for the purpose and learning resources and instruments are satisfactory.

## **Physical education**

- 128 Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in physical education. Provision has improved since the last inspection. More time is now devoted to the subject, planning is more effective, a broader range of activities is provided, and as a result, progress is better. Only a limited number of lessons could be observed during the inspection but teachers' records and photographic evidence provided sufficient information on which to base judgements.
- 129 Pupils of all ages make good progress in outdoor activities during guided options lessons. They improve their abilities in a range of activities including canoeing and rock climbing. Their level of skill improves but importantly so does their confidence and social development. Satisfactory progress is made in a range of games including basketball, football and unihock. Pupils of all ages develop their games skills, including their ability to pass, receive and shoot. Progress for some pupils is hampered by inappropriate attitudes to the subject and a reluctance to take part but this is a minority. For some others, progress is good and in some areas, attainment is of a standard appropriate for their age.
- 130 For the majority of pupils, attitudes to physical education are satisfactory and for some, they are very positive. They listen carefully to instructions and follow them. Because of their particular personal problems, some pupils are reluctant to take part in physical activities. They are sensitively handled by staff usually with successful outcomes. In the main, they co-operate well, for example, when working in pairs during circuit training or during unihock matches.

- 131 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher has sound knowledge of the subject which he uses well during question and answer sessions to enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding. For example, when considering the effect of exercise on the pulse rate and exploring the implications of the rate of recovery in relation to levels of fitness. Expectations are appropriate though not always challenging in physical education lessons where there is only a loose insistence on proper clothing and quality performance. Expectations are higher in outdoor pursuits lessons and this results in better progress. Organisation and management of lessons and control of pupils are sound. Because of the potential difficulties, the teacher handles the situation carefully by encouraging pupils to be involved. As a result, there is not always a clear start to lessons where all pupils are ready to begin. This can cause difficulties and affects the progress pupils make. Resources are always readily available and well prepared. Records of pupils' performance are kept but there is no systematic use of assessment to enable pupils to build on previous learning. There are good opportunities for pupils self-assessment.
- 132 The curriculum for physical education has developed since the last inspection. A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is now provided which includes strong elements of outdoor pursuits. As a result of these developments, pupils now make better progress. Assessment and recording has improved since the last inspection. Resources and accommodation are adequate for the curriculum and good use is made of external resources for outdoor pursuits and fitness training. Staffing expertise is sound and the co-ordinator is well supported by other teachers. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject within the curriculum.

137 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

137 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 133 The school was inspected by a team of four inspectors for a total of 14 inspection days over a four-day period.
- 134 Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met with the staff and chairman of governors and held a parents' meeting attended by four parents. The inspection team analysed school documentation including whole school policies, teachers' planning, the school development plan and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- 135 During the inspection, a total of 36 lessons or parts of lessons was observed covering all areas of the curriculum and including pupils of all ages. In addition, the registered inspector attended the daily agenda meeting the community meetings, and a staff meeting. Inspectors held discussion with pupils during lessons, around school during breaktimes and had lunch with them. Samples of pupils' work representing all subjects, ages and levels of attainment were scrutinised. Discussions were held with all teaching and non-teaching staff and the registered inspector met daily with the head teacher. The head teacher was interviewed by all members of the inspection team. The school secretary was interviewed. Interviews were held with three governors, including the consultant psychiatrist responsible for admissions to the unit and therefore the school. Pupils from all year groups were heard to read.
- 136 Additional documentation including reports to parents, and special education needs data was scrutinised during the inspection.

142 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

142 **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
Y7 – Y12	28	3	28	2

142 **Teachers and classes**

142 **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y12)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	6.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	4.1

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**Education support staff (Y7 – Y12)**

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	47

142 **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/1999
	£
Total Income	314,704
Total Expenditure	311,760
Expenditure per pupil	11,134
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,516
Balance carried forward to next year	12,460

Number of questionnaires sent out:	28
Number of questionnaires returned:	7

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	29	57	14	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	43	57	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	29	14	57	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	14	43	14	29	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29	43	14	14	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	0	33	33	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	57	14	14	14	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	14	14	14	57	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	43	0	43	14	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	14	14	29	43	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	43	0	43	14	0

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#### 142 Summary of responses

There were only seven returns to the questionnaire. Because of the type of special school and the relative responsibilities of the school and the overall unit provision some parents found it difficult to comment specifically on school provision.

One parent unaware of homework; thought pupils should be taught to GCSE standards where appropriate.

One parent strongly agreed with all statements.

One parent gave lengthy comment expressing gratitude for the very strong commitment of the Headteacher and staff to all pupils and stated this school has been a positive experience for her child.

All find school approachable although there was some dissatisfaction with work pupils are expected to do at home.

Some doubted whether school achieved high standards of good behaviour.