

ERRATUM

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In the first paragraph under the **TEACHING AND LEARNING** heading, the fifth sentence should read:

“There is some uncertainty in the teaching of French at Key Stage 4 and on one occasion a lesson was unsatisfactory.”

INSPECTION REPORT

THE RAEBURN SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122 162

Headteacher: David Lloyd

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 December 2000

Inspection number: 193548

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Raeburn Road Kingsley Northampton Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN2 7EU
Telephone number:	01604 460017
Fax number:	01604 460024
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	David Williams
Date of previous inspection:	14 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael McDowell (OFSTED No: 1504)	Registered inspector	English Physical education	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Gordon Stockley (OFSTED No: 19365)	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Geoffrey Binks (OFSTED No: 8216)	Team inspector	Geography History	How high are standards? b) pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
Kathleen Cannon (OFSTED No: 27058)	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Modern foreign language Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Robert Franks (OFSTED No: 25340)	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology	How high are standards? b) the school's results and achievements.
Gillian Lawson (OFSTED No: 21899)	Team inspector	Art Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Raeburn is a small secondary special school for boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are fifty places and currently there are forty-six pupils on roll, forty-four boys and two girls. The school draws its pupils from Northampton and the south and west of the county with a small proportion of pupils coming from outside this area. Almost all pupils come from the majority white community and all have statements of special educational need because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. About half have additional barriers to learning, including moderate learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is, in most cases, well below age related expectations.

A high proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals, almost 50%, and overall the population is drawn from families which are economically and socially disadvantaged.

The school aims to enable pupils to stabilise their behaviour and integrate successfully with others of the same age. It works to prepare them to successfully transfer to further education or employment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

For most of its pupils the school is effective in providing appropriate educational opportunities and a milieu in which they can succeed in stabilising their behaviour. Those who attend regularly achieve the personal targets that are set for them. Pupils achieve well in English and science by age 16 and their achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a high proportion, just under half, that is good or better. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching. The school is well led by the headteacher and his senior staff and it is given strong support by its governors. Its overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Teachers' positive expectations, good knowledge of their pupils' learning needs and the subjects they teach and full use of time ensure that, in the great majority of lessons, pupils make good efforts to broaden what they know and improve what they can do.
- Basic skills are taught well so that all pupils make good progress in acquiring and extending skills in reading, spelling and writing and a number make good progress in mathematics.
- By age 16 pupils have made good progress in science and also in music, art and personal social and health education.
- The quality of the relationships that the staff maintain with their pupils is high enabling most of those who regularly attend to gain insights into their own behaviour and to develop their self-control.
- Good leadership by the headteacher has enabled the staff to gain greater understanding of the pupils' special educational needs and of methods by which these can best be managed.

What could be improved

- **The curriculum:** Taught time is too short. Schemes of work, for example in information and communication technology, are not yet fully implemented; the approach to accreditation at age 16 is unambitious and there is too little choice for pupils in their final two years.
- **Accommodation:** This is unsatisfactory and adversely affects learning.
- **Attendance:** Unauthorised absence is too high and a significant proportion of pupils on roll never or very rarely attends.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. It has made satisfactory improvement and has fully addressed five of the seven substantive issues that were identified. Some progress has been made in the other two areas but more remains to be done. Standards and teaching in both literacy and numeracy have improved.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening			B		
reading			B		
writing			C		
mathematics			C		
personal, social and health education			B		
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*			B		

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

The school has too few pupils in the key age groups to make the reporting of success in attaining the targets set at age 16 obligatory. However targets were set in 1999 in relation to achievement of GCSE grades in July 2000. In setting its targets for 2000 the school acknowledges that no GCSE grades are anticipated in the July 2001 examinations. By ages 14 and 16, pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their own previous standards. In English, particularly in their acquisition of literacy skills, pupils make good progress. Progress is also good by age 16 in science. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory across the age range. Pupils make good progress in both art and design, and music. In their lessons in personal, social and health education pupils' progress is good and they achieve well to reach the targets set for them at annual reviews and in individual plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory; those pupils who have good attendance appreciate the efforts made by the school and the staff on their behalf. The majority do their required tasks and do not interfere with others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; in lessons pupils generally behave appropriately and in a high proportion of lessons their behaviour is good. A small minority of pupils challenge the boundaries set by the adults and are unwilling to accept the routine of the classroom. These pupils sometimes leave their lessons without permission and, on occasions, abscond.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships between pupils and the adults who teach and support them are positive and are helpful in supporting learning. Pupils' relationships with each other are satisfactory. Those pupils who attend regularly achieve, over time, the personal targets set for them. They improve their attitudes to work and come to a more informed knowledge of their own negative impulses and how they might control these.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; a significant minority of pupils do not attend and their commitment to their own progress and the school is weak. The rate of exclusions, while justified, is high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall			Satisfactory	

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

Teaching is satisfactory; of lessons observed 14% were very good, 30% were good, 51% were satisfactory and 5% were less than satisfactory. Teaching is predominantly good in English, and at least satisfactory and sometimes good in mathematics and science. Teaching in personal social and health education is very good. Teaching is consistently good in art and design, and in music. There is some uncertainty in the teaching of French at Key Stage 4 and on occasion lessons are unsatisfactory. A good contribution to teaching is made by the learning support assistants who work assiduously to help pupils stay on task. The needs of pupils with particular special needs such as literacy difficulties are met well and the school meets the learning needs of all its pupils. Teachers are fair and consistent in managing behaviour and this promotes good relationships which, in turn, increase pupils' confidence in themselves as successful learners. Good subject knowledge and great understanding of pupils' learning needs are evident in most teaching and in particular in the lessons that are good or very good. Teachers prepare their lessons well; where preparation is less thorough and the activities planned are mundane, or extended for too long a period, pupils switch off or fail to engage with the lesson. The balance of individual and whole class activities is out of adjustment in some instances and this tends, over time, to have a negative impact on what is retained. In a school where some pupils' control of their impulses can be weak, teaching that does not capture their interest and sustain their attention contributes to problem behaviour. In the very small percentage of lessons that was less than satisfactory this was a key factor in the judgement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the school offers a range of learning opportunities which are relevant to the needs of the pupils. In ICT plans are at an early stage of implementation and not yet complete. It is a weakness that there is insufficient taught time and the length of the school day is too short. Pupils aged 14 to 16 have too few opportunities for work related and independent learning and little choice in what they do. Good provision is, however, made for extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; moral and social development is promoted well. The school's strategy for behaviour management is well established and places upon each pupil the onus of making the right decision when behaviour is in question. Teachers and all staff model in their own conduct and in their interactions with pupils very good moral and social behaviour. There are however limited opportunities for pupils to become familiar with cultures other than their own. Acts of worship or periods for reflection during the school assemblies and aspects of the curriculum in music, art and literature make some contribution to spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; there are effective procedures for child protection and these are well known to all staff. The school takes good steps to ensure that pupils attend though these are not blessed with much success. An effective check is kept on pupils' behaviour and progress and records are made. The information gained from assessment in subjects is not, however, always used in curriculum planning. Pupils are given good educational support and guidance. The school works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher provides good leadership and has enabled the staff to develop a more secure understanding of effective methods of managing behaviour. He has set the educational direction emphasising the need to develop a curriculum that best meets the needs of pupils with extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties. He is well supported by his senior managers and, in most cases, by those who take responsibility for subjects of the curriculum. There are, however, weaknesses in some aspects of curriculum management.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory; the governors are supportive and the chairman is very much involved in promoting the interests of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; a policy for performance management has been put in place which will develop existing satisfactory means of overseeing the school's progress and development.
The strategic use of resources	Good; financial administration and routines are good and the principles of best value are known and inform decisions about spending. Strategic use of resources is effective and helps to promote learning.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff and resources are satisfactory and well used. Accommodation is inadequate for the purposes of the school and has a negative impact on curriculum and standards. Classrooms are too small to accommodate full class groups. Accommodation for PE is unsatisfactory, as are library facilities. Access to computers is limited by where they are placed and there are limited facilities for individual or withdrawal work. This was raised in the previous report and no changes have been made.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They view the school as helping their children. • They believe that it is well run and that it provides a suitable education with realistic expectations of what can be achieved. • They believe that teaching is good that they are kept informed about their children. • They feel they can approach the school with any problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most would like homework to be offered more regularly. • Many are generally unimpressed by the behaviour in the school. • Some are not convinced that their children are making sufficient progress.

The inspectors' findings confirm that pupils are given generally suitable learning opportunities that help them to develop control of their impulses and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The school provides clear reports and works closely with parents in the interests of their children. Behaviour in the classrooms is satisfactory and sometimes good; some pupils do however offer challenging behaviour that the school struggles, generally successfully, to manage. The role played by independent learning, including homework, in enabling pupils to develop as learners is presently under-valued and could usefully be increased.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Achievement is at least satisfactory and sometimes good especially for the pupils who have good attendance. By the age of sixteen the majority of pupils have made sound progress and made up much ground previously lost because of their adjustment difficulties and their inability to thrive in mainstream schools. The school has previously set overall performance targets for the end of Key Stage 4. In 2000 these were in relation to expected achievement of GCSE grades. It does not anticipate that pupils who will leave school in 2001 will achieve this standard and has not set such targets for this group. The use of identified performance targets to improve group achievements, particularly in mathematics, English, science and information and communication technology gives the school a useful mechanism for both promoting achievement and measuring school improvement.
2. Achievement in English is good particularly in the acquisition of literacy skills. This is due to good teaching and good support for learning. Pupils show growing confidence with their independent reading skills and are able to understand a variety of written material including newspaper articles, autobiographies and traditional stories like the work of Charles Dickens. They are aware of the layout of a newspaper and the purpose of headlines in signifying briefly the context of stories. They develop a good understanding of stories and characters and know that authors use punctuation marks to convey emphasis. The large majority of pupils make good progress in reading, which in many cases was very weak when they first came to the school. Pupils at all levels of attainment use the cues provided by the text. Higher attainers read with fluency and expression. They make good use of phonics to read unfamiliar words. Lower attainers rely more often on verbal prompts from the teacher and any pictorial cues provided in the book. Pupils whose progress in reading is seen as very poor are withdrawn from class and follow an appropriate approach to accelerate their learning.
3. Pupils listen with sustained concentration to stories, videos and explanations when presented in a lively and interesting manner. They speak clearly about their work and answer questions sensibly in class discussions. Pupils present reasoned arguments linked to stories they listen to. For example Year 10 pupils can say why a character is unfairly treated when discussing the classic novel "Of Mice and Men". Pupils talk to unfamiliar adults with confidence and are polite. With few exceptions, pupils' progress in speaking and listening is good.
4. Pupils develop their spelling skills by using dictionaries to support their writing activities. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. There are a range of opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and for different audiences. For example in Year 11, older pupils are exposed to different writing styles like modern "Junk Text." They write sensible directions and are aware that writing can be used to argue a case and persuade people from one point of view to another. Pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly when writing sentences.
5. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and sometimes good and pupils respond to the well-planned and sometimes challenging aspects of the teaching. Younger pupils enjoy the challenge of mental mathematics and respond quickly and accurately to teacher's questioning when recalling multiplication facts. They know subject language such as "inverse operation" and use addition and subtraction methods when sequencing numbers. Pupils use centimetre squares to calculate the area of rectangles and triangles and learn about the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They record the results of simple investigations involving the answers to questions in a block graph. Older pupils by the age of 16 apply their numbers skills to investigations that have real life implications. For example they use their division skills to find out an individual's body weight. More able pupils develop their knowledge and skills in using simple and complex formula to work out projected costs and savings on utility bills like gas. Pupils extend their knowledge of the properties of three-dimensional shapes. For instance they know that a cuboid has six faces each of which is a

rectangle. Pupils record their results of practical investigations appropriately using line and block graphs as well as tally charts.

6. Pupils achieve well in science by the time they are 16. Younger pupils develop their knowledge of plants and animals. For example, They know that fish and reptiles are types of mammal and that animals with a backbone are called vertebrates. They discuss how the spinal system is used to send messages to the brain. Pupils investigate properties of sound by participating in simple experiments that involve vibration. They draw simple conclusions that sound travels in straight lines and know that in large rooms it can bounce off ceilings and walls. Older pupils learn more about how health and safety and discuss their immune system and how diseases spread. They identify symptoms and common prevention methods for common diseases like Polio and Meningitis. Pupils gain skills in reading and interpreting thermometer readings. They work in pairs to test out what are hot, cold and normal temperatures. They relate their knowledge to real life situations such as being ill and compare human temperatures with those of cold and warm-blooded animals. Well-planned teaching makes effective use of strategies that enable pupils to learn well together.
7. Progress for all pupils in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory overall. The lack of structured schemes of work limits individual and group progress across both key stages. However, aspects of the subject are being taught. In some lessons such as English pupils develop basic word processing skills to draft and present their writing. In other curriculum areas, for example music, pupils make progress using the Internet as a research tool. There are good strategic plans to develop teaching and resources by the end of 2001
8. There is good progress in art and design and music. In personal, social and health education pupils' progress is very good and they achieve well to reach the targets set for them at annual review and in individual plans. In history, geography, physical education, religious education and modern foreign languages progress is at least satisfactory. The progress of pupils in design and technology was judged as satisfactory during the inspection. However the lack of a comprehensive planned scheme of work that covers all aspects of the subject is restricting pupils' achievements in some areas of the subject such as food and control technology.
9. Progress overall is good for both higher and lower attaining pupils in the development of their personal and social skills. Team teaching arrangements have been made to meet the needs of pupils who were making unsatisfactory progress in mathematics and these have been effective in raising group achievements because it enables good quality support to be provided to individual pupils and small groups. There are a very small number of pupils whose difficulties are so profound that their progress is uneven and their behaviours disrupt the learning of other pupils. There has been, especially in English, music, art and design, and science, satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. These include the pupils who have been attending a similar type of primary school prior to secondary transfer. A significant minority, over one in ten, does not settle well. This group includes pupils who transfer late in their school life after numerous school exclusions elsewhere and one female pupil who is not comfortable in the almost exclusively male school population.
11. Pupils are friendly and in most cases are happy to discuss their work with visitors. Three Year 11 pupils were anxious to apologise to an inspector for the disruptive behaviour of one of their classmates, which the inspector had witnessed. They did not want a visitor to feel that what had been witnessed reflected all pupils' attitudes towards school. A few pupils, however, do not display positive feelings towards the school. On occasions a small number of boys refuse to go to lessons. They sometimes attempt to disrupt lessons from outside the building and make disaffected gestures such as throwing mud at the building.

12. Pupils are most enthusiastic about schoolwork where lessons are interesting and challenging. Art lessons produce positive attitudes from pupils of all ages. Well organised teaching of the novel, "Of Mice and Men" in English literature to Year 10, and a very successful PSE lesson on 'name calling' taught to Year 7 also produced very good response from the pupils. In these lessons pupils keep their minds on their work and try hard to do it.
13. Behaviour overall is satisfactory in relation to the particular needs of the pupils. It is helped by the good relationships that exist between pupils and adults in the school. In addition most pupils try hard to work in appropriate ways to accumulate points which lead to tangible rewards within the school rewards system. All pupils understand that appropriate behaviour in and around the school, particularly in relation to their own individual targets, is rewarded and most are very keen to take advantage of this. Some are keen to win a 'brilliant behaviour' certificate, which they can achieve for a full day of exemplary conduct in lessons. A few pupils say that they are also rewarded at home for an achievement such as this.
14. Pupils show growing security in their learning abilities in the efforts that they make. Some, for example, are confident enough to play carols on keyboards for the whole school and visitors at the Christmas Dinner. Pupils watching this performance applauded and showed pride in their friends' achievements and demonstrating respect for others. Pupils achieve the personal targets set for them. This is greatly helped by the clear framework provided by the school's systems for promoting good behaviour and by the positive relationships pupils have with their teachers.
15. It is rare for pupils to show much personal initiative in respect of their own learning. The unsatisfactory accommodation, in particular the lack of library and private study facilities, is significant in this.
16. The school is fully aware that instances of bullying occur from time to time but no pupils spoken to felt that they were regularly intimidated although the school staff are aware that some pupils do feel threatened on occasions by the behaviour of others. Pupils are aware of the negative effects of racist language. They share their thoughts on this during assemblies and show that they know that their own behaviour can sometimes intimidate or hurt others. When pupils are unable to control their behaviour despite the support they are given, they are excluded. The number of permanent exclusions is little changed since the previous inspection but there has been a substantial increase in the number of temporary exclusions.

Attendance

17. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall, and the attendance of a minority of pupils is very poor. Many pupils admitted to the school have a history of non-attendance and they are allowed to attend part-time initially to ease them gradually into school routines. Exclusions account for a significant number of absences. A number of pupils simply refuse to attend and these are followed up in consultation with the education welfare officer. In some cases this results in a court appearance for the parent or carer, together with a fine. All these factors combine to make attendance unsatisfactory. There has been no improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved; there is now a greater proportion of teaching that is good or better and only in two lessons was the standard below that which is required. Overall the quality is satisfactory with nearly half of lessons being good or very good and, as a result, pupils make sound progress in extending their knowledge, skills and understanding.
19. The major challenge that teachers must face is to manage behaviour and stimulate interest in learning for pupils who have, in many cases, opted out of education and denied their teachers the right to control and instruct them. Few pupils entering the school have good habits of learning. Among younger pupils there are some for whom sitting at a desk and engaging in a lesson are in

themselves novel requirements. In this context the teachers are fair and consistent, maintain their composure, work hard to establish positive relationships with their pupils and, in most, cases succeed in moving them forward so that they make progress.

20. Teaching in English is good across the age range; the teaching of the literacy skills, reading, spelling and writing, is at the centre of the work provided in English. This is appropriate because most pupils have much ground to make up in these areas. Individual and small group sessions based on the sounding out of letters are provided for those pupils with the greatest need. In these sessions, the programmes are delivered by special support assistants, under the direction of the co-ordinator for English, and they are effective in increasing the confidence of pupils and they enable them to improve their reading and spelling. As their competence as learners increases pupils begin to enjoy literature. They readily take part in discussions prompted by the texts that they study. Such positive outcomes, achieved by sensitive, well informed teaching were clearly illustrated in a lesson that introduced a class of 13 year olds to the contemporary novel, "Buddy". The teacher's careful preparation, confident manner and very good sense of timing prompted the pupils to become fully involved. Their level of attention was very high as they explored, through the story, events and issues that reflected similar happenings in their own lives.
21. In mathematics teaching and learning are satisfactory across the age range with some good features. In the most effective teaching, good planning enables the pupils to pursue, successfully, both precise and broad objectives. It is a positive feature of lessons in mathematics that the teacher pays close attention to the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy and that resources, including information technology, are well used. For the more able pupils, work is challenging. However, while all lessons in mathematics were of a satisfactory standard, there were some in which the balance of individual and whole class teaching was awry. In these cases work was, almost entirely, focused on the individual, who may be given a great deal of support to complete the set task. Although this helps pupils to taste success, it also has the unfortunate side effect of encouraging them to be dependent learners. Thus, when they are required to fend for themselves, as in examinations, they are not always able to cope.
22. Teaching in science is always at least satisfactory and is good in about a third of lessons. Pupils are managed well in science lessons and they respond with curiosity and enthusiasm. A particularly good feature that was noted was the productive use of questioning to summarise and evaluate learning in each lesson and the promotion of social development that was brought about by an emphasis on pupils working together in pairs. Science teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and a strong emphasis on the use of an appropriate subject vocabulary. The practice of encouraging pupils to read aloud from texts and worksheets during science lessons, contributes well to the pupils' literacy development.
23. Teaching is consistently good and is frequently very good in art and design, and music. This is strongly related to two factors; the subject competence of the teachers and their ability to manage the pupils' behaviour. Their particular success in engaging pupils in lessons arises both from the stimulating climate for learning they generate in their classrooms and their own ability to relate positively to the pupils within the context of the school's policy for promoting good behaviour. There is also very good teaching in personal social and health education. Teaching is satisfactory in history, geography and religious education (RE). In physical education (PE) it is chiefly satisfactory with some very good teaching of gymnastics for pupils in Year 7. There are, however, some unsatisfactory aspects in the teaching of PE. These are chiefly to do with the ineffectiveness of the teacher's control of the class in activities that carry a degree of risk in gymnastics sessions. In the teaching of French, which is mostly satisfactory, planning and preparation are at times insufficiently thorough to ensure that the lesson runs smoothly and that pupils who are prepared to learn have a proper opportunity to do so.
24. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught through other subjects. The plans for this subject are in place and teachers have received training, but, as yet, teaching is not fully guided by relevant schemes of work. The school has succeeded in fostering the pupils' interest but not, as yet, in enabling them to achieve consistently and to progress appropriately. Teaching in the aspects of design and technology that the school can offer, in the light of the long-term absence of

its specialist teacher and subject co-ordinator, was observed only in Key Stage 3. It is satisfactory.

25. To a satisfactory extent, through its teaching, the school meets the needs of all its pupils. For the majority, lessons are productive and enjoyable and lead to a sense of accomplishment. This is only achieved, however, through rigorous preparation so that lessons go smoothly; many pupils cannot, because of their fragile grip on their own control, sustain delay disappointment or frustration. There are also those for whom the process of accommodating to the demands of the classroom is taking a lengthy time. In these cases teachers are not always able to gain their co-operation and a few pupils still absent themselves from lessons. Nevertheless teachers continue to show patience and strong commitment to the system they have evolved for managing behaviour, which they believe, with good evidence from past experience, will be successful, eventually, in drawing even the most reluctant into learning. Teachers, with very few exceptions, prepare their lessons well taking account of the requirements of their subjects and making use of their broad and extensive knowledge of the special educational needs of individual pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

26. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Its breadth and balance, which were unsatisfactory in the previous inspection, have improved, and it offers a full range of learning opportunities in line with the National Curriculum and relevant to the needs of the pupils. However, the length of the school day is still too short, with the taught time adversely affected by the pupils travelling time to and from the school. Too little time is therefore available for teaching and especially to support accredited work in Years 10 and 11. The accommodation for science, physical education, information and communications technology, food technology and music severely restricts and impedes teaching and learning and presents safety hazards in both subjects.
27. In addition to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the school's provision includes personal and social education. However, there are no discrete lessons of information and communication technology. There is evidence in the pupils' work in other subject areas that modern technology is used to support learning and independent research, and planning indicates that this is being further developed. French and humanities are taught at both key stages and with the introduction of music since the previous inspection, the curriculum now fully meets statutory requirements, except in information and communication technology. At Key Stage 4, in addition to following examination courses, the pupils pursue a Nationally Accredited Youth Award Scheme, working towards bronze and silver certificates.
28. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Cultural awareness is encouraged through music, literature and art and is satisfactory and opportunities for cultural and spiritual development are provided in geography and religious education. However, there is too little emphasis in other subjects on pupils' cultural development, especially their awareness of the ideas and products of cultures other than their own. The pupils have a clear understanding of the social and moral expectations of the school. They know right from wrong and are encouraged at all times to show consideration and tolerance for the views and feelings of others, and there is no evidence of oppressive bullying or racial disharmony. Staff present very good role models and set high standards for good behaviour. During the inspection, the school's assembly and Christmas Dinner provided a very good example of staff, governors, parents and pupil relationships and their social interaction. There has been some improvement in this area of the school's provision since the last inspection.
29. Sex education and drugs awareness programmes are linked to science and health education, and visiting experts such as the Police or health advisers occasionally enhance these aspects of the curriculum.

30. Work related education is provided for pupils from Year 9 onwards, and opportunities for work experience are good in year 11. A number of pupils secure part-time and sometimes post-school full-time employment at their work experience placement. All the older pupils receive careers interviews and, during the inspection, they attended a local career's conference.
31. Curriculum plans which lay out clearly what is to be learned are underdeveloped in some subject areas, such as information and communication technology and French, but the overall development of Curriculum 2000 and subject planning is satisfactory. In the majority of subject areas, policy documentation incorporates the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills and includes provision for the use of modern technology to support learning. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is largely directed by examination syllabuses, and all pupils work towards Certificate of Achievement or other examinations in a range of subjects. There is, however, no choice given to pupils about what they should study in their last two years in school. Opportunities to pursue vocational courses are insufficiently developed. Pupils also have limited opportunity to develop independent learning skills as there is no facility in the school for personal research or study and too little expectation that pupils will pursue their own learning in this way. Opportunities for social and recreational interaction are provided through lunchtime clubs and off-site day or residential visits.
32. Equality of access to the curriculum is good. For the pupils with English as a second language, good links with a local college enable them to study and gain accreditation in their native language. There is a good gender balance among staff, however, there is some concern over the imbalance in numbers between boys and girls. Currently only 3% of the school roll are girls, and with persistent non-attendance, this is further reduced to 1.5%. However, girls enjoy equality of access to the curriculum and a member of staff is designated to deal with girls' concerns. All pupils have equal access to extra curricular activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school has sound procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. There has been improvement in specific areas, for example the recording of incidents and risk assessments to health and safety. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum includes guidance on food preparation and healthy eating. Staff are well informed about pupils' individual medical needs and administer prescribed medication where this is required. There are appropriate arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety in the design and technology room where power saws and other electrical equipment are controlled by keys and pupils work under the close supervision of an adult. The school has an appropriate policy on restraint. There is guidance for staff in the staff handbook and a copy is included in the school brochure so that parents and carers are clear about the circumstances in which physical restraint is used. Detailed records are kept about each incident.
34. No serious health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection, but there was some potential danger arising from a number of trailing wires across the floor during music lessons when pupils were using electronic keyboards and in the use of the hall for physical education. The health and safety policy provides for a regular inspection of the premises and the investigation of potential hazards by the governors. The governor who took a leading role in this process has now left the governing body and there is a need to ensure that the system of regular inspections is re-activated as soon as possible. The school has appropriate and effective child protection arrangements that follow local authority guidance and policy. The designated person is known by all staff and he undertakes regular training. All staff, including support staff, are briefed about the possible signs of child abuse and areas of concern are discussed regularly at staff meetings.
35. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance although these are not blessed with much success. Pupils' attendance is monitored daily and parents are contacted by telephone where pupils are absent without explanation. The school goes to great lengths to work closely with parents and carers, even to the extent of providing pagers for those who do not have a home telephone. On occasions, the headteacher has collected pupils personally and brought them into school. Absence is a particular problem in Year 11; even court action has failed materially to

improve the position. In some cases, pupils' reluctance to attend school is supported by medical professionals involved. Attendance targets are set for pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory and bronze, silver and gold awards are given for improved levels of attendance. The school receives good support from the education welfare officer.

36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Behaviour management is based on "Assertive Discipline" principles, which aim to provide pupils with the opportunity to make a choice about how they behave. The rules and consequences are displayed clearly around the school so that pupils and staff are well aware of them. At the start of each day every pupil is given a document detailing his or her short-term objectives. Pupils can earn certificates by achieving their target in each lesson, and further rewards are given if they are properly equipped for the lesson, complete set tasks, do not break any rules, and arrive on time. Certificates can be "cashed in" for various rewards, such as caps, tee shirts, cameras, etc. Other rewards can be achieved by not breaking rules for a specified period, and whole class rewards are given for remaining on task. The school's anti-bullying policy, written by pupils as well as staff, makes clear that bullying and racist behaviour will not be tolerated. The procedures are clearly having a positive effect on behaviour generally, and no incidents of racist behaviour were noted during the inspection. Pupils are given good educational support and guidance.
37. Although the school's procedures for monitoring and assessing the pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, their use is underdeveloped. At the time of the previous inspection, assessment procedures were informal and inconsistently applied across the whole school, and assessment was not used to guide subject planning. Although there are now formal procedures for monitoring the pupils' progress in all subject areas, the use of assessment to guide subject planning is less well developed. It is good in mathematics, English, science, art and music where progress and academic targets are matched to National Curriculum attainment levels but it is underdeveloped in other subjects.
38. In the core subjects of English and mathematics the pupils' progress is tracked from initial assessment on admission and monitored as they move through the school. However, current baseline testing is set at a low age range to determine whether a pupil has functional literacy and numeracy skills. Some pupils with a reading age above 12 years do not always have literacy and numeracy targets, which prevents the accurate measurement of their progress over time. .
39. Although all the pupils have individual education plans, in many cases their targets are behavioural rather than academic. The recommendations from the pupils' Annual Reviews are reduced to smaller stages and these mini-plans are used to inform lesson planning and pupil management. They are monitored daily by all teachers, with half-termly evaluations by form tutors and the pupils concerned to measure success and add new targets appropriately. Additionally, the teachers' good knowledge of the pupils ensures that academic and personal needs are met during most lessons. Individual teachers evaluate the pupils' subject achievements to inform Annual Reviews and reports to parents. In some subject areas the information also informs curriculum development and lesson planning but this is inconsistent. Currently the school does not collate information about individual pupils' achievements to provide data on the basis of which targets for groups of pupils can be set.
40. Annual Review and Transition Plan procedures are well organised, and form the basis of the school's annual progress reports to parents. The quality of these is good.
41. The expectation that the pupils' will develop an awareness of their own learning and behaviour is encouraged by their involvement with their Annual Review and the target setting process, which strongly supports the pupils' personal development and improves their self-esteem and confidence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Whilst parents and carers are generally satisfied with the school and what it provides for their children, a significant minority have concerns about various aspects of provision. They believe that the school is well run and that it provides a suitable education with realistic expectations of what can be achieved, but most would like homework to be offered more regularly. They believe that teaching is good, that they are kept informed about their children and that they can approach the school with any problems. However, they are not convinced that their children are making sufficient progress and are generally unimpressed by the behaviour in the school.
43. The school keeps in touch with parents, mainly by telephone, on a regular basis. Parents are informed when there have been problems at school that have resulted in pupils reaching level four of the five level scale for misbehaviour. Equally, parents are informed when a pupil has done something particularly commendable. Letters are sent to parents about particular events that affect their children, such as a school trip, but the school does not issue regular informative newsletters about general matters that are happening in school. Parents are not given advance information about the type of work that is to be covered in the forthcoming term or half term, although pupils' annual reports contain brief information about the work covered in some curriculum areas. Many parents do not live close to the school and this limits the opportunities for parents to become involved in its daily life. Some parents do help out, however, on an occasional basis. There is no parents' association and, as the school does not perceive there to be a demand, no curriculum events are arranged to inform parents about what the school provides. Parents are given a copy of the home-school agreement when they attend the pre-admission meeting and are asked to sign it at that meeting. This ensures that they are aware of the school's commitment to their child and what is expected from them and their child in return.
44. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report are clearly presented and meet statutory requirements. Parents receive an annual written report on their child's progress and these are of good quality. They contain statements about pupils' attitudes and performance in each subject, together with the national curriculum levels achieved in English, mathematics and science. In some subjects there are targets specified for pupils to aim for. Pupils themselves have an opportunity to make written comments about their report, but not all pupils choose to do so. There is an open evening annually at which parents are able to discuss their child's work with the appropriate teachers. Normally less than a quarter of parents attend the open evening. Parents are invited to the formal reviews of their child's statement of special educational need, but not all attend. Overall the school has satisfactory links with parents, but the contribution of parents' involvement with the school and with their children's learning has only a modest impact on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher provides good leadership and has enabled the staff to develop a more secure understanding of effective methods of managing behaviour. He has set the educational direction that the school must travel emphasising the need to develop a curriculum that best meets the needs of pupils with extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties. He is well supported by his senior managers and, in most cases, by those who take responsibility for subjects of the curriculum.
46. There are, however, weaknesses in some aspects of curriculum management. While in most subjects there are schemes of work that are useful for guiding teaching and learning, in physical education and in French there remains much work to do. There are plans for introducing information and communication technology, (ICT), and these involve subjects across the curriculum. They are at an early stage of realisation. To some extent the delay in equipping the school with sufficient hardware to teach ICT effectively is a consequence of the uncertainty surrounding local education authority plans to improve or replace the school's accommodation; nevertheless the introduction of a good programme for teaching ICT has been tardy.
47. There are existing policies for ensuring that teaching is effective and that learning takes place.

These include provision for lesson observation by senior staff and by the local authority inspector linked to the school. The outcomes of these observations are reported to the governors. A policy for performance management has been put in place that develops these existing satisfactory strategies.

48. The governors carry out their statutory duties. There is an appropriate committee structure. In order to help the school to improve more regular attendance will be necessary. In addition the mechanism by which governors approve draft policies should be addressed to give this vital function additional rigour. Nevertheless, the governors are supportive and the chairman is very much involved in promoting the interests of the school. The governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are involved in planning the way forward. The school set targets for pupil performance as required in 1999, but for the year 2000, has not done so, believing the achievement of GCSE grades to be beyond the capacity of pupils currently in Year 11. In these circumstances the good practice of setting additional, non-statutory targets is followed and this should be further developed in order to promote higher achievement. The governors make sure that the school budget is set with educational priorities in mind. They oversee spending so that they can be sure that the best value for money is obtained. A considerable surplus of funds has been accumulated over time to help in improving accommodation, particularly to address the criticisms in the previous report. However, on the instruction of the local authority this has not been spent for its original purpose since the school may soon be moved to another site. Financial administration and routines are good.
49. There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff and resources are satisfactory and well used. Accommodation is inadequate for the purposes of the school and has a negative impact on curriculum and standards. Classrooms are too small to accommodate full class groups and their size limits the options open to the teacher; this has great significance because of the particular special educational needs of these pupils. Accommodation for PE is unsatisfactory and unsafe and there is no library or base in which independent study might be pursued. Access to the computers is limited since they are located in the mathematics room. There are very limited facilities for individual or withdrawal work. This issue was raised at the previous inspection and some improvements have been made but plans to make a significant difference have been shelved on the advice of the LEA.
50. Since it was last inspected the school has made satisfactory improvement and has fully addressed five of the seven substantive issues that were identified. Some progress has been made in the other two areas but more remains to be done. Subjects missing from the curriculum have been introduced, though more remains to be done in relation to ICT, and there are better procedures for monitoring and assessing progress including individual educational planning. In most cases management of the curriculum has improved. This has resulted in an overall improvement in teaching and learning. Statutory requirements in connection with appraisal, the school prospectus, policy for special educational needs and the National Curriculum are now met. Leadership and management have been successful in bringing about a satisfactory level of improvement in quite difficult circumstances.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to ensure that its pupils receive the greatest possible benefit from being at the school and achieve as well as possible;

(1) The headteacher, governors and staff should continue to develop and improve the curriculum by:

- Increasing the time of the taught day so that it is in line with national recommendations for pupils of this age. *(Paragraph number 26)*
- ensuring that all schemes of work, and particularly those in ICT, are in place and fully implemented. *(Paragraph numbers 31, 81 and 94)*
- ensuring that the learning opportunities offered to pupils aged 14 to 16 give them an element of choice and greater opportunities to relate their learning to the world of work. *(Paragraph number 31)*

(2) Together with the local education authority, the school should;

- resolve the attendance problems that have become chronic over the past four years by reviewing the underlying causes of poor and non-attendance on a case by case basis. *(Paragraph number 17)*

(3) The local education authority and the school should improve the accommodation provided which is unsuitable for its present purpose because rooms are too small for the number of pupils in each group, especially in the light of their particular special needs. They should;

- provide a library and space for personal and independent study. *(Paragraph number 49)*
- provide a sports hall or gymnasium, as present provision is unsafe to use and curtails pupils' curriculum opportunities. *(Paragraph number 49)*
- provide a room to house the computer suite. *(Paragraph number 49)*

When drawing up its action plan in response to the inspection the governors, as well as addressing the key issues above, should consider taking the following more minor matters into account:

- Develop the good practice of setting overall targets for specified groups of pupils. *(Paragraph numbers 1 and 48).*
- Ensure that pupils are given greater opportunities to exercise responsibility within the school. *(Paragraph number 15).*
- Continue to improve the extent to which assessment is used to guide the planning of teaching. *(Paragraph number 37).*
- Ensure that parents are given fuller information about the work that their children are doing. *(Paragraph number 43).*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	33	50	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	46
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	15.27	School data	11.21

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	138	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.1
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	230

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	454,423
Total expenditure	456,283
Expenditure per pupil	9,126
Balance brought forward from previous year	60,970
Balance carried forward to next year	59,110

There was a surplus of more than 10% because the school has been accumulating a reserve for planned accommodation improvements.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	15	37	7	41	0
My child is making good progress in school.	19	26	22	19	15
Behaviour in the school is good.	7	37	19	33	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	0	22	22	33	15
The teaching is good.	48	33	4	0	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	30	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	30	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	33	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	26	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	26	0	4	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	22	26	11	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	19	15	7	26

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

52. Achievement in English is good. Most pupils enter the school with significant deficits in their reading, spelling and writing skills. While they rarely make up sufficient ground to attain the average standards for their age, over time, they make gains in all areas and both by age 14 and by age 16 their progress is good.
53. The youngest pupils, who are aged 11, develop their literacy skills both in individual and small group reading sessions and in class lessons which draw upon the English literary heritage. For example, most recently, Dickens' novel, "A Christmas Carol" has been the theme for a series of lessons in Year 7. Pupils remember the story well and discuss it in some detail. Their written answers to questions on the text are legible and show understanding both of the plot and of the motives of the characters. They develop awareness of the devices used by the author to convey mood and to involve the reader in the story. Pupils practise punctuation in their writing and the use of full stops, capital letters and question marks is becoming established. By Year 9, pupils who have attended for two years or more have made sufficient progress in literacy to enable them to enjoy literature, discuss and analyse plays and works of fiction and write for a variety of audiences and purposes. Pupils behave well in their English lessons. Pupils aged 13 were very attentive in a lesson in which the contemporary novel "Buddy" was introduced. They were fully engaged by the story and, when required to do so, they read aloud from the text with fluency and expression. They willingly shared their views in response to the story using an extended vocabulary. Their speaking and their listening skills were generally age appropriate and, in a minority of cases, good. In almost all cases pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 have made good gains in their reading accuracy and fluency and in their spelling. In a small number of cases these gains are very good but an equal number of pupils, where their attendance is a negative factor, make less than expected progress.
54. In their final two years of schooling pupils continue to broaden their knowledge and awareness of literature. In a productive lesson on Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" pupils showed clear appreciation of the theme of the novel and good reasoning and expression as they discussed the unfairness with which a character was treated in the story. They wrote clear notes in preparation to producing an account of this scene as a "news" article.
55. Pupils in their last year in school are preparing for the City & Guilds, (C&G), "Word Power" examination in communication skills, which will accredit their learning. In their lessons they successfully complete modules of work on practical communication, for example giving detailed directions with reference to a map. These positive outcomes come about because of the quality of the teaching.
56. In lessons that stimulate discussion and involve the interpretation of the actions of characters in novels, plays and stories, their behaviour is very good. They make efforts to do their work in lessons and most are inclined to want to learn and to use their time well. Where pupils are not willing to take a full part in the lessons others are not generally disturbed by their conduct.
57. Teaching is good and in a quarter of lessons it is very good; it is never unsatisfactory. As a result of this pupils learn well and make good progress. Teachers plan their work thoroughly to provide opportunities for their pupils to succeed and to move forward with increased confidence because of this success. Relationships between teachers, support assistants and pupils are very good and this engenders a positive climate of trust in which learning is stimulated. Very effective use is made of the school policy for behaviour management to maintain order and discipline in the classroom and to keep learning on track. In the most successful lessons the use of time is very effective. From experience teachers know when to change activities so as to keep lessons fresh. They mix whole class and individual activities well. Teachers have very good knowledge of the learning characteristics of their pupils and use this to good effect. A very good example of this

understanding was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 9 where the point had been reached where it was necessary for pupils to record the ideas they had been discussing. One or two showed reluctance to get down to the writing task. At this, the teacher, who knew her pupils well, did not resort to threats, but chose instead to provide an incentive, by allowing them to choose the colour in which they should write from a range of attractively coloured ink pens that she provided. This worked well and was all that was required to defuse discontent and renew the pupils' enthusiasm for their work. Knowledge of the curriculum requirements for the subject is good and a scheme of work, which is consistent with National Curriculum requirements, has been put in place for Key Stage 3. Those pupils in their final two years in the school work on the syllabus set by the accrediting body for the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) or the C&G. There are, however, a number of pupils who are capable of attaining grades in the GCSE examinations and there is sufficient depth and quality to the English teaching to make this the mode of accreditation of choice. Teachers assess their pupils accurately and useful records of these assessments are kept. Assessment is soundly used to inform planning and teaching. The individual and small group sessions, led by support assistants under the supervision of the English co-ordinator, which are offered to pupils with acknowledged literacy difficulties are effective. Pupils who have been supported in this way speak highly of the help that has been provided. There is a policy for the setting of homework, which acknowledges the difficulties associated with this in a school for pupils with these special educational needs; opportunities for fostering independent learning within the school day are very limited.

58. General resources for English such as texts, novels and collections are of satisfactory quality and are well used. ICT resources are available but are inconveniently located and this seriously limits the use to which they can be put. The accommodation is, however, unsatisfactory. Rooms are too small and seriously limit the possible range of approaches to teaching the subject; offering drama, for example, is a practical impossibility. There is no library and this means that fostering habits of reading and independent learning is thus denied to the pupils.
59. There has been some improvement since the last inspection when progress in English, which is now good was judged satisfactory. The quality of teaching is also higher being good overall, as is the pupils' learning and their response to what is taught.

MATHEMATICS

60. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved well since the last inspection: they are now consistently satisfactory overall and at times good. Previously progress was commented on as unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8. The progress in Year 9 is broadly in line with judgements made in the last report where it was considered as good. Since the last inspection and the co-ordinator has worked hard with other members of staff to ensure the quality of teaching is more secure. The co-ordinator and another member of staff team-teach Year 7 pupils once a week. This change in organisation is working well towards improving group achievements. The pupils' basic mathematical knowledge is now assessed on entry to the school. This information is used effectively to place pupils on appropriate schemes of work including appropriate written materials in both key stages. The previous report made reference to unchallenging work across both key stages. The work pupils now undertake stretches all ability levels. However, there are occasions when lower attaining pupils find tasks difficult to complete without a large amount of individual support.
61. Overall pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress by the end of Year 9. In Year 7 pupils show they know their multiplication facts to ten by completing multiplication grids correctly under test conditions. They use their mental calculation skills to explore simple number sequences and write the missing numbers on teacher devised worksheets. Pupils use appropriate computer software to reinforce what they have learned and write their own rules that match the number pattern they have devised. More able pupils demonstrate their knowledge of fraction equivalency by matching simple and complex fractions when playing a domino game. In Year 8 pupils apply their knowledge of appropriate calculation methods to solve simple number problems. They discuss the term inverse operations and predict the answers to two and three-digit number sequences using subtraction and addition methods. More able pupils identify repeated patterns in tens and units to

predict the next sequence. Pupils in Year 9 use their knowledge of the four rules of number to complete simple formula. For example one pupil knew that the perimeter of a pentagon was five times the length of any one side. He could express this in a simple algebraic formula. Pupils are supported in answering questions with real life implications. For instance, one pupil judged whether people were too fat or too thin by working out an individuals body number. He used a calculator to divide a person's height in centimetres by their weight in kilograms. All pupils are made aware of the need to give sensible estimates when involved in investigative work to enable them to check whether or not their answers are accurate. Pupils' attitude to learning ranged from satisfactory to very good and overall was good. They listen well to the teacher's explanations and try hard to complete tasks successfully, although a minority of pupils disrupts lessons for a short time.

62. By the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress. Some pupils have made good progress. Year 10 pupils reinforce and develop their knowledge of the role of letters in algebra and complete simple linear equations with support. Pupils in Year 11 follow the Number Power City and Guilds course of study and apply and develop their number and algebra skills to real life situations. They calculate money problems accurately to enable them to make reasoned choices. For example, one pupil develops his data handling skills by checking price lists to find the best purchase price of several pieces of hi-fi equipment. He works out which is the best bargain by comparing the difference between one firm's prices against those of another. More able pupils understood the practical implications involved in getting an estimated gas bill as opposed to having your meter read by a gas company official. They demonstrate their knowledge of the four operations of number by calculating costs accurately to two decimal places using a simple formula. While some of the older pupils do not always respond positively to the school's reward and sanctions procedures, most often, the pupils' response to learning during lessons is satisfactory or good and it was good overall. Some pupils who enjoy the subject try to help their peers understand the consequences of their actions during lessons when conflict situations arise. One pupil in Year 11 who was being disruptive was told by another pupil to think about what he was doing and consider what would happen if he carried on.
63. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning overall was satisfactory with some good features across both stages. Where team teaching occurred in Key Stage 3 learning was good. Where teaching and learning was good lessons were well planned with clear open-ended learning objectives. The pace of the lesson was good and a variety of resources were being used effectively including appropriate computer software. Good planning and teaching paid close attention to the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematical facts and concepts were taught using an investigative approach that stimulated teacher pupil interaction and sustained pupils' interest. Sound subject knowledge and good teacher pupil relationships enabled pupils to participate confidently in their number work. Teacher's used praise effectively to celebrate individual achievement that enhanced pupils' self-esteem and increased their time on-task during independent activities. The work for more able pupils was challenging and at the correct level to enable them to work with limited supervision.
64. Within teaching that was otherwise satisfactory there were some weaknesses, particularly in Years 7 to 9. These include introductions to lessons and summaries of what had been learned being too brief and an over-emphasis on individual rather than class teaching.
65. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall with some good features. The co-ordinator and senior management have worked hard to improve provision for the subject and have addressed many of the key issues raised in the last inspection. However, the subject policy requires updating to National Curriculum 2000, as it does not state clearly how the subject and teaching will be formally monitored and evaluated. The school is aware of this and has taken action to remedy it. Although overall assessment procedures have improved there are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers' marking is beginning to inform the pupil of the next step in the learning process but pupils' work is not annotated. This limits the teachers' ability to accurately measure individual progress against prior achievements. Medium-term planning is satisfactory but insufficiently detailed to enable group attainment to be easily identified. It needs to be developed to ensure that within each year group there are clear learning objectives for the different ability levels of pupils which will enable progress throughout and across key stages to be easily tracked. The

subject continues to make a good contribution to pupils' moral development.

66. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has identified the need for more computer software to support learning. There are some practical resources but these are limited. The use of mathematical games to consolidate learning is underdeveloped especially for older pupils. The work of classroom support assistants is generally effective and staff have built up very good relationships with pupils.

SCIENCE

67. The standard of teaching continues to be satisfactory or better, and as a result the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory and sometimes good. There has been steady improvement since the last inspection.
68. By age 14, while their level of work is below the nationally expected average for their age within their ability levels, the standard of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By age 16 the pupils gain passes with merits and distinctions in the Associated Examination Board (AEB) examinations on Health, Hygiene and Safety and their standard of achievement is good. Additionally, Certificate of Achievement courses have recently been introduced.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Well-planned lessons are balanced and structured and, where appropriate, individual and special needs are catered for with extra in-class support. Earlier work is consolidated through skilled question and answer, and most pupils show good recall, using appropriate vocabulary such as vertebrate and non-vertebrate. The subject specialist teacher sets realistic challenges, checking that everyone clearly understands the tasks. Lessons are planned for continuity and there is evidence in the pupils' work at both key stages that they make satisfactory progress over time. For example, pupils aged 11 to 14 who have little knowledge and understanding on admission, progress to studying food chains and using computers to investigate links between the brain and the nervous system. They identify the differences between mammals and reptiles, and know that reptiles have no body temperature controls. They use scientific terminology appropriately, which develops their vocabulary skills. By Year 9, they have a knowledge of basic electricity and can explain how sound and light travel.
70. At Key Stage 4, the pupils understand the structure and working of the heart, lungs and thorax. They have a secure knowledge of basic health matters, and an awareness of preventative solutions such as the reasons for avoiding nicotine and alcohol. Lessons are well paced and literacy skills are promoted through volunteered reading aloud. The pupils respond well to lesson expectations and use opportunities for paired and group work, For example, the work in pairs to conduct a fair test in taking a range of thermometer readings, and they predict and evaluate the results, recording their findings in both freehand and computerised graphs.
71. At the conclusion of lessons, the teacher's effective questioning allows the pupils to evaluate their learning. Work is marked with positive and encouraging comments, and the teacher's effective system for monitoring and recording individual achievement is used to inform subsequent lesson planning. Good classroom and pupil management encourages learning and there is an atmosphere of harmony and respect.
72. Subject documentation and procedures for monitoring and assessing the pupils' progress are matched to Curriculum 2000, and this is used effectively for continuity in lesson planning, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Schemes of work also incorporate aspects of sex and drugs education. The teacher's good practice of daily lesson evaluation further informs planning. The use of modern technology to support science has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Risk assessment and emergency guidelines are very well documented and there is very good attention to safety, such as hazard warning signs and the security of dangerous substances. Resources are satisfactory, but the poor accommodation hinders both teaching and learning. Burners and chemicals cannot be used safely in the restricted classroom space, and the absence

of a fume cupboard limits experimental work. Additionally, the location of the site manager's storeroom within the laboratory is inappropriate.

ART AND DESIGN

73. Pupils' achievement in art is good. Most pupils enter the school with limited experience in art and underdeveloped manipulative skills. As they move up through the school, expert teaching, clear understanding of each pupil's special needs, and a widening range of exposure to artists, colour, design and techniques, enable pupils to make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding of art. This means that by the time pupils are ready to leave school they are working at levels similar to that of pupils attaining grades close to D at GCSE. Teachers value pupils' contributions and this raises pupils' self-esteem and gives them confidence and pride in their work. The subject manager has clear aims for the subject Her effective leadership has guided the development of the subject since the last inspection and has led to good improvement in this subject area.
74. Teaching and learning are good. In one lesson in three they are very good. A strength of the teaching is that a subject specialist, whose enthusiasm and confidence inspires and motivates pupils, teaches lessons. The teacher demonstrates skills well and provide a range of interesting and colourful tools and materials. As a result, most pupils use a range of resources effectively. They recognise how pattern and texture contribute to the composition of pictures and paintings and use this in developing group and individual work. Famous artists' work is used well to inspire pupils. This inspiration is shown in the high quality of their work and in the way pupils used a variety of techniques. For example, dripping, pointillism, squeezing, sponging and rolling, to replicate some of the designs and textures seen in aboriginal art. The teacher and special support assistant (SSA) work well together to ensure pupils have individual attention when they need it and are creative and productive.
75. This leads to pupils' achievement in lessons and over time being good at both 14 and 16. Year 9 have a growing awareness of the formal elements of art. They build on drawing techniques using texture and tone in designs, and colour and shape in landscapes and self-portraits. Higher attaining pupils learn to observe the detailed markings and features of still life objects, which they turn into prints, designs and three-dimensional models with clay, paper and glue. From year seven pupils learn to use their sketchbooks well to collect ideas for use in their work This is continued with increasing maturity and until they finish in Year 11.
76. At 16 pupils' increasing knowledge of artists and a developing ability to link styles with a particular artist raises standards. For example, higher attaining pupils made good progress when using the work of Salvadore Dali and Magritte to influence exciting work on dreams in their surreal compositions. They work in a range of media, such as clay, plaster, paper and glue and wire on individual projects towards the Welsh Board Certificate. Many of their clay and plaster forms are inspired by Henry Moore whose work they have visited and are familiar with. Pupils learn to take enormous care with finishing techniques. They incorporating tiny, intricate designs into their main design and deliberate carefully over colours in glazes and paints.
77. Behaviour is well managed; the teacher and SSAs provide good role models and have high expectations of how pupils should behave and of what they can achieve. As a result pupils behave well in art, and are respectful and helpful to each other and their teachers.
78. The quality of informal assessment is good and staff put a lot of emphasis on personal encouragement. They have an ongoing discussion on the evaluation of work during lessons, and the pupils begin to have a sound knowledge of their own learning and what they need to do to succeed. More formal assessment structures and mapping through and across the key stages are in place but are relatively new and at an early stage of implementation. The schemes of work ensure clear progression through the key stages and are planned against the National Curriculum and examination board requirements. The curriculum is enriched by visits to art galleries, exhibitions of specific artists, to museums, and includes visits to London.

79. This department has made good improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to improve the standards and quality of work in art still further. Closer links with mainstream and similar schools would enable extended knowledge of good practice and an exchange of ideas.
80. Resources for art are satisfactory overall but the limitations of access to computers and more sophisticated art programmes have an impact on meeting the information and communication technology requirement in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. The co-ordination and delivery of the subject over recent months has been affected by the long-term absence of the subject co-ordinator who is also the specialist teacher for the subject. During the inspection, the subject was taught mostly by an appropriately qualified supply teacher who was following the school's planning. Work scrutiny and discussions with staff and pupils provided insufficient evidence to allow a judgement to be made on pupils' achievements across some aspects of the subject since the last inspection. While the last report stated that pupils were making satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4, that is for pupils aged 11 to 16, it also judged that the schemes of work did not fully reflect the revised National Curriculum programmes of study.
82. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 they were involved in a project to design and make a calendar. Teacher's planning referred to computer software to make and print out each pupil's calendar. Pupils had to complete three designs that made use of simple templates. They discussed the task as a class and were given a structured method for completion. They decided on a theme for their calendar and drew simple designs on paper with coloured pencils. One pupil made good use of the circle template by choosing an earth theme which he decorated with simple outline shapes representing different places on earth Pupils sanded, painted, and cut out shapes carefully using appropriate equipment. They followed safety procedures by wearing goggles and masks and were aware of the reasons for this. The majority of pupils were eager to participate in practical work but some were reluctant to wear their safety equipment. A few pupils did not listen attentively to the teacher's suggestions of how to improve and modify their designs. This resulted in some of the pupils initial design work being rushed and not very well thought out. In one lesson, the classroom assistant used her initiative very well when pupils were drifting off-task and being noisy. She immediately made each pupil aware of his or her social targets and asked them if they were trying to keep them. This was effective in reducing the level and frequency of the anti-social behaviour. Although slow to start the majority of the pupils completed their tasks satisfactorily. The work on display in the design and technology room shows pupils achievements are good in wood technology. Pupils' completed artefacts include well-made magazine racks, chairs, and coffee tables with ceramic tile tops.
83. The quality of teaching for pupils aged 11 to 14 was satisfactory. Good aspects of teaching included clear explanation to the class of the lesson's objectives and how these were going to be achieved. Planning was structured and utilised information and communication technology to broaden pupils' knowledge of how different technology equipment can be used effectively to produce a high quality product. There was sound subject knowledge. Effective use was made of classroom support to encourage and praise positive behaviour. A weakness with the teaching was that the ends of lessons were not effectively used to check out what each pupil had learned. On one occasion there were no extension activities available to pupils who finished their tasks quickly. This was a missed opportunity to either extend or consolidate on previous learning.
84. The specialist room is well equipped, spacious and has a kiln that is well used by the art teacher. However the long-term action plan for the subject states several areas for development that will require an increase in resources to ensure that the proposed new schemes of work for all age groups will be able to be fully implemented. These areas include computer assisted design and control software, food technology and textiles, and Key Stage 4 accreditation systems such as the ASDAN awards.

GEOGRAPHY

85. Pupils are taught geography for one lesson a week within the humanities teaching programme. In the current Year 11 the humanities teaching time is used to allow pupils to follow the ASDAN Award Scheme (Bronze Award). This year group will complete the award course taking units including home management and the world of work. Pupils in Year 10 are following a course leading to the Certificate of Achievement in humanities. This includes elements of twentieth century history, religious education and local geographical studies.
86. Achievement by age 14 and age 16 is satisfactory and reflects the good teaching provided. The teaching and learning support in geography is good. The planning of lessons is done well to ensure that the tasks set challenge all pupils as well as building their confidence. Lessons are rounded off well with a brief recapitulation and quiz. Attempts are made in all lessons to anticipate the particular learning and behaviour needs of individual pupils. As a result behaviour in lessons is mostly good. Pupils behave well in lessons and try their learning tasks willingly. Although some Year 9 pupils experienced frustration caused by their lack of skills in handling computers this was not allowed to deflect other pupils from their work. The youngest pupils in Year 7 use atlases and locate continents and countries which extract and export particular natural resources such as oil, iron ore and copper. With help they complete charts linking products to their source. Pupils in Year 9 work on computers to download information about tornadoes from commercial sources. They have compiled a newspaper front page describing the impact of extreme weather conditions on communities in the U.S.A. The teacher and support assistant handled the frustrations of pupils who are at an early stage of using computer technology well, and ensured that all pupils achieved some success.
87. Older pupils in Year 11 work well within the ASDAN framework. In the information-handling unit, for example, most pupils can interpret an Ordnance Survey map competently and can give directions to construct a route between towns. In a lesson seen in Year 11 they successfully identify map symbols to consolidate map reading skills.
88. The new outline scheme of work for geography in Key Stage 3 covers the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. Some improvements need to be made to the curriculum for the younger pupils to introduce more practical geographical activity such as mapping within and around the school. The subject co-ordinator has rightly sought specialist subject guidance to assist in the planning of more detailed schemes of work. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Resources, however, still need further development.

HISTORY

89. Pupils are taught history for one lesson a week until the age of fourteen. In Year 10 they follow a general humanities course leading to the Certificate of Achievement which includes a central element of twentieth century history. The current Year 11 follows the ASDAN general studies course within humanities time.
90. Achievement in history is good because of the quality of the teaching. It is most successful with the older pupils who clearly understand what is expected from them. The team approach using effectively the experienced learning support assistants is particularly helpful in encouraging and supporting pupils' learning. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the organisation of the lesson to encourage some collaborative discussion, but with a stronger focus on individual work well-supported by the adults, led to better learning throughout the lesson than in a geography lesson with the same group. The youngest pupils in Year 7 understand the sources and the interpretation of historical evidence and this is near to national expectations for their age. Pupils investigate the disappearance of ships in the Bermuda Triangle and show that they understand how evidence can be conflicting and how some sources can be more reliable than others. Pupils in Year 9 have a clear recall of some of the main events of the reign of King Henry VIII and of Tudor times generally.

Year 9 group pupils use and follow the prepared historical source material satisfactorily, although only two of the three were able to read the information successfully. Pupils have a clear understanding of chronology and some have a good knowledge of historical facts in different ages.

91. A small number of Year 10 pupils are working at levels appropriate for their age. The remainder are following the course successfully but with a lower level of understanding. Their good level of understanding of the Suffragette Movement, its aims and achievements and their note-taking skills suggest that they have made an appropriate start to work towards the Certificate of Achievement.
92. These positive achievements contribute to the pupils' favourable attitudes towards history lessons. The few instances of inappropriate individual behaviour seen in lessons were dealt with firmly within the school's agreed framework. Improvement in achievement and the curriculum has been good since the last inspection.
93. The commercially produced teaching materials in use in lessons give a valuable structure to pupils' work throughout the school but there is room within the very broad outline scheme of work for more local historical studies to be introduced. The school has rightly sought external guidance to redevelop the curriculum. It is helpful for non- specialist teachers to receive specialist guidance on how to plan more detailed schemes of work and on the selection of a wider range of resources for teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Overall, since the last inspection there has been unsatisfactory progress in developing provision for information and communication technology. There is still no structured schemes of work to develop the subject cohesively. The work scrutiny, discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils provided insufficient evidence to comment on pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching across both key stages. However, since the last inspection several modern computers have been purchased and there is now a computer suite with a fully functional internet facility used by staff and pupils.
95. During the inspection no lessons were seen where learning objectives for information and communication technology were the main teaching focus. There is evidence of computers being used for research and to support learning. Teachers make good use of the Internet for subject research and to help them provide pupils with interesting worksheets. For example in mathematics Year 8 pupils complete a Number Sequences sheet downloaded from the Teachers' Library. In the core subjects of mathematics and English pupils develop their word processing and number skills using appropriate software. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson pupils develop their word processing skills by writing an acrostic. They change font size, colour and type style by selecting menu options correctly and highlighting text when appropriate. Pupils in Year 7 use subject software to develop their number sequencing skills. They use a mouse to drag different shapes onto a number square to make a number sequence. They write out their rules for their number sequence by correctly identifying the writing icon and typing in their phrase or sentence. In other areas of the curriculum like music pupils explore the Internet for research purposes. In Year 10, one pupil was finding out more about famous composers like Haydn. He logged on, located a search engine and found the information he wanted by scrolling web pages down using appropriate keys. All pupils are eager to use the computer and familiar with how to open up programmes. However, discussion with individual pupils revealed they had limited knowledge of subject vocabulary. For example, a Year 10 pupil could find the information he wanted on the Internet with limited support but was unable to identify the difference between a web page and a web site.
96. Although leadership of the subject has not yet resulted in full implementation of the curriculum, there have been some significant improvements in strategic planning and training since the last inspection. The co-ordinator and senior management have worked hard to establish a detailed long-term plan for the subject which covers training and subject implementation. All staff have received some basic training in using word processors, data bases, spreadsheets, control technology and the Internet. The school has an Internet Access Policy, which states what is acceptable use. The computer suite is fully operational and well used by staff and pupils throughout the school day.

There is evidence that teachers are beginning to plan for ICT across the curriculum both as a subject and as a cross-curricular tool, such as word processing. Procedures for monitoring or assessing pupils' achievements are not established. At present the co-ordinator has no non-contact time to formally evaluate the effectiveness of teaching or to develop the subjects action plan.

97. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall but will require developing when the planned schemes of work have been decided on and implemented. For example appropriate software to support the teaching of control technology. The use of subject software is underdeveloped and recognised by the co-ordinator as an area for improvement. The computer suite is a good central facility that enables all pupils to develop their skills individually. However, the effectiveness of this provision is severely limited because the teaching area is jointly shared with mathematics. This reduces the amount of taught time available for teaching the subject and therefore is a limiting factor on pupils' progress. Organisational arrangements are currently being reviewed to ensure that all pupils have access to the suite for at least for one lesson each week.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

98. The school's provision for modern languages is satisfactory and pupils make gains in their knowledge of French.
99. By the age of 14 pupils have a basic vocabulary and respond appropriately to everyday phrases. By the age of 16 they gain national accreditation through the Certificate of Achievement assignments, achieving passes at merit and distinction levels. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
100. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to satisfactory but it is satisfactory overall. Lesson planning includes elements of written and oral work, with taped exercises for listening and comprehension skills. The pupils name in French a range of food and drink and can express their personal likes and dislikes. By the end of Year 9, they use common regular verbs to engage in simple conversations and role-play.
101. In Years 10 and 11, the pupils continue to develop their basic vocabulary and identify for example times on the 24-hour clock or who has ordered what in a restaurant. There is some evidence of independent work when they write postcards or simple sentences, but much written work at both key stages is heavily dependent on commercial worksheets. Moreover, in Year 10 the pupils' folders are untidily presented and covered in graffiti and inappropriate comments. Where coursework modules are complete, these are kept separately by the teacher. By age 16 the pupils make satisfactory progress in achieving national accreditation.
102. The non-specialist teacher speaks French during a third of the lesson. However, it is a weakness of the lesson planning that it sometimes lacks cohesion and objectives are not paced to match the available time. Consequently such lessons sometimes finish too early and there are no planned activities to fill the remaining time. A further weakness is that individual needs are not specifically catered for, although some pupils receive extra support from classroom assistants. At both key stages, relationships are satisfactory, and most pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest. The teacher records and matches work that has been covered by age 14 against National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, the marking of work is irregular and inconsistent. In Years 10 and 11, assessment of the pupils' progress is linked to coursework assignments, but this lacks continuity because several unfinished modules of work are running simultaneously.
103. The co-ordinator recognises that subject documentation and planning need to be updated to comply with Curriculum 2000. The non-specialist teacher is currently attending a course in teaching modern languages, but has little knowledge of what is available for pupils with specific needs. Accommodation is satisfactory, but resources to support French are unsatisfactory. Original

artefacts and cultural images that reflect the subject are limited and little use is made of computers to support learning. Although opportunities for national accreditation at age 16 have been introduced since the previous inspection, little else has changed.

MUSIC

104. The school's provision for music at both key stages is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when the subject was not taught. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good and all the pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of musical concepts. However, the range of musical experiences is restricted by the poor quality of the accommodation.
105. The quality and standard of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. The subject specialist is ably supported by a classroom assistant who is also a music graduate. Well-planned lessons and good preparation offer the pupils a programme of differing musical styles ranging from Mediaeval chants to rock and roll and classical sounds. For example, in Year 7 they learn and compose Gregorian chants which promotes an awareness of the cultural origins of music in Mediaeval Britain. By the end of Year 9, the pupils play keyboards with increasing confidence. They read notation and begin to develop appropriate tempo by adding chords to their music.
106. By the end of Year 11 the pupils have a good background knowledge of instruments and sounds. They listen to classical composers and use computers to research the lives of the great composers, which further encourages reflection on musical changes across the centuries. The pupils with additional and specific learning difficulties are encouraged to work within their ability levels, and they make as good progress as their higher achieving peers. The teacher occasionally plays a guitar for the pupils, which helps them retain the timing and tune when singing. The pupils' response to music is positive and enthusiastic. They relate well to staff and there is a warm ethos of learning throughout lessons. They work hard, concentrate well and show pride in their achievements. For example, at the time of the inspection, rehearsals for a Christmas performance were under way and all pupils selected and practised a range of Christmas music, which they played and sang for staff, governors and visitors during the school's Christmas Dinner.
107. The teacher monitors the pupils' progress through termly assessment, and taped recordings of this track the pupils' achievements over time. These are used to inform curriculum development and schemes of work, which are matched to Curriculum 2000. There is a limited range of quality resources, which are currently and inadequately stored in a converted shower room. Although there is a designated music room, this is very small with poor acoustics and limited electrical sockets. Consequently, when electrical equipment is in use, cables and extension leads trail between desks and around the floor. This is both unsatisfactory and dangerous. Although some use is made of modern technology, there is insufficient classroom space to house a computer and the pupils have to work in another room. Despite this, the subject is well managed and is good overall.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both key stages and over time most pupils reach the attainment targets set for them across a range of physical activities; in some lessons the achievement of individual pupils is high but this standard is not reached consistently. In Year7, pupils work hard in their gymnastics lessons. They respond to their teacher's knowledgeable planning and good direction in developing sequences of movements involving curling and stretching. Higher attaining pupils prepare and demonstrate linked tumbling and balancing. Some can support their own body weight in a "tripod stand" holding themselves vertical while balanced on their hands and head. Lower attainers show increasing flexibility in their stretching and curling movements. Older pupils within Key Stage 3 work at developing skills using a vaulting box and a trampoline board. All show some gymnastic skill and ability and about half are very competent, performing somersaults, headsprings and forward or backward rolls. The benefit of this good work is vitiated, however, by the lack of discipline among the pupils and by their disregard for their own safety and that of others. They are unable to wait for their turn and interfere with others and put themselves at risk by using the apparatus when they should not. Pupils in their last two years at school work on improving their skills in games such as football. About half of the pupils show skills appropriate to their age as they practice activities such as trapping and passing a ball. A similar proportion shows good achievement as they apply these skills in small-sided games.
109. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory; on balance it is satisfactory and this is reflected in the attitudes of pupils. The attitudes of most pupils are satisfactory; about half take part in lessons willingly and show enthusiasm as they develop their skills. Occasionally they are distracted by others and temporarily lose commitment to their learning but a word from a staff member is frequently enough to get them back on track. Other pupils are more inconsistent in their attitudes and among these are some of the more talented gymnasts. These pupils have not internalised the basic rules of conduct that make work in the gym safe and enjoyable and they tend to pursue their own sometimes dangerous agenda until actively checked by the staff.
110. Pupils' learning in lessons also varies between very good and unsatisfactory, but, over time, their skill knowledge and understanding develops satisfactorily. Teachers have good knowledge of the curriculum requirements in PE and prepare appropriate sequences of lessons. There is a sound incremental approach to the development of movement and flexibility and refinement of technique in gymnastics and to the establishing of games skills. This has resulted in success in competitive sport, for example the victory for a school team in a local 5-a-side soccer tournament. Within most lessons, except for those for Year 7, the pupils have insufficient involvement in reviewing their own performance and that of others. To some extent this is a product of the fragile control over some groups of pupils that is exercised by the teacher. Calling a halt to the activity in order to analyse it requires good class management skill and secure discipline, qualities that were seen to be lacking in some lessons. Assessments of pupils' performance are made and these are recorded by a check- list. Teachers take account of these assessments in planning their lessons.
111. The very limited accommodation for PE, places additional strain upon the teaching. Lessons take place in a multi-purpose hall that is much too small and is also a thorough- fare for the school so that lessons are constantly subjected to low-level disruption as people walk through on other business.
112. There is an outline scheme of work that guides teaching but is not as yet fully in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. For example there are no plans in place to incorporate ICT into what is offered. There are sufficient resources to promote learning although their use is limited by the unsuitable and unsafe accommodation.
113. There has been some improvement since the last inspection. Then it was reported that progress in lessons was frequently unsatisfactory and teaching in a third of lessons was unsatisfactory. Management of behaviour was an issue then as now in the unsatisfactory lessons. There has been no improvement in the accommodation, however, which was described as limiting and posing a risk to health and safety.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. Standards of achievement are sound in both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Since the last inspection there has been steady improvement. The subject policy has been reviewed. The long and medium-term planning documents, which follow the objectives of the agreed syllabus are being developed in line with QCA. The importance of religious education is being highlighted through staff training and external validation of pupils' work through the ASDAN scheme in Year 11. Accreditation is also being introduced through the Welsh Board Certificate of Achievement in humanities, which also contains a religious education paper.
115. At fourteen pupils broaden their knowledge of some of the principal world religions for example Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. They know about the early beginnings of Christianity and the earliest Christian missionaries. They know something of the lives and values of these early leaders, where they travelled and the lands they converted. They retell stories of the first Christian Martyrs. They understand the Bible is a holy book and can name other holy books from other religions. Younger pupils know characters from the bible such as Abraham, Isaac and David, and they have heard the story of creation. They learn about the use of symbols in studying religions. For example, in learning about the baptism of Jesus they understand the symbolism of the Holy Spirit and its importance.
116. At 16, pupils consider deeper aspects of life and show a developing understanding of moral issues. In looking at the Buddhist belief of noble truths they consider the idea of 'no self'. They discuss religious beliefs concerning anger, love and forgiveness and how these effect our daily lives. They learn about the lives of revered people, famous for their love of others and their fight for justice in peaceful, non-violent ways.
117. Owing to timetable restrictions it was only possible to see lessons in Years eight and nine and in both lessons teaching was satisfactory. Evidence from looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with staff and pupils, shows the quality of teaching and learning over time in both key stages is satisfactory.
118. Teachers plan work well with clear learning objectives that are well communicated to the pupils. This means that pupils know exactly what they have to do and are generally productive and engaged in the lesson. Good relationships and humour enable teachers and special support assistants to manage behaviour and generally keep pupils on track. The behaviour policy is followed consistently by all staff and pupils are aware of the rewards and penalties for good and poor behaviour. Staff work well together and this ensures that all pupils have access to the work and are fully involved. The methods used are appropriate to the diversity of pupils' needs and work is well differentiated so that most pupils complete the work set and make sound progress towards their individual targets. However much of the lessons are teacher led and there is insufficient group and pair work to foster pupil initiative and independence in learning.
119. The co-ordinator leads the subject with determination and commitment. He is working with the LEA advisor to develop a more formal system of assessment in religious education linked to the agreed syllabus levels, and in-service training for staff. Resources have been improved since the last report and are generally satisfactory. However there remains a need for more artefacts and increased software in information and communication technology to allow research and independent learning.