

INSPECTION REPORT

GREEN ARBOUR SCHOOL

Thurcroft, Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106970

Headteacher: Mr P Gawthorpe

Reporting inspector: Sarah J Mascall
20536

Dates of inspection: 14th - 16th January 2002

Inspection number: 195071

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 -16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Locksley Drive Thurcroft Rotherham
Postcode:	S66 9NT
Telephone number:	01709 542539
Fax number:	01709 730198
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Basil Larcombe
Date of previous inspection:	19/05/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
20536	Sarah J Mascal	Registered inspector
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

QICS

“Ibsley”
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Green Arbour School is an all age school for boys and girls between the ages of five and sixteen who have moderate learning difficulties. Currently there are 140 pupils on roll of whom 99 are boys and 41 are girls. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and when they start school their attainment is low. There are seven pupils who are on the autistic spectrum disorder. A number of pupils have been identified by the school as having behavioural difficulties. Pupils are mostly from the south and east of Rotherham. 42% have free school meals which is high for this type of school. There is one pupil with English as an additional language but he was not in school during the week of the inspection. The present headteacher has been in post two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Green Arbour provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has a number of strengths. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. He is well supported by his senior management team who carry out their roles effectively and ensure the school runs smoothly. However there are weaknesses in aspects of leadership and management. Teaching is good for the vast majority of pupils and as a result nearly all make good progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The vast majority of pupils make good progress because of effective teaching.
- Behaviour is very good, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and relationships with each other and staff are very good.
- The very good links with the community provide pupils with a range of experiences that support their education well.
- The leavers programme is very effective in preparing pupils for when they leave school.
- Links with parents are good.

What could be improved

- There are serious health and safety concerns.
- Procedures for checking the work that goes on in the school are unsatisfactory.
- Arrangements to meet the needs of the small number of pupils with additional special needs and more able pupils are unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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

Although the school was described as very good at the time of the previous inspection in May 1997, seven significant weaknesses were identified. The school has gone some way to rectifying these; the school day has been extended, organisation and management structures have been improved as have the quality of the worksheets that are given to pupils in lessons. Pupils' targets are set appropriately although they are very broad. There are still though weaknesses in the monitoring of the curriculum, assessment procedures and accommodation. The decoration of the school has been improved and government initiatives including the literacy and numeracy strategy and performance management have been successfully adopted. Pupils' progress in several subjects has improved. However, the high standards in some aspects of the school including leadership and management have not been maintained and as a result the school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	good	B
Writing	C	C	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

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

The vast majority of pupils make good progress. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and this enables them to be confident speakers by the time they leave school. There are good strategies to improve reading and these have been successful in enabling a number of pupils to become independent readers. Pupils' handwriting improves as they move through the school but opportunities to develop skills in writing imaginatively and in detail are limited. Progress in mathematics is good and by Year 11 pupils are confident to attempt mathematical problems such as working out wages and overtime on pay slips. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science; they clearly enjoy the work and do well in many areas of the subject. However, in Years 7 to 11 pupils' lack of awareness of health and safety in the laboratory and limited access to the correct equipment reduces their progress. In personal, social and health education progress is good. In nearly all other subjects pupils make good progress. However, in information and communication technology (computers) progress is unsatisfactory. Pupils are given time to develop word processing skills and can use spreadsheets and make graphs but there is no system for ensuring that they extend their skills. Evidence shows that there is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or by those pupils for whom English is an additional language. For the very small number of pupils whose special needs are on the autistic spectrum progress is unsatisfactory. This is because the targets set are not effective in supporting their special needs and systems to help them communicate are not yet well developed. For the small number of pupils who are more able progress is not effective because the work is not always matched to their ability. This is particularly so for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are capable of taking more academically based accredited courses. Pupils are set targets at annual reviews which are, overall, appropriate although they are not always specific enough. The school does not meet requirements, as it has not set itself targets against which it can improve standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils clearly enjoy school. They work hard in lessons and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well both in and out of school. Where there are lapses in behaviour pupils respond well to the school's strategies and settle back into class quickly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very sensible and by the age of sixteen are mature young adults. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibility and carry out tasks with enthusiasm. Relationships between each other and with staff are very good.

Attendance	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school. Punctuality overall is good.
------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Pupils feel valued and as a consequence there is an atmosphere of calm and orderliness throughout the school. This is enhanced by the very good relationships that exist.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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.

Overall teaching is good. It is most effective in the primary department where the literacy and numeracy strategies are used well and teachers ensure work is matched to pupils' individual needs. For pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 teaching is satisfactory and often good. It dips at this age range partly because the teaching of English is not as effective as elsewhere, as teachers have not had the support of a co-ordinator. Also, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' individual needs are met, for example, more able pupils are often given the same work as less able pupils and as a result are not sufficiently challenged. Teaching is good for Year 10 and 11 pupils because planning is based on the accredited course that all pupils follow. In Years 7 to 11 pupils benefit from specialist subject teaching. This is particularly good in physical education and food technology. Teaching of science is satisfactory. Across the school pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well; teachers ensure that there are good opportunities for discussion. Teachers are still developing their expertise in working with those pupils with more severe autism and as a result teaching is not always effective. Teaching is good in personal, social and health education and teachers frequently promote these areas in other lessons reminding pupils of how to behave and the right way to approach situations. Teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory; teachers use computers and develop pupils' skills within their own subject areas. However planning does not ensure pupils make progress in their skills in using computers as they move through the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There are a number of strengths in the curriculum and pupils are given a good range of experiences throughout their time in school. The leavers' programme is particularly effective. The school uses the community very well to enrich the curriculum. However the lack of opportunities for pupils to be educated with their mainstream peers before Year 10 is a weakness.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Very few pupils who attend the school have English as an additional language. For those who do, provision is appropriate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Moral and social development is very well promoted. Clear rules and high expectations ensure that pupils behave well and get on well together. Cultural development is good; pupils benefit from a range of trips and visitors that promote this aspect well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. However arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils are poor. Procedures for pupils' personal support and guidance and the promotion of good behaviour are effective and contribute to the positive atmosphere in the school. There are a number of procedures for assessing pupils' progress which are satisfactory at present, but the school is appropriately reviewing these to ensure that they are more effective in enabling pupils to build on their skills.

The headteacher has been effective in involving the school in local community projects. Links with parents are good and they have a positive view of the school. The departments have developed very good systems that ensure parents are informed of the different expectations as their child moves up through the school. Most parents support their children's homework, listening to them read. A small number help in school by providing support to staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has ensured that national initiatives have been put in place and has appropriately delegated roles and responsibilities to staff. He has recognised the need to develop the school's provision and is working closely with the local education authority to improve and extend teachers' expertise. The deputy headteacher has successfully developed strategies to support teachers in managing pupils' behaviour and heads of department are effective in ensuring that their staff work well together and there is a clear identity for each department. However there are weaknesses in checking what is happening in school and in the role of the governing body.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and have ensured that appropriate committees are in place. However they do not have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are not effectively involved in moving the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. There are no formal systems for checking that the work of the school is consistently effective. Planning for developments are not based on an evaluation of where the school is and where it wants to go. Priorities are not formally evaluated or checked. The school has not set itself targets and as a result cannot check how well it is doing.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funds are used well and staff deployed appropriately. However school developments are not costed effectively.

Staffing is adequate. A number of specialist teachers enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory although in some areas of the curriculum including English and science for pupils over the age of eleven, resources are insufficient. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school benefits from a swimming pool and a number of specialist rooms that are of good quality, including the design and technology room and food technology room. Outside play facilities, particularly for the youngest pupils, are good. However, the playground surfaces are uneven and not safe in a number of places. Forty percent of the school is based in temporary classrooms and pupils in these classrooms have to use outside toilets; there is no social area for older pupils and no library. Changing facilities are inappropriate. The hall is used for physical education and as a dining room and is not big enough for older pupils to do a range of activities. The science room is cramped and lacks adequate resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress. • Their children like school. • Their children's behaviour has improved. • Always welcome to visit . • Staff are approachable. • The range of trips and residential opportunities their children get. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents felt that they were not sufficiently well informed of how their child was getting on. • A small number felt that there was not enough homework.

The team agrees with parents' positive views. During the inspection there was evidence of a number of classes being given homework and in the primary department there is a clear expectation that pupils will read at home on a regular basis. The team therefore does not support parents' views about this aspect. The school provides detailed reports once a year and parents are welcome to discuss their children's progress with teachers at any time. However because pupils' targets are not always specific it is difficult for parents to track how well their children are doing. The inspection team agrees with parents' concerns with regard to this point.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The vast majority of pupils make good progress because of effective teaching.

1. Pupils make good progress overall and develop their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. This is a direct result of the very hard work and commitment of their teachers. Pupils start school with low levels of attainment particularly in literacy and numeracy. By the time they leave school in Year 11 nearly all, regardless of their ethnic background and gender, will have gained accreditation in ASDAN.
2. In the primary department pupils make good progress because there is effective planning to ensure pupils' needs are met. For the youngest pupils work is appropriately based on the Foundation stage and nearly all make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and answer questions about them. They share books with staff and try to track the words turning the pages when asked. By the time they reach Class 3 pupils are developing confidence in speaking and listening and most communicate their needs well. For older pupils in the primary department there is a very effective focus on literacy and numeracy. This enables pupils to develop good skills in English and mathematics. They respond well to the structure of lessons and move from group work to individual work without fuss. Planning is good in the primary department because of the focus on developing pupils' skills; for example pupils will have a whole class lesson based on the National Literacy Strategy and another based entirely on developing their individual skills linked to the targets set at their annual review. In reading pupils are beginning to recognise familiar words and show enjoyment of the stories they hear. By Year 6 more able pupils spell words such as "cat", "dog" and "man" independently. Pupils dictate their stories to staff and then copy write these into their books. Most are able to read these back showing pride in the work they have done. In mathematics teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy well and as a result pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils sort shapes and most count to ten with confidence. They count using 1p, 2p and 5p and are developing their skills in ordering objects in size, shape and colour. In science they make satisfactory progress. They classify animals for example, by whether they are day or night creatures and understand that plants need light and water. In physical education pupils benefit from specialist teaching and listen well to instructions. They get a good range of experiences for example, learning to play indoor hockey. In all other subjects progress is good.
3. Overall progress in Years 7,8 and 9 is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge in most subjects. By Year 9 pupils' progress has slowed slightly in English but remains good in mathematics. Teachers have worked unguided in English over the last two years and have been dependent on support from the primary head of department. Although this has been effective and teaching has ensured that pupils make progress not all teachers are confident in the subject. As a result pupils' progress in English has not been as good as in other subjects. The quality of teaching varies and there are weaknesses in the work that is provided. For example, pupils in Year 9 respond to questions about Oliver Twist and use a good range of vocabulary when describing Fagin. However, there are errors in the worksheet provided to pupils and opportunities for pupils to develop skills in extended writing are missed. For example instead of asking pupils to write in detail about Fagin they are asked to write

short sentences all starting with "Fagin" and finish off the work by drawing a picture of Oliver asking for more. Pupils make good progress in reading because there is a very effective system for ensuring that all pupils read to a member of staff at least twice a week. Teachers continue to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and most pupils are confident to contribute to discussions and listen well to each others' views. In mathematics pupils continue to make good progress. Teachers mark pupils' work well which ensures they know where they have made mistakes. Planning is effective in extending pupils' skills. By Year 9 they learn to tell the time and add and subtract in units. More able pupils work on adding hundreds, tens and units and they continue with their work on money using a wider range of coins. Teachers develop pupils' skills in problem solving, for example, looking at the cost of items and working out how much change they will get. In science pupils make satisfactory progress developing their skills and knowledge but are not effectively taught about safety in the laboratory. They understand how temperature can change the size of materials, carrying out simple experiments and record what they do using appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils develop a growing understanding of circuits drawing diagrams to show the route of a current and they enjoy opportunities to carry out experiments. Teaching is satisfactory in information and communication technology. One class in Year 7 has separate lessons in this subject and progress for this group in lessons is good because teaching is effective. Pupils combine text with graphics and use the internet to visit a Victorian website. Teachers use computers in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils create graphics using a drawing programme and are beginning to understand how to email. Teachers encourage pupils to use the digital camera and transfer pictures into documents and this has been very successful in producing booklets about the work they have done. However, there is insufficient whole school planning to ensure that they extend on their skills as they move through the school.

4. By Year 11 the vast majority of pupils have made good progress in their learning. The leaver's programme is based almost entirely on ASDAN accreditation and opportunities to prepare for life when they leave school. In English pupils' writing skills are developed through a range of activities including setting out details of what is required of a receptionist. Pupils have some opportunity to do extended writing when they complete work experience diaries however opportunities to extend their skills in imaginative writing are limited. Their reading skills continue to be developed although the school recognises the need to invest in an age appropriate reading scheme. In mathematics pupils' learning is well linked to the National Curriculum and ASDAN accredited course. They continue to develop their skills in multiplication and work on time, length, weight and capacity. Pupils extend their knowledge in practical maths by carrying out surveys, working with money and costing activities such as decorating a room. Progress in science is satisfactory because the range of experiences is not as wide as it is for younger pupils and is not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. In information and communication technology teachers continue to concentrate on developing pupils' skills in word processing. Pupils also learn to use spreadsheets to record information in mathematics and work such as that studied in the enterprise project.
5. The school has consciously focussed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and as a result pupils make good progress in this aspect. Teachers encourage discussion in lessons and value pupils' contributions so that they are confident to share their ideas. For example in a Year 8/9 English lesson pupils were given good opportunities to suggest what the poem they had read was about. When the teacher points out that it is about water one pupil is confident enough to point out that nowhere in the poem is water mentioned. Where needed pupils benefit from one to one sessions to develop their speaking and listening skills. These are taken by the speech and language therapist and a member of the support staff who has been given training in this area. These sessions are effective in improving pupils' skills.

6. Teachers make good use of personal, health and social education lessons to provide opportunities for discussions and involvement in drama. Circle time is being developed in classes and this enables pupils to talk about their day and problems they have in school. Drama enables pupils to develop confidence in speaking to audiences and parents commented on how pleased they were that their children could stand up and speak in front of a hall full of people. The school has worked hard in developing this aspect and the school performances contribute a great deal to improve pupils' learning. For example last year's school play, based on life in Africa, was very effective in promoting pupils' knowledge of history, geography and social and moral issues linked to the slave trade and colonisation. The Christmas performance was based on "The Christmas Carol" and displays were used well to give pupils an understanding of what life was like in Victorian times.
7. Reading is well promoted across the school. In the primary classes teachers ensure that pupils read at least twice a week to a member of staff and parents are encouraged to hear pupils read at home. Four days a week there is a lunch time reading club run by support staff. This time is used well and provides opportunities for older pupils to listen to younger pupils read. There is also a story club once a week in which a teacher reads a range of stories to pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school uses good incentives such as awarding a credit to those pupils who attend and this ensures that the clubs are well supported. Support assistants are meticulous in recording what pupils have read but have been given insufficient guidance on how to check and record pupils' understanding of the texts. This is particularly relevant for those pupils who read well and often have comments such as "excellent reading" but no indication of how much they understood. As teachers use these records to ascertain pupils' progress more effective records need to be kept for those pupils who are independent readers.

Behaviour is very good, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and relationships with each other and staff are very good.

8. Behaviour is very good because the school has developed good systems to encourage pupils to behave well. The school has recognised that a number of pupils have behaviour difficulties and that a more structured approach was needed to help them improve. A lot of work has been done in this area including a full review of the behaviour policy and training for all staff. Since the headteacher's appointment the deputy has been given the role of supporting teachers and improving behaviour. This he has done very effectively and staff very much appreciate his support. There are a range of strategies that help pupils to behave well. For example there are clear expectations of what is expected and good rewards' systems that pupils value. Each class has adapted and developed its methods for rewards. For example pupils in the primary get smiley faces whilst older pupils gain credits. Equally each department has different ways of recognising achievements in this area. For example the middle department has a picture on the wall of the "star of the week". A number of classes have their own rules or targets and these are displayed clearly on their classroom wall.
9. For those pupils who need more encouragement to behave the school has initiated a link teacher system. Pupils who are involved fully appreciate this. One such pupil was able to explain who his link teacher was and what her role was. He knew he could go to her if there was a problem or when he had done well as she gave him a lot of encouragement. Teachers work well with pupils, providing them with advice and a place to go where they can talk.
10. Pastoral support plans have been developed for those pupils who have particular difficulties. Class teachers consider which pupils may need this extra support and in consultation with the deputy headteacher they develop a plan which will address this. Records show that these systems have been effective and parents are very positive about the improvements in their children's behaviour.

11. Pupils clearly enjoy school and are cheerful and friendly. They work hard in lessons concentrating very well on the tasks set. This was evident in Year 6 physical education (PE) lesson where pupils listened carefully to instructions and concentrated on trying to master the technique of getting the ball going in the right direction when hit by a hockey stick. In a number of lessons, including this PE lesson, pupils were used to working together and teachers promote this well. For example, in science lessons Year 9 pupils share equipment well and work together to complete experiments. Teachers' lively approach to lessons and their good use of humour makes lessons enjoyable.
12. Pupils get on well together. There were a number of occasions during the inspection when pupils showed concern for each other. For example, when an older boy hurt his wrist in the playground several pupils immediately went to see if he was alright. The school fosters this approach through encouraging older pupils to look after younger ones. They help them at lunch and break times as well as listening to them read. Meal times are pleasant occasions when pupils sit together and talk. Good manners are well promoted and older pupils are expected to look after younger ones. For example, an older pupil from the primary department explained to an inspector that he had to make sure the younger pupils on his table ate their lunch and behaved.

The very good links with the community provide pupils with a range of experiences that support their education well.

13. The school uses the community very effectively to develop pupils' learning. Pupils visit the local library each week and select books; there are visits to the local shops to support work in food technology and ASDAN. Younger pupils gain a knowledge of the area and increase their social skills through such visits.
14. Pupils develop their geographical knowledge well through visits to reservoirs, local parks, places such as Filey beach as well as taking part in residential on a farm. All of these enable pupils to increase their knowledge of living in different localities and understanding the difference between living in a city and life on a farm. They develop their understanding of maps and where places are in comparison to where they live. Their knowledge of weather is promoted well both in school and on trips and many identify the different seasons.
15. In history pupils develop an understanding of life in different times through their visits to Conisbrough Castle and local museums. Visits to Cusworth Hall and Kelham Island industrial museum have given pupils an insight into life in the Victorian period and the impact of the industrial revolution.
16. For older pupils in Years 10 and 11 the community is used well to support their work in preparation for life after school through working in local hotels and attending college. Visitors such as the police, firemen and school nurse contribute to pupils' awareness of a range of topics and enhance their personal, social and health education. Pupils' cultural development is well promoted through visits by theatre groups and musicians and there have been artists in residence.
17. The school ensures that it contributes to the community and there are good links with the local village. Pupils use the local church for their nativity and the vicar visits the school to take assemblies. The school has taken on responsibility for a section of the community gardens and pupils keep these tended. The community uses the school in the evenings for a range of activities such as a Youth Sport Project and it has been praised by the local community development worker for its interest and contribution to local initiatives.

18. The quality and range of residential trips are very good. All pupils have opportunities to go on these. For example pupils in Years 5/6 stay four nights in a large Victorian house. Year 6 stay at a local farm and older pupils go to Northumberland camping or and stay in a guesthouse. Years 9 and 10 pupils' visit to France supports the curriculum well. Parents are very happy about these opportunities especially since for some it is the first time they have experienced such activities. These trips develop pupils' independence and self esteem and are very effective in cementing the already good relationships they have with each other and staff.
19. Although the school has developed good links with local colleges to support pupils in years 10 and 11 there are no other arrangements for pupils to study in mainstream schools. It is unsatisfactory that the opportunity to develop their learning and social skills through working in different settings as well as benefiting from the wide range of facilities is not available to all pupils.

The leavers' programme is very effective in preparing pupils for when they leave school.

20. Planning for the leavers' programme is good and ensures that the needs of pupils are met well. There are effective aims which reflect the expectations of staff. The course is reviewed each year and adapted to reflect the needs of the pupils moving into Year 10. The links with local colleges are very good. For example a course focussed on business and communication is taught by the college tutor but planned by school staff. The work pupils cover is linked to ASDAN accreditation however higher attaining pupils do not have opportunities to take more academically challenging courses.
21. Year 10 and 11 pupils attend college half a day a week. The courses promote literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology well. Pupils learn a range of skills including filing, how the office postal system works, computer/keyboard skills and aspects of health and safety in the office. In Year 11 pupils have opportunities for half a day a week to take part in vocational courses. These develop their skills and knowledge of work outside school. Courses include bricklaying, joinery, art and textiles and painting and decorating.
22. There are good opportunities for work experience. These are planned well to meet individual needs. Those who are less confident are supported through work experience in school. This entails activities such as working in the primary department supporting pupils and helping in the office at lunch times. For others work experience is in the community working for example in a local hotel. Careers education and guidance supports these opportunities well and there is an appropriate emphasis on life skills development.
23. The leavers' programme aims to prepare pupils for life after school and there is an effective curriculum which enables pupils to develop their independence. Pupils are encouraged to travel to and from school or college independently. They also develop social and community skills such as road safety, shopping and using a café.

Links with parents are good.

24. The majority of parents feel that they can approach the school if they have concerns and that the school works closely with them. The school encourages an open door policy and parents commented that they know they are welcome to come into school at any time. A small number of parents work in school and support teachers well, for example, by listening to pupils read.
25. There are good strategies to keep parents informed of the next stage of their child's education. Each department arranges a parents' evening so that parents know the different expectations such as when their child moves from the primary department to the middle

school department. There are various open days. For example after the nativity service parents are able to visit their child's class and see the work they are doing. Parents' commitment is reflected in the one hundred per cent attendance to the Class 1 open day.

26. Parents of primary aged pupils are kept informed about their child's day through the home school book. These are appropriately not continued for secondary aged pupils as the school is keen to encourage independence. However, where it is thought pupils may need the support of a home school book to communicate the day's activities then its use is continued. Parents of Year 10 pupils are kept informed about work experience and careers and attend a meeting at which colleges of further education, the careers service and teachers are present.
27. Attendance at school events reflects parents' positive commitment. For example 160 people attended the school's last drama production. The school ensures that there are plenty of opportunities for parents to visit. Apart from events such as Harvest festival, plays and sports day, there is a themed café each year and "restaurants" run by leavers as part of their food technology course.
28. The majority of parents support their child's learning at home well. Each department informs parents of the expectations with regards to homework and teachers expect work to be completed. In the primary department pupils are expected to read at home on a regular basis. In other parts of the school such as in mathematics for Year 11 pupils complete homework based on learning vocabulary linked to pay slips and this supports their learning well. However there is no whole school homework policy that would outline the school's expectations clearly. As a result at the inspectors' parents' meeting there was some confusion as to how homework was provided, many thinking it was just for those pupils who wanted to do it.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are serious health and safety concerns.

29. During the inspection a number of health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the head teacher. These include:-
 - o The child protection policy is inaccurate and still refers to the previous headteacher. When consulted only two out of six staff knew who they should go to if they had concerns.
 - o There is no evidence of recent fire drills and the school was unable to supply details of the last fire drill. Staff were unable to recall when this had been done.
 - o Although there are effective risk assessments for trips to various local facilities there are none for other aspects of the school's provision. This is a cause for concern as a number of health and safety issues were raised particularly in science. For example pupils carried out a dangerous experiment without goggles and they are unaware of issues such as tying long hair back when conducting experiments.
 - o There is no evidence of an audit of the health and safety aspects of the school site.
 - o There is no extraction fan in the science room so that when there are fumes there is no safe method for ensuring that they are cleared from the room.

- o Playground surfaces are uneven in a number of places and this makes it dangerous for pupils to run and play on.

Procedures for checking the work that goes on in the school are unsatisfactory.

30. The head teacher and senior management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of most aspects of the school's provision. This is because they visit lessons and have an overview of what is being taught. However because there are no formal procedures to monitor what is happening they do not have the means to address weaknesses.
31. For example although on balance teaching is good overall because of the hard work of the staff, where there are weaknesses these are not being dealt with. A number of teachers in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not effective in planning their lessons to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Heads of departments team teach with those in their department and this has provided them with an insight into how their staff work. It has also enabled them to share good practice. However the lack of any formal structure to these arrangements makes it difficult for heads of departments to have a set of criteria against which they can make judgments and feedback to staff on the quality of their teaching. The biggest impact on the lack of monitoring has been in English in Years 7,8 and 9. where a range of teachers teach the subject. A lot is dependent upon the teachers' own skills in teaching but where there are weaknesses these go unchecked and there is no system for addressing them. Pupils are set worksheets that do not challenge them and do not extend their knowledge. Hence more able pupils who are independent readers do worksheets based on simple words such as "man", "hat" when they are capable of doing far more difficult work.
32. Aspects of health and safety have not been dealt with because of the lack of monitoring. This is particularly evident in the teaching of science where a number of unsafe practices were observed during the inspection.
33. Teachers' timetables are established by the headteacher and senior management team. This provides them with a clear overview of what should be happening in lessons. However not all decisions are carefully thought through to ensure that all pupils will get the same experiences as they move through the school. For example, one Year 7 class has 2 lessons of ICT but no French where the other Year7/8 class gets no ICT lessons. Senior staff are also not helped by the fact that there is no curriculum policy to support their planning. Teachers' planning is checked in the primary department by the head of department and in Years 10 and 11 planning is well supported by the accredited course that pupils study. However in Years 7, 8 and 9 planning is not closely monitored. In mathematics where there is an appropriate plan of work for teachers to follow, planning is satisfactory. In other subjects, such as English teachers are left very much to themselves to organise and plan what they will teach.
34. The school's approach to the teaching of information communication technology is that it should be taught as part of pupils' work in other subjects. But there is no system for monitoring what pupils learn as they move through the school. Pupils learn to word process in English and have done some graph work in maths and developed skills in other subjects such as graphics and using digital cameras. However there is no planning that will tell teachers what skills pupils should have acquired by the time they leave. Although the co-ordinator gathered information about the work teachers had covered in their subjects, this information has not yet been used to consider where the gaps in provision were and how to improve the range of skills pupils develop.
35. There are a number of systems for recording the work pupils have completed. However there is no monitoring of these to ensure that they have been filled in and are kept up to date. Although teachers grade and assess pupils' work to assess what level they have reached, the

school has not established systems for checking this or enabling teachers to assess pieces of work together to ensure that their grading is in line with everyone else's. Because there is no member of staff appointed to co-ordinate assessment there is no effective system to ensure that this aspect is monitored.

36. Governors are very supportive but do not effectively monitor the work of the school. They are over reliant upon the headteacher's reports and have no system for checking what is happening in school or what are the strengths and weaknesses. The literacy and numeracy governors have gone into lessons based on these aspects but have not fed back their findings to the whole governing body. As a result the governing body has not benefited from the views of these governors about the school's provision for literacy and numeracy. Governors are unaware of what policies need updating or in fact which policies exist. For example they are unaware of the lack of a curriculum policy or the errors in the child protection policy. A small number of staff have done presentations about certain areas of the curriculum including ICT, literacy and numeracy and residential visits but this has not provided governors with a full picture of how the curriculum works, such as the rolling programme of topics in Years 3 to 9.
37. The school development plan highlights areas in which the school can develop its provision. Many of these areas are appropriately based on government initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and performance management. However there is no system for governors or the senior management team to regularly monitor and analyse how successful developments have been. The plan is underpinned by a series of action plans but these are of varying quality. Although some, such as the mathematics action plan, are well detailed and costed appropriately, others are less specific and this makes it difficult for the school in relation to its financial planning. There is no clear focus on how the school is to move forward and how staff and governors see the school developing in the next four to five years. This is because there has been no formal evaluation or monitoring of the school's present position.
38. The school has begun to collect data about pupils' achievements based on assessments using "P" levels. Although this was done previously, last year's results were not sent out to be collated. The school has not used the information it has to set itself targets by which it can monitor how well it is doing and as a consequence it is not meeting its responsibilities to do this.

Arrangements to meet the needs of the small number of pupils with additional special needs and more able pupils are unsatisfactory.

39. Targets are set for each pupil at their annual review. These targets are based on developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. However they vary in quality and many are very broad. Most teachers appropriately refer to pupils' targets in their planning and make every effort to ensure that pupils' skills are developed. However there is no process by which the targets can be reviewed on a more regular basis than once a year. Thus the school has no system for checking whether the pupil has achieved the targets or whether they are appropriate until the next annual review.
40. Because targets are very broad they are difficult at times to achieve and as a result a number of pupils have similar targets for two or three years in a row. For example one pupil's target for 98/99 was numbers to 20; this target was reset in 99/00. Targets are not sufficiently well focussed to enable teachers to measure progress or for the pupil to achieve. For example a pupil was set the target of practising number recognition up to 50. This was despite the fact that assessment showed the pupil to have difficulty recognising numbers over 15.

41. Planning to meet pupils' needs varies. In the primary department it is good because teachers follow the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and incorporate into their lessons planning for individual pupils. However, this is not consistent for older pupils. For example in a Year 7 English lesson pupils worked on computers to fill in missing words in a story based on "The Lazy Lion". However, the texts were all the same and although challenging for the majority of pupils a few needed support as they struggled to read the text let alone complete the task set. Equally in a Year 11 maths lesson the teacher ensures that the less able pupils are supported by the classroom assistant but the task is the same and these pupils struggle to complete the work.
42. For the small number of more able pupils there is insufficient focus on ensuring that they are challenged. In lessons teachers adapt their questioning to meet the needs of these pupils. In a Year 11 maths lesson the teacher asked the more able to answer quite difficult problems and expected them to work it out in their heads. However, the pace of the work was determined by the majority of pupils and at times the most able pupil became frustrated with the slowness of the responses. There was not the opportunity for these pupils to start the task earlier and work independently. In Years 10 and 11 pupils complete the ASDAN course and gain accreditation in this as well as a range of non-academic subjects such as St John's 1 cross/2 cross award. Although this is appropriate for the majority of pupils there are insufficient opportunities for more able pupils to take more academic based accredited courses.
43. For those pupils with specific special needs such as autism, aspects of their provision are not being met. For example one autistic pupil's communication needs are not met as the school has not persisted with the use of Pecs. Teachers are still developing their skills in working with pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and are not yet sufficiently trained in understanding these pupils' needs. This is reflected in the targets set for these pupils. For example one autistic pupil's targets included "to be more interactive"; "to play alongside other pupils" "to communicate greetings and needs". Although these may be appropriate as very long term targets they are not effective in supporting the pupils' needs at present. A number of pupils' statements have not been signed and as such are not legal documents. This is unsatisfactory.
44. Teachers are not helped by the fact that the assessment policy is dated 1994 and does not reflect current requirements. Equally although there is comprehensive guidance to support completion of the annual review this has not been reviewed since 1998 and does not reflect current guidelines. Although this area is not in the school's development plan, the headteacher recognises that assessment needs to be reviewed and this process has started in mathematics. Recording has been appropriately adapted to reflect "P" levels. This provides a good record of what pupils know understand and can do. However, it does not provide information about how much they know in relation to what has been taught. The co-ordinator has recognised this and is referencing worksheets in line with key skills which will give teachers a better way of measuring pupils' progress.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

45. Much has been done by the caretaker in improving the décor of the school and this has ensured that the premises look well cared for. As a result pupils treat it with respect and there is no evidence of vandalism. However accommodation is unsatisfactory. This is because:-
 - o 40% of classrooms are based in temporary buildings based in the playground.
 - o those pupils in the temporary classrooms have to use outside toilets.
 - o There are no appropriate indoor sports facilities for older pupils.

- o The science laboratory is cramped.
- o there is no library and no social area for the oldest pupils.
- o access to one class can only be gained by going through another classroom.
- o there are no adult changing rooms in the swimming pool area.
- o changing facilities for pupils doing PE are unsatisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The headteacher, staff and governors should:

I. With the support of the LEA the school should as a matter of urgency address the serious health and safety concerns. This should include:

- o An audit of all aspects linked to health and safety.
- o Update the child protection policy to ensure it reflects the correct named person and ensure all staff are familiar with the procedures.
- o Carry out risk assessments for all activities.
- o Ensure health and safety is more closely monitored particularly in science lessons.
- o Carry out fire drills.
- o Address all the other issues raised by the team.

(paragraphs 29,32)

II. Establish systems for monitoring all aspects of the school's provision. This should include ensuring:-

- o There is a curriculum policy which reflects what the school is planning to teach.
- o Procedures are in place to monitor the curriculum and timetables are balanced so that all pupils receive the same education.
- o There is an effective curriculum for ICT that can be monitored to ensure pupils develop their skills in the subject.
- o School developments reflect a clear shared vision for the school and these are evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis.
- o Governors take a more active and evaluative role in developing the school.
- o There are whole school targets set for pupils' achievements.
- o Developing systems that enable the senior management team and subject co-ordinators to check the quality of teaching to ensure it is of a consistently high quality.
- o Teachers complete assessment procedures on a regular basis.

(paragraphs 31,33,34,36,37,38)

III. Improve planning for those pupils with additional special needs and the small number of more able pupils by ensuring :-

- o Targets set at annual reviews are more effective in supporting pupils' progress by being more relevant and achievable and are monitored on a regular basis.
- o Systems for assessment that will enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress more effectively.
- o Teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils.
- o Teachers' expertise in working with autistic pupils is improved.

(paragraphs 35, 39-44)

IV. Improve accommodation in the areas where there are weaknesses.

(paragraph 45)

V. The following minor areas for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- o Pupils are provided with opportunities to integrate in mainstream schools.
- o Ensure pupils' statements are signed and fulfil statutory requirements.
- o Develop a better system for recording pupils' progress in reading.
- o Clarify the homework policy and ensure it is understood by parents.

(paragraphs 7,19,28,43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

17

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number			10	7			
Percentage			59	41			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	61

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Exam results for pupils in Year 11. 1999/2000

Examination	Number of pupils entered	Total % of passes
Preliminary cookery certificate	12	67
Basic food hygiene	10	30
NEAB U of accred. Restaurant	12	83
NEAB U of accred reception duties	12	83
NEAB U of Accred. French	12	42
NEAB U of accred: enterprise	12	92
Youth awards - Bronze	12	92
Youth awards – silver	12	75
St John's One Cross	12	100
St John's Two Cross	4	100
Trident work experience	12	92
Trident personal challenge	12	100
Trident community involvement	12	92
Trident Gold award	12	83
Vocational Experience	12	83
Business and communication	12	100

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9

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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.75
Average class size	10.77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	363

been set aside to improve buildings

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99-00
----------------	-------

	£
Total income	840915
Total expenditure	809991
Expenditure per pupil	5705
Balance brought forward from previous year	22479
Balance carried forward to next year	53403*

* part of this money has

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	140
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	24	5	5	2
My child is making good progress in school.	59	27	5	7	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	41	10	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	27	10	10	12
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	20	17	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	12	5	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	24	7	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	56	22	7	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	71	20	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	27	5	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	24	0	0	12