

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MUNTHAM HOUSE**

Horsham

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126154

Principal: Mr R Boyle

Reporting inspector: Mr T Richardson  
16500

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th December 2000

Inspection number: 223670

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special: emotional and behavioural difficulties

School category: Non-maintained

Age range of pupils: 8 – 18 years

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: Barns Green  
Horsham  
West Sussex

Postcode: RH13 7NJ

Telephone number: 01403 730302

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr V Jennings

Date of previous inspection: May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr T Richardson 16500	Registered Inspector	Art and design	How high are standards; how well are pupils taught; how well is the school led and managed
Ms S Stock 9147	Lay Inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils; how well does the school work in partnership with parents; residential provision
Ms E Mildner 18206	Team Inspector	Mathematics; history; religious education; equality of opportunity	
Mr G Essex 1358	Team Inspector	English; physical education; special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Ms J Taylor 17260	Team Inspector	Science; design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Ms A Sydney 20622	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology; geography	Provision for students post-16

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The Registrar  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Muntham House is a non-maintained, residential, special school for boys aged 8 to 18 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 pupils on roll, 38 resident and 10 attending daily, with three students post-16 attending local colleges and work placements full time. The majority of pupils are from white European backgrounds and there are no pupils with English as an additional language or claiming free school meals. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and are placed at the school by a number of local education authorities, from as far away as Wales. Most pupils enter the school with attainment levels below average for their age, usually as a result of disruption to their previous education.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Muntham House is a good school that is rapidly improving. Achievements are rising and teaching is improving as a result of excellent leadership from the principal and senior managers. The school now has many strengths, makes a significant difference in the lives of its pupils and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Benefits from excellent leadership that is rapidly improving the quality of provision and raising standards. This is particularly successful in improving the quality of teaching, supported by very good appraisal and professional development
- Promotes very good relationships and consistent and fair behaviour management that help pupils to develop good behaviour and attitudes to their learning
- Enables pupils to achieve well so they are motivated to improve their behaviour through academic success.
- Promotes a school community with full inclusion of all staff and pupils. This benefits from a positive ethos and shared values, based on the school's aims and vision for improvement, that results in a good capacity for continued improvement
- Provides residential provision of high quality with an exceptional range of leisure activities that extend the curriculum effectively over 24 hours. This makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Makes very good provision for students post-16
- Has very good links with parents through the success and very good practice of the family induction team
- Makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development

#### **What could be improved**

- The curriculum, to include: music; a modern language; religious education at Key Stage 4; consistent provision for information and communication technology; and opportunities to study the expressive arts.
- Standards could be further raised in mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education.
- Staffing levels could be more consistent so learning support assistants are available throughout the school day.
- Pupils could have a forum for expressing their views routinely to senior managers.
- Attendance figures need to be routinely collated and reported.

*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 May 1998. Since then, good improvement has taken place overall, and the school has successfully risen out of 'serious weaknesses'. New leadership of outstanding quality is successfully managing change at a very fast rate. There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching; the professional development of staff; and in procedures for assessing pupils' attainments. Good improvement has taken place in pupils' achievements; parents are provided with much better information and school improvement is driven by a good development plan that is monitored well. Satisfactory progress has been made in raising standards in mathematics; implementing schemes of

work for all subjects; and in planning the curriculum. The school is continuing to improve and many of the areas identified through inspection are already included as priorities in the school development plan.

## 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 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	very good	A
Reading	B	good	B
Writing	B	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	C	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		

Most pupils enter the school with attainment that is below average for their age. The Year 2000 National Curriculum test results show that pupils make at least satisfactory progress over their time in school. GCSE results, for pupils in Year 11 in July 2000, are significantly better than the results for EBD special schools nationally. Year 11 pupils were also successful in attaining pass, merit and distinction grades in Certificate of Educational Achievement courses. This 'passage' through school from disaffection and low attainment on entry to GCSE and other accreditation success by the age of sixteen represents good achievement. Students in the post-16 provision continue to build on their success and do well in their college courses. The school has set appropriate targets for the number of GCSE entries and successes in 2001 and is expected to achieve them. Standards have improved, and pupils achieve well in English, science and art. They are also currently achieving well in geography and history. There has been a steady rate of success in mathematics and design and technology. Standards in physical education, however, are not as high as they were, and are limited by the lack of facilities in the school. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are restricted by the lack of consistency in the way the subject is taught. In mathematics, while pupils' achievements are satisfactory, they are not as high as in English and science due to teachers concentrating on completing calculations rather than teaching pupils to understand what they are doing. Currently, standards in art are showing the biggest improvement with pupils attaining at levels above the average expected of mainstream schools. Insufficient evidence was seen in religious education to judge pupils' standards. In addition, pupils' achievements are restricted by the lack of provision for music or a modern language. Pupils achieve well in improving their behaviour. They make a good response to the points system and benefit from its consistent application in classroom and residence. Pupils know their targets for improvement and try hard to meet them. Pupils do well in developing and using effective strategies for avoiding conflict and are quickly motivated to keep calm so they can make the most of the opportunities they have for academic and leisure pursuits.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their school. They are polite and keen to show their school in the best possible light.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. On occasions, lessons begin with unco-operative behaviour, but this usually subsides as interest in the activity grows. Pupils respond well to the behaviour 'points' system and are keen to learn. In the corridors and in the residential provision, behaviour is also predominantly good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils make choices about managing their own behaviour. Relationships are very good. Pupils and adults value and respect one another.
Attendance	Good. There is less authorised and unauthorised absence than in similar special schools.

Pupils grow in maturity and form valid opinions about their school that could be used more effectively by senior managers in making decisions about school improvement.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	good	good	no judgement*

*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. \*Students attend local colleges and are not taught within the school.*

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of all observations. The quality of teaching was good in 38 per cent of lessons, very good in 19 per cent and excellent in five per cent. Very good teaching is provided for careers education and guidance. There is consistently good teaching of English, science and art. Teaching is also good in geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in design and technology for Key Stage 4. Teaching is satisfactory in geography, ICT and design and technology in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics in all key stages. Lessons benefit from the good learning support assistants and there is a high degree of teamwork in the classrooms. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in three lessons (mainly physical education) due to ineffective time management. In English, teachers have high expectations and this elicits a very good response from pupils. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in all key stages. However, too many lessons involve pupils just 'getting on' with the next page in their textbook, instead of having 'whole group' teaching of mathematical concepts. The teaching of science is good. Many lessons give ample opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge through experimental and investigative work. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the emotional and behavioural needs of their pupils. They apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and award pupils their points and warnings fairly. Teachers are timetabled to provide support for behaviour and they carry out their duties well, responding quickly to successfully prevent situations from escalating. They work well with individuals who may have been removed from class, calming them effectively so that they usually return to their learning without disrupting the rest of the pupils. Specialist teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and this helps to motivate pupils. In response, pupils apply good physical, intellectual and creative effort, particularly in Key Stage 4, as they work through their GCSE courses. All through the school, teachers work hard to provide the pupils with interesting lessons and help them to gain more knowledge and skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, so that their self-esteem is raised through success in learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good quality and range of learning opportunities is provided. The work done in school is very well complimented and extended by an exceedingly rich programme of evening activities. For students post-16, their curriculum provision is excellent with a full choice of further education courses.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Satisfactory provision for spiritual development; good provision for cultural development; and very good provision for social and moral development. Pupils learn about morality through taking consequences for their actions and the emphasis provided on fairness.
Residential provision	High quality residential provision makes an excellent contribution to learning and personal development. Care staff are of high calibre and very well qualified.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care provided, with very good procedures for child protection. Good assessment to monitor progress and very good procedures for improving behaviour through the points system.

Despite the current quality of the curriculum, pupils are unable to study music, a modern language or expressive arts such as drama. There is still work to do to ensure that pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement of information and communication technology, religious education and physical education. Also to ensure that attendance is recorded and reported appropriately. Parents have good views of the school and the family induction team provides a very good link between home and school. Pupils' weekly achievement cards and the school's newsletter are valued by parents and help them effectively to support behaviour and learning at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership from the principal, supported by a very strong head of education and head of care. Priorities for development are identified and acted upon very well. This is driving school improvement
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors have responded well to change and now operate as a sound body, with a clear commitment to improving their work and playing a greater part in the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. School leaders have a clear view of what is done well, what can be improved, and how it should be done.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial decisions are firmly linked to educational priorities and best value is sought at all times.

There are sufficient staff, but learning support assistants often finish work before the end of the school day, leaving some classes unsupported for the last lesson. Good accommodation is provided for most subjects, but there is a lack of facilities for physical education. There is an appropriate supply of learning resources in school and residence.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and become more mature and responsible</li> <li>• Teachers have high expectations, teach well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music and modern languages to be included in the curriculum</li> <li>• clearer arrangements for the setting of</li> </ul>

<p>and help their children to make good progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The school is approachable and takes notice of parents' concerns and suggestions</li> </ul>	<p>homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more consistent and improved communication between school and home</li> </ul>
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Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed above. They also agree that the school should include music and a modern language in the curriculum. Sufficient homework is set for pupils each week, but this information could be made clearer for parents. Inspectors judge that the family induction team is providing very good information and communication between home and school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Pupils make good achievements in almost all the subjects they study throughout their time at the school. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching, and the curriculum are having a positive impact on the number and grade of certificates pupils gain by the end of Key Stage 4, and standards overall are rising. There has been a major change in the philosophy of education provided by the school to promoting better behaviour through academic success. This is proving beneficial and the current Year 11 pupils generally behave maturely in lessons and around the school, their self-esteem and confidence raised by their pride in their academic achievements.
2. Most pupils enter the school with a history of disrupted education and are often disaffected from education by their experiences in mainstream schools. As a result, their attainment levels are below average for their age. This is seen in the Year 2000 National Curriculum test results. Most of the pupils in Year 6 in July 2000 scored results in English, mathematics and science at Level 3 or below, compared to the national average of Level 4. When these results are compared with those at the end of Key Stage 3, a clear improvement of two National Curriculum levels is seen, showing that pupils make at least satisfactory progress over their time in school. Most of the pupils in Year 9 in July 2000 scored results in English, mathematics and science at Level 4 or 5, compared with the national expectation of Level 5 or 6. The school's GCSE results, for pupils in Year 11 in July 2000, are significantly better than the results for EBD special schools nationally. In addition, a number of these pupils were also successful in attaining pass, merit and distinction grades in Certificate of Educational Achievement courses. This 'passage' through school from disaffection and low attainment on entry to GCSE and other accreditation success by the age of sixteen represents good achievement. Those pupils who continue into the post-16 provision continue to build on their success and do well in their college courses, with one student expressing regret that the improvements in the school's provision had come too late for him to take advantage and gain more GCSE qualifications!
3. Pupils achieve well in improving their behaviour over the time they are in school. They make a good response to the points system and benefit from its consistent application in classroom and residence. Pupils know their targets for improvement and try hard to meet them. Their records show that many pupils who came to the school with a history of violent aggression are now controlling their behaviours and growing in maturity. Pupils do well in developing and using effective strategies for avoiding conflict and are quickly motivated to keep calm so they can make the most of the opportunities they have for academic and leisure pursuits. Those pupils who go on to local colleges are well thought of by their peers and tutors and have successfully achieved acceptance as members of the college community. One student, for example, having recently been selected to formally represent his tutor group. Students achieve very well. Their college tutors report that the students are academically suited to their courses and that some could go on to further extend their qualifications. A measure of the success of the school's provision is that most of the students, who entered the school with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are enabled to independently take on further training and full time employment.
4. Since the last inspection, the accreditation results for pupils have improved in English, science and art. There has been a steady rate of success in mathematics and design and technology. Unfortunately, there has been a gap in the teaching of history and geography. This has now been rectified and pupils in Year 10 have begun GCSE courses in both subjects. Standards in physical education, however, are not as high as they were, and are limited by the lack of facilities in the school. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are restricted by the lack of consistency in the way the subject is taught. In mathematics, while pupils' achievements are satisfactory, they are not as high as in English and science due to teachers concentrating on

helping pupils to complete calculations rather than teaching them to understand what they are doing.

5. Inspection shows that, currently, standards in art are showing the biggest improvement with every Year 11 pupil predicted to attain GCSE grade C, and some of the Year 10 pupils already at this level. Every pupil in the school takes art GCSE in Year 11, compared to mainstream schools where pupils choose art as an option. In this respect, standards are above the average expected of mainstream schools and represent a considerable achievement for the pupils.
6. Pupils' achievements in English and literacy are good, and better than in similar special schools. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a varied vocabulary, talk confidently and make very good progress in their reading and writing. In Key Stage 3 and 4 they cover a wide range of work, both in their reading and writing, in the study of different genres of literature, for example. A good variety of well-chosen texts, including modern television scripts as well as Shakespeare and Dickens, engages pupils' interest and their written work shows good understanding of plot and character. Their reading skills, such as the recognition of whole words and the use of phonics to tackle more complex words, continue to develop well and they are beginning to use dictionaries and other reference books with more independence, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' achievements in mathematics and numeracy at Key Stages 2 and 3 are good and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have gaps in their mathematical understanding for instance, they know about probability but are unclear as to its relevance and hence need support to apply the theory. They are confident when applying a known method and understand for instance what factors are and how to find them, but are not secure in using that knowledge when confronted with a problem in a different context, for example, in translating percentages into fractions. The pupils' standards of attainment in science, shown by statutory tests and examination results, are above those in similar special schools. Pupils in all key stages make good progress in all aspects of the subject and this is good improvement since the last inspection.
7. Standards of attainment in design and technology (DT) were satisfactory in all lessons seen in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. They are good in Key Stage 4 where pupils are working towards GCSE. Attainment in Key Stage 2, however, is unsatisfactory overall since the programme is very narrow, focused mainly on introducing pupils to workshop practice and tools. Pupils achieve well in geography in relation to their prior attainment and there is an improvement in standards since the last inspection. Despite below average literacy skills, pupils in Year 10 are aiming at GCSE. Their work is closely geared to the examination course and they are gaining a good grasp of geographical terms. They are expected to achieve success in their examinations, though not at the highest grades. Pupils' achievements in history are good at all key stages and pupils at all key stages are making good progress. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is higher and the pupils' rate of progress is improving. The curriculum provided for pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) is inconsistent throughout the school. This lack of continuity affects standards and, as a result, they are below the expectation for the ability of the pupils. The most recent examination results have been poor compared to standards in other subjects. Despite the fact that pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress in some activities such as basketball, cross-country running and weight-training, overall achievements in physical education are unsatisfactory. This is because of the very narrow curriculum offered. There is not enough provision for indoor games, gymnastics, swimming or dance and opportunities for outdoor pursuits are very limited. Religious education is now consistently taught to pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3, but not yet at Key Stage 4, or to students post-16. Examples of teacher's planning in Key Stage 2 and 3 indicate that these pupils are now following an established scheme of work which is based on the locally agreed syllabus. However, insufficient evidence was seen to judge pupils' achievements. In addition, pupils are restricted in their achievements by being unable to study music or a modern language.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Pupils display good and positive attitudes to their school. They talk appreciatively of the many things they like about it. They are polite and helpful to visitors and are keen to show their school in the best possible light. They also talk in a mature manner about the improvements, both in their academic work and in their behaviour, which they feel they have made since coming to the school. Older pupils are also able to discuss areas of school life with which they are less satisfied, for example, bed times and what some see as the inadequacy of the rewards for consistently good behaviour. In general, however, pupils feel that the points system operated at the school is very fair and they are very clear about the criteria used. Good teaching, the very good work of care staff and very effective links with home are also important factors in pupils' enjoyment and sense of security in school.
9. Behaviour in lessons is predominantly good or better. Interest in the work, promoted by challenging teaching, is a particularly noticeable feature of good lessons and pupils are generally keen to learn. They work on their own with good concentration and though they sometimes find it more difficult to collaborate with others, some good examples of co-operating in pairs or small groups were noted during the week. They are aware of the close monitoring of their behaviour by staff and make good use of the support provided for them when problems arise. On several occasions during the inspection week, lessons got off to a bad start, with some noisy and unco-operative behaviour, but this usually subsided as interest in the activity grew. Outside the classroom, in the dining hall, for example, in the corridors and in the residential provision, behaviour is also predominantly good. Some use of bad language, which was reported before the inspection to be a concern of some parents, was noted during the week but was not judged to be a serious issue by inspectors as pupils were learning successfully to manage more important aspects of their behaviour. The rate of temporary exclusions is significantly higher than the average for schools of this type but this strategy is used to good effect for clearly understood reasons relating to violent behaviour. The incidence of permanent exclusions, however, is lower than average for schools of this type and demonstrates the impact temporary exclusions have on helping pupils to moderate their behaviour. Most pupils are making good progress towards the targets for improving behaviour stated in their individual education plans in areas such as managing anger, following instructions and improving their relationships with other people. There are incidents of bullying but pupils are unanimous that these are dealt with very speedily and effectively by staff. Pupils develop a very clear awareness of the effect of their actions on others and respect and tolerance in their dealings with both their peers and adults are the norm.
10. Pupils are able to function well without constant adult supervision. Examples were noted during the week of pupils encouraging others to behave better. All are clear about the importance of being responsible for their own behaviour. Throughout the school there is an ethos of taking responsibility and making choices about how to act and behave. This builds on the foundation of very good relationships that exists. Despite petty grievances, pupils get on well with one another and respect individual differences. There are very good relationships with staff too and there is a valuing of individuals and of their self-worth. This leads to respect for one another and is influential in resolving any difficulties that arise. There are not many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in the day to day running of the school but they have made a mature contribution to the discussion of changes to the whole-school behaviour system. However, there is no regular forum through which pupils can convey their opinions and suggestions for school development to senior managers.
11. Attendance is good, with levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence being lower than average for schools of this type.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

12. There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This has been brought about by changes in staff and as a result of clear and purposeful leadership from the principal and head of education. In the lessons seen by inspectors, teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of all observations, compared to 78 per cent in the last inspection.

In May 1998, very few lessons were judged to be of good, or very good, quality. These figures have now risen significantly and teaching was judged to be good in 38 per cent of lessons, very good in 19 per cent and excellent in five per cent of all observations. The impact of this improvement is clearly seen in the way standards are rising, and in the motivation of the pupils, particularly in Key Stage 4, to work hard to attain good GCSE results by the time they leave school.

13. The quality of teaching is now judged to be good throughout the school. Inspirational teaching of history for Year 10, science for Year 7 and English in Key Stage 2 was observed. Very good teaching is provided for careers education and guidance. In all key stages, there is consistently good teaching of English, science and art. Teaching is also good in geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in design and technology for Key Stage 4. Teaching is satisfactory in geography, ICT and design and technology in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics in all key stages. All lessons benefit from the good contribution from learning support assistants and there is a high degree of teamwork in the classrooms between teachers and assistants. They have a detailed knowledge of the pupils and help with their behaviour and basic skills to keep lessons focused. Also, there is very good quality additional tuition provided for literacy support by three support assistants. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor in three lessons due to ineffective time management. Too high a proportion of these lessons were in physical education.
14. English is taught very well in Key Stage 2. Teachers provide a very well planned programme of work on the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing to which pupils respond with enthusiasm. There is a strong focus on spelling and expectations are high. As a result, pupils' oral and written work shows very good progress in both the vocabulary used and the range of writing attempted. The teaching of English in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good, and is notable, again, for teachers' high expectations and for the very good response this elicits from pupils. Teachers ask challenging questions, for example, on the use of imagery in Shakespeare and on the variations of language between different genres, and this is very effective in leading pupils to think more deeply about the work they are doing. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in all key stages. When teaching is good, the work set is challenging for each pupil and any mistakes are picked up precisely so that pupils are helped to overcome their difficulties. However, too many lessons involve pupils just 'getting on' with the next page in their textbook, instead of having lively mental calculation sessions and 'whole group' teaching of mathematical concepts. This is needed to help pupils extend their capacity for mental mathematics, and to develop their use of accurate vocabulary. The teaching of science is good throughout the school. In the exciting and imaginative lesson seen for Year 7 pupils, they were 'detective' scientists finding out what was in a mixture of liquids and solids. This also helped them to develop independence and excitement in learning so that the 'glow', and very positive behaviour, lasted well beyond the end of the lesson. Many lessons give ample opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge through experimental and investigative work. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are effectively developed through opportunities for recording data in graphs and tables and writing up experiments.
15. There is a high level of expertise in the staff who teach history so that lessons are presented in a lively and knowledgeable way and pupils are motivated to extend their understanding, often comparing ideas and facts from previous work and applying it to the current lesson. Teachers use a good range of resources, including extracts from contemporary evidence and accounts giving different points of view so that pupils are able to consider and discriminate between the evidence. Teachers have high expectations of good work and are very skilled in presenting written tasks with prompts and information sheets so that any pupil with weaker literacy skills is supported and their skills extended. Lessons are well structured with a variety of activities, such as in a lesson on the Vikings which included identifying and explaining the use of artefacts inside a Viking house as well as tasting 'Viking bread'. Within the space of the lesson, the pupils were able to talk about the Viking lifestyle from a basis of sound and accurate knowledge. In the excellent lesson seen, the teacher encouraged pupils to think deeply about the implications of the American election of 1932. By asking them to take sides and present their argument for and against Roosevelt, the pupils developed their expertise in interpreting evidence and also in extending their debating skills. The high standards in art are directly linked to the quality of teaching that is consistently good

throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils very well to think about their response to art and to discuss it in depth. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 benefit from specialist subject teaching. The teacher is very knowledgeable and talented. He brings a genuine love of art to each lesson that enthuses pupils and often leads to lessons buzzing with excitement as pupils discover more about art, other artists and how they are improving their own expression. A very good six step procedure for producing a final piece of work is clearly in place and this is followed carefully by all pupils, who also learn to work independently to deadlines to complete their projects ready for marking.

16. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the emotional and behavioural needs of their pupils. They apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and award pupils their points and warnings fairly. Teachers are timetabled to provide support for behaviour and they carry out their duties well, responding quickly to successfully prevent situations from escalating. They work well with individuals who may have been removed from class, calming them effectively so that they usually return to their learning without disrupting the rest of the pupils. Specialist teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and this helps to motivate pupils. In response, pupils apply good physical, intellectual and creative effort, particularly in Key Stage 4, as they work through their GCSE courses. All through the school, teachers work hard to provide the pupils with interesting lessons and help them to gain more knowledge and skills so that their self-esteem is raised through success in learning.
17. There is very good teaching of basic skills in Key Stage 2, and teachers take every opportunity to extend literacy and numeracy at all times. A good emphasis on basic skills is also provided in Key Stages 3 and 4 in most subjects. Teachers help pupils to improve skills such as note-taking, for example, in English where Year 9 pupils took notes throughout the lesson with the teacher increasing the pace of delivery so that pupils worked hard to write faster. Lessons are planned satisfactorily, with most teachers following the scheme of work for their subject. Planning is further aided in Key Stage 4 as teachers follow the syllabus for each of the examination courses followed. However, there are occasions when insufficient regard is given to the knowledge pupils may already hold in a subject. This is particularly evident in ICT where teachers do not plan sufficiently to build on the skills some pupils develop with their computers at home. Teachers have high expectations at all times in Key Stage 2, and this trend is carried on into most lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4. They also use a sound range of teaching methods. In the best lessons, pupils are able to learn through a variety of styles such as discussion, questioning, listening to information and seeing how things are done. In some lessons teachers provide a good range of work at different levels of difficulty so that each pupil has written work to complete that is matched effectively to their learning needs. However, this approach is not consistent in all classes. Teachers provide good management of their classes and observation shows that this is best where lessons are academically challenging and delivered at a sustained brisk pace. In most lessons, this is the case and time is used well, along with good deployment of support staff and good use of learning resources. There is good use of day to day assessment in most lessons to analyse where pupils have difficulty and to provide effective help with remediation. Homework is used satisfactorily to extend classroom experience and pupils receive a sufficient amount each week.
18. The good teaching is effective in helping pupils to develop good learning habits throughout the school. For example, in Key Stage 2 where pupils are encouraged to look up words in a thesaurus and do this independently when searching for the right vocabulary to use. Also, in history, pupils learn to listen to both sides of an argument before drawing conclusions and come to realise that events can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Pupils keep up a good productivity and pace of working when teachers use a lively pace and keep the focus on extending knowledge. Often, lessons settle down well and pupils concentrate and work independently for good lengths of time for example, in science, when developing their experiments and in art when persevering with their GCSE course work. Through teachers' use of the points system, pupils have a good knowledge of how well they are doing in managing their behaviour. In most subjects, they also know how well they are doing and this motivates older pupils, for example those in Year 11, to focus on their course work and gain accreditation. Throughout the school, pupils work hard to gain new knowledge skills and understanding – even when withdrawn from class on 'time out' they continue with their work to keep up with their peers.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided is very good for pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. The work that is done in school is very well complimented and extended by an exceedingly rich programme of evening activities. For students post-16, their curriculum provision is excellent with a full choice of further education courses and the development of independent living in well appointed school apartments.
20. The school aims to provide the full National Curriculum for its pupils, but does not yet do so. There is no discrete music provision, although pupils in Key Stage 2 cover some aspects of this in other lessons. A modern foreign language is not taught and religious education is not taught to pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils use computers throughout the school and there are many good quality learning experiences, but coverage of the appropriate programmes of study in information and communications technology (ICT) is insecure. In Key Stage 2, there are too few planned opportunities to develop ICT skills. In Key Stage 3, the focus for different year groups shows a lack of balance; ICT lessons for Year 8 are exclusively individualised learning in Mathematics and English, in Year 9 they are focussed on media education. The physical education programme is too narrow to meet National Curriculum requirements. Some subjects, such as the food technology aspect of design and technology are effectively extended by evening activities. This could be further improved if subject co-ordinators were more informed about what is undertaken and more involved with planning. Plans to develop the expressive arts curriculum, to include drama and music, are well advanced.
21. There are good systems for identifying pupils with literacy difficulties. These pupils now have effective remedial help, and information about their needs is shared with other teachers. There is very good frequent and regular communication between home, education and care staff to ensure that everyone is working together to help pupils develop positive ways of managing their own behaviour, and that any important factors are shared quickly. The provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is good. Teachers in all subjects ensure that pupils have opportunities for developing their reading and spelling. Although there are few occasions when pupils write at length, they are frequently asked to make notes, record results and write their own answers to questions. They also apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as drawing graphs, applying formulae in science or working out quantities of materials and costs in design and technology.
22. Evening and leisure activities provided by care and education staff are excellent. Pupils develop their own interests, participate in exciting activities, such as go-karting and night hikes. They join activities in the local community such as the Cadet Corps and the Cyber Café. They also do the sort of things that children do in families, for example, play computer games, spend pocket money and buy and cook their favourite food. Other activities include outings of all sorts, trips to places of interest, camping and residential activity holidays.
23. The school staff works hard to ensure that all pupils have full access to the range of activities. Day pupils can elect to remain after-school on occasions, and sometimes stay for weekend camps and expeditions. Pupils are helped to develop individual interests and follow courses, in line with their transition planning, that will help them build an appropriate portfolio of their achievements for further study and employment.
24. There is a planned programme of personal, health and social education for all pupils except those in Years 7 and 8. This should now be extended to include all classes. The school intends, appropriately, to develop this subject in line with the new Programme of Study for Citizenship. The activities and demands made by care staff also make a very positive contribution to this aspect of the school's work.

25. Careers and vocational education is very well organised and very good work is done to obtain appropriate work experience for pupils. The local careers officer plays a significant part in supporting teachers and pupils through this process. There is thorough and careful job preparation for work placements in very diverse settings. Recently pupils have, for instance, worked in retail, horticulture, child-care and with computers. Very good local connections are nurtured and employers are extremely pleased with the outcomes. This can be seen from the glowing references that each pupil has in his record of achievement.
26. The school has and maintains good links with other schools and organisations. There are very good links with mainstream schools. Muntham House, for example, is the local moderation centre for Art GCSE. The principal meets other special school headteachers regularly and plays a significant role in extending school and college provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some teachers attend local training events and benefit from new information and sharing experiences with mainstream teachers.
27. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the taught curriculum since the last inspection. However, there has been a marked improvement in the quality and range of experiences for boys at the school, the co-ordination between education and care, and the provision that is made to help boys overcome their individual difficulties. The school recognises that more work still needs to be done to meet the aim of giving pupils access to the full National Curriculum.

### **Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

28. The school is successful in providing for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection, there has been a good level of improvement in all aspects of this provision. The school's provision for spiritual development is now satisfactory. In religious education at both Key Stages 2 and 3, teachers plan specifically to enhance pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimensions in life. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged through learning Bible stories about the creation and the story of Noah to think about the wonders and mystery of our environment. Older pupils in Key Stage 3, whilst studying the customs and practices of major religions, have considered the role of meditation and prayer. In science, pupils are encouraged to realise the excitement of discovery and pupils out on a night hike experience a sense of wonder at the sky at night. In other subjects, opportunities to reflect and express wonder are not so well developed. The two daily assemblies, whilst not being acts of collective worship, are important occasions when community values are confirmed and public praise given.
29. The school's provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. At all levels and in all activities pupils are encouraged to realise the consequences of their actions and take responsibility for them. The school has clear and high expectations for doing the right thing, respecting self and acting with consideration for others. When pupils are in 'time out' they actively consider strategies for how they could have improved their behaviour and avoided being withdrawn from class. Pupils are expected to make amends for any wrong doing but are also given the choice and responsibility for how they will do that. There is a strong sense of making reparation without retribution and the system of rewards is seen to be transparent and fair. Teachers teach from a moral perspective particularly within the humanities where moral issues, for instance, moves to abolish slavery in the eighteenth century are compared with the exploitation of third world industrial workers today.
30. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school is a community where staff provide a very good role model and relationships are built upon valuing the contribution of each individual. Opportunities are grasped throughout the day and evenings to encourage every pupil to be part of that caring community. Meal times are enjoyable and relaxed social occasions where pupils are encouraged to share. After school activities give a wide range of social opportunities both in the house and in the locality where pupils develop confidence and, as they get older, take more responsibility. The Challenge 21 scheme, just started, enabled a group of pupils to learn the skills of decision making, coming to a consensus of opinion, planning and organising a group visit which every one enjoyed. There is not yet a school council, which would enable pupils to be more involved in decisions concerning the organisation of the school.

31. The school's provision for cultural development is good and is confirmed through specific elements of the humanities curriculum and in art. In Key Stage 2 in particular, pupils visit many places of historical interest including the Fishbourne Palace and the Downland museum. Art is a strength in the school and pupils enjoy visiting galleries including the Tate Modern as well as the National Gallery. Theatre visits and visiting actors all combine to give pupils a rich cultural experience. The school successfully develops an awareness of the richness of other cultures whilst addressing successfully the issues of prejudice and racism.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

32. The school has continued to build on the satisfactory support and guidance reported by the previous inspection and now has good provision overall, with some very good elements.
33. Procedures for child protection are very good and include good quality training for all staff, with clear guidelines and procedures. Day to day care of the pupils is very good. The health and welfare bursar keeps meticulous records of any incidents, treatments and medication. The pupils benefit from an on-site surgery but also have access to the bursar to talk informally and consult when the need arises. This is a feature of the life of the school, in that all the adults in the school are prepared to support the pupils informally, which is a very positive aspect of the care they receive and results in the development of very good relationships.
34. There have been major improvements since the last inspection in the school's assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development. The need to improve these procedures was identified as a key issue for action. There is now a clear and very structured system for the assessment of each pupil's progress with strong links between the annual review process and the setting of targets in the pupil's individual education plan. Annual reviews summarise very effectively the progress which has been achieved towards the previous targets and objectives. They are very useful and precise documents. Transitional reviews, however, do not address post-sixteen, joint-planning issues with sufficient detail or commitment. Tutors' and subject teachers' reports are generally of good quality. They are concise but provide clear evidence of the pupil's attainment levels and personal development. Appropriate targets are set for the following year and these are then broken down for more specific objectives in the individual education plan. Pupil's success in meeting these targets is regularly reviewed during the term by the form tutor and key worker. Subject teachers also set targets in their planning. Assessment of performance in subjects, although satisfactory, is more inconsistent in its quality. The use of assessment information to assist curricular planning is also variable between subjects. The school has, however, made very good progress from a situation where assessment was not being applied in most subjects. It is very clear about the need to further develop its systems with greater consistency. In the meantime, the quality and range of information on each pupil has greatly improved and in the "Annual Summary Document", for example, a very clear picture of each pupil's attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and Science since the previous year emerges, together with targets for the following year.
35. Another very good part of the school's work is the way in which the pupils' behaviour is monitored and good behaviour is promoted. The care and teaching staff work very closely together to help the pupils make progress in this. The staff consult together daily, exchanging written information through detailed and thorough documentation, so that everyone involved is fully informed. Pupils have personal targets which are reviewed every three weeks and which include expectations for school and residential care. Achievement points are gained when pupils reach their personal goals and this system is used to help pupils not only in their learning but also in their personal development. There is a very clear, structured plan, with which the pupils are very familiar and which they appreciate. They know what is expected of them and know that progress with their personal targets results in a choice of interesting and exciting activities such as outings and extra privileges.

36. The school is very quick to intervene when bullying or other unacceptable behaviour occurs. Pupils feel secure that this is so and spoke openly of this during the inspection. Pupils are fully involved with the reward and sanction process and contributed to the setting up of the present system. There is an open procedure for pupils to voice their concerns either via direct access to the Principal, an adult of their choice or an outside voluntary arbitrator. This is further supported by formal written records. A very important element in the support that pupils receive is the way in which the residential and school systems link successfully together. This is made possible by the open and shared philosophy of the two strands in the school's provision held together by a tight, formal structure.
37. The monitoring and improving of attendance is unsatisfactory at the moment. The school does not keep appropriate attendance data to enable it to monitor and improve it, including the movements of pupils during the school day. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. However the policy is not reviewed frequently enough nor is it applied with sufficient rigour across all aspects of the school's work including the curriculum.
38. There are some very good elements to the provision for promoting the pupils personal development, particularly in the care curriculum, for example pupils are encouraged to plan and organise extra curricular activities, also the recently introduced Challenge 21 which is based on personal challenges and life skills. The school's emphasis is on the pupils taking responsibility for themselves and encourages them to make the right choices in matters of behaviour and understanding the consequences of their actions. However there are still too few opportunities for the pupils to develop a real sense of responsibility for the way in which their school works and to contribute to the life of the school in a positive and constructive way.

## **Residential provision**

39. The school currently provides residential care for 38 boys, including three students in Year 12 who are housed in the post-16 apartments. Depending on the needs of the pupils, and where their homes are situated, they are able to go home every weekend or for a long weekend every three weeks.
40. The accommodation in the main building is of very good quality. The school has successfully created a welcoming, relaxing atmosphere in which the boys are able to experience a sense of 'home' once the school day is over. The use of examples of the boys' own work, paintings and drawings, to decorate the walls not only enhances their living areas but celebrates their achievements. This is supported further by the very good relationships between the pupils and their care staff. The system of a key worker and the team leader remaining with the same group of pupils throughout the year makes a very good contribution to these stable and positive relationships.
41. The pupils benefit from the excellent leadership and management of the care provision. Development planning shows a clear insight into the needs of the pupils and seeks to improve further the understanding and expertise of the already well qualified staff, as well as providing the boys with more opportunities to experience an even wider curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on their personal development.
42. At present, the pupils enjoy an excellent and rich and varied care curriculum from which they are able to select activities, for example, attending a Youth club and internet café, trampolining, combined cadet force, Challenge 21 and shared activities with other local schools. The activities are planned carefully to ensure that pupils not only have fun, but also that they make a positive contribution to their learning and personal development. Many of the activities enhance the taught curriculum, for example in art through visits to galleries and museums, in physical education through competitive and non-competitive sport and information and communication technology through the Internet Café. The curriculum is supported through homework, which is co-ordinated by a class teacher, and personal, social and health education through direct response to specific

issues such as bullying. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were very enthusiastic about the care curriculum and the support they received from their care workers.

43. Very good liaison takes place between the care and teaching staff. There is a daily exchange of written information to ensure a smooth transition between the classroom and the after-school provision. A very strong feature of this is the way the school's behaviour policy is a consistent thread throughout, so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them at all times. Pupils know and appreciate the fact that good behaviour points result in extra 'treats' towards which they can work for example, meals out, go-karting or the cinema. The pupils very good individual care plans which contain appropriate personal goals are assessed regularly involving both the teaching and care staff, who also have an input into the pupils' annual reviews. Targets are set with the pupils and focus directly on meeting their individual needs to ensure progress and improvement.
44. The provision for the post-16 students is excellent. Each one has a purpose built flat with a communal living area. Evening activities make a very good contribution to their learning and personal development, for example support with college work and work experience, shopping for their shared needs, and police cadets.
45. Parents are kept fully informed about their son's education and care through the excellent support of the Family Induction Team, the 'Chat Books' which enable parents and the school to exchange views and concerns, and weekly newsletters. Parents are encouraged to keep in touch with their sons and the school monitors this to ensure that regular contact takes place.
46. The school has recently undergone an inspection by the Social Services, which resulted in a very good report and has followed up promptly all the points for development. Since the previous Ofsted inspection there has been considerable improvement in this area of its work and the school now provides residential care of a very high quality.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

47. Overall, parents and carers have positive views of the school. They are supportive of the work of the school although with some reservations over the amount of homework their sons are given to do and the closeness of their relationship with the school. However during the inspection it was found that there is an appropriate programme of homework and that the school seeks to establish a strong partnership with its parents through an excellent support system.
48. The main focus for the school's links with its parents is through the Family Induction Team which offers parents excellent opportunities to develop a good understanding of the school's provision and to build a strong, supportive relationship which benefits the whole school community. The Family Induction Team make home visits prior to a pupil being admitted and continue to build on that early contact through being a constant and available reference point for both parents and pupils. The two staff members involved play a full part in the work of the school and have regular contact with the teaching and care staff.
49. The school is very aware of how necessary and important good parental links are and to that end have a variety of systems in place to keep families fully informed and involved. Weekly newsletters in a friendly, inclusive style keep parents abreast of school life. These are sent home with the pupils' achievement cards which ensure parents are kept up to date with their sons' progress and enables them to support the school's behaviour policy at home.
50. All the pupils go home for a long weekend every three weeks to enable staff to share in training and to review the pupils' needs. This enables parents to have regular opportunities to share their sons' experiences and learning. This contact is enhanced further by the use of 'Chat Books' which the boys take home with them, to enable parents and staff to exchange views and concerns and which support the pupils needs and targets. Parents and pupils are encouraged to keep in regular contact through the telephone and the school monitors this to ensure that this is the case.

51. Parents receive termly reviews and annual reports and detailed reviews across the taught curriculum and the care provision which provides them with very good information on their sons' learning and personal development. Parents also have opportunities to visit the school every term for formal meetings with their sons' teachers, the senior management team and the care staff.
52. The school is successful in fulfilling its aim of building a mutually supportive partnership with the parents and carers of its pupils, and which is appreciated by the vast majority of their pupils' families. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the school's partnership with its parents was deemed unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is making rapid improvement and has successfully moved from being in 'serious weaknesses' in May 1998 to the position of a 'good school' in December 2000. This is due to the excellent leadership provided by the principal. He has made significant changes in staff, appointing new teachers of good quality from mainstream schools and selecting senior managers of high calibre to the posts of head of education and head of care. From the outset, the principal has made clear that his leadership will be based on professionalism, integrity, mutual support and mutual regard. These principles have been positively and consistently applied to the extent that the school community shares these values as they work together with determination to improve. There is a clear understanding and application of the school's mission statement that:

*"Muntham House School is a safe, caring and positive environment dedicated to supporting individual needs and seeking effective change in order to send our students forward into society"*

and the influence of this is seen in all the work of the school.

54. The quality of teaching has been successfully improved. This has been achieved through a number of factors, and these are:
  - appointing a very good head of education with drive and determination for excellence;
  - together, the principal and head of education lead by example and are both very good classroom practitioners;
  - the work of teachers is monitored and evaluated carefully, with praise given for good practice and targets set for improvement where necessary;
  - the timetable has been changed so that there are more, shorter, lessons in the day, which helps pupils to concentrate and stay on task;
  - greater emphasis has been given to teachers working in their strongest subject areas; and
  - the consistent application of the whole school behaviour policy enables teachers to focus more on their lessons.

The head of education has been particularly influential in this work which has also been carried out with sensitivity, and supported with a very good range of professional development for teaching staff.

55. Significant improvement in the residential provision has been successfully achieved through:
  - enabling the head of care to give a very high quality of leadership to the provision;
  - increasing the number of care staff;
  - raising the professional status and qualification level of care staff;
  - demonstrating the value of the work with pupils in residence; and
  - promoting a sense of pride among staff and boys in their residence.

The high quality of this provision has been recognised recently by Social Services and confirmed by this inspection.

56. The principal, head of education and head of care form a very good senior management team. They select very good priorities for improvement. The initial priorities focused on the recommendations of the previous inspection. These have been implemented well and continuing development is clearly planned. The school development plan is a good quality, working document that is systematically implemented, with new initiatives monitored and evaluated well. There is good delegation of roles and responsibilities to staff and this is increasing as personnel gain in confidence and experience.

All departments of the school now have an opportunity to suggest areas for school development and this is promoting a sense of 'ownership' of improvement. There is a strong community commitment in the school and a good capacity to continue to improve.

57. Senior managers set a very clear direction for development that is firmly based on raising standards and providing pupils with the 'best deal' possible. Values, of improving behaviour through academic and personal success, are shared between the school and the residential provision very well and are clearly making the difference in the lives of the pupils. These values are also conveyed to parents through the family induction team who are enabled to work very well to provide high quality support and very effective links between home and school.
58. The work of the governing body has improved since the last inspection. The minutes of their meetings show a clear rise in professionalism and an increasing emphasis on the standards and quality of education the school provides. Governors have responded well to change and now operate as a sound body, with a clear commitment to improving their work and playing a greater part in the development of the school. For example; governors took part in the discussions about improving the school's behaviour system and also attended the training provided for staff. They have provided effective support for the current changes and now share the school's vision for continued development. Governors are regularly in the school and have an increasing understanding of what the school does well and what should be done to improve. They set relevant academic targets against which to measure the school's achievement, and these are continuing to develop in accuracy and rigour as more subjects are added to the school's curriculum. A particular concern facing the governors and senior managers was the legacy of a deficit budget left by the previous management of the school. Careful planning has enabled the school to improve while, at the same time, reducing the deficit in stages. The school's accounts now show that the deficit has reduced according to plan and is in-line to be eradicated by July 2001. There continues to be a good link of financial planning to school priorities. The bursar keeps careful track of income and expenditure and has implemented satisfactory procedures that ensure appropriate financial control. Good quality work is currently underway to further refine and improve these procedures. Appropriate use is made of government grants, such as the 'standards fund' and the principles of 'best value' are applied consistently to all school transactions. Administrative staff are of good quality and the clear definition of their roles adds to their efficiency. New technology is used satisfactorily for administrative purposes, and used well for keeping central records of pupils' attainment and other information. However, office staff have no access to a computer network or electronic mail and the Internet. The school currently sets a reasonable level of fees, is rapidly improving and is enabling staff and pupils to successfully raise the quality of education provided. The provision for students post-16 is not cost effective due to the current small number of students, but is of high quality for those who attend. Overall, the school now provides good value for money.
59. There is now a good match of teachers and care staff to the needs of the pupils and their curriculum. However, learning support assistants often finish work before the last period and this means they are unable to support every teacher in the last lesson each day. This now needs revision to ensure that consistent levels of support are provided throughout the whole of the school day. There is very good monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching where clear targets for improvement are set and supported with very good professional development. This is extended to all staff and is very effective. Very good procedures for appraisal are in-line with current requirements for performance management and are being applied fairly with all staff. There is very good induction of new teaching staff which brings them quickly 'up to speed' and enables them to follow the school's behaviour procedures consistently.
60. The extensive buildings and grounds are maintained effectively by the site manager. There are sufficient rooms to provide good accommodation for most subjects but there is a lack of facilities for physical education, music and the expressive arts, that limits the learning opportunities for pupils. Also, pupils indicate they would like more hard-surfaced outdoor play space for those who don't want to play football at break time when the grass is wet. The excellent residential accommodation for students post-16 is underused at present and the lack of use of their workshops and equipment is inefficient. Throughout the school there are sufficient learning resources, both for the needs of pupils in lessons and also in their residential activities.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The school should continue its drive for improvement with the emphasis on promoting pupils' academic achievement. To assist this, the following priorities should be adopted.

- a) Improve the curriculum, (paragraphs 20, 109, 116) so that:
  - pupils are enabled to study music and a modern language;\*
  - all pupils are taught information and communication technology skills that lead to accreditation;
  - religious education is taught to pupils in Key Stage 4;\* and
  - all pupils have increased access to studying the expressive arts.\*
  
- b) Further raise standards (paragraphs 4, 72, 78, 109, 113):
  - in mathematics, through incorporating the teaching methods of the national numeracy strategy in all key stages
  - in information and communication technology, through improved continuity of provision and coordination of how computers are used in all subjects; and
  - in physical education by improving the range of sporting activities available.\*
  
- c) Ensure staffing levels are sufficient for learning support assistants to be available in lessons throughout the school day (paragraph 59).\*
  
- d) Enable pupils to have a forum for expressing their views to senior managers (paragraph 10).

In addition, the following points should be acted upon (paragraph 37):

- ensure attendance figures are appropriately collated and reported;\* and
- ensure that governors review routinely the health and safety policy and define more clearly the procedures to be adopted.\*

\*already identified by the school as areas for improvement

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	19	38	33	3	2	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	48
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.36

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.37

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year			Total
	2000			5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4
Percentage of pupils at each NC level	<b>English</b>	60	20	20
	<b>Mathematics</b>	40	60	0
	<b>Science</b>	40	40	20

Teachers' Assessments		Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Percentage of pupils at each NC level	<b>English</b>	60	20	20
	<b>Mathematics</b>	40	0	60
	<b>Science</b>	40	40	20

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year			Total
	2000			8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Percentage of pupils at each NC level	<b>English</b>	12	0	50	25	12	
	<b>Mathematics</b>		12	50	25	12	
	<b>Science</b>		25	50	12	12	

Teachers' Assessments		Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Percentage of pupils at each NC level	<b>English</b>		25	50	25		
	<b>Mathematics</b>		12	50	12	12	
	<b>Science</b>			75	25		

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4**

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year			Total
	2000			7

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Total	0	2	5
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	0	29	71
	National	0	9	46

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

**Other external examination results 2000**

Associated Examining Board Basic Skills				
Subject	No of students entered	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Graphicacy	4		1	
Health, hygiene, safety	4	1	2	
Life skills	3			
World of work	3	1	1	
Certificate of Educational Achievement				
Subject	No of students entered	Pass	Merit	Distinction
English	6	3	1	2
Mathematics	6	2	3	
Design and technology	6	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2		

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	43
Any other minority ethnic group	1

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	13	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	1

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y12**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Average class size	6.8

**Education support staff: Y4 – Y12**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	267

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Residential care staff:**

Total number of residential care staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	546

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	1,232,326
Total expenditure	1,256,397
Expenditure per pupil	26,732
Balance brought forward from previous year	-53,120
Balance carried forward to next year	-77,191

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	48
Number of questionnaires returned	23

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	48	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	74	13	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	17	39	4	0
The teaching is good.	57	39	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	35	13	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	35	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	30	17	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	35	0	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	30	4	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	30	0	4	4

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

### **PROVISION FOR STUDENTS POST-16**

62. Very good provision is made for students post 16 which prepares them effectively for independent adult life. This is a strength of the school. The provision is open to all students in Years 12 and 13 and admission is through the recommendation of the annual review of students' Statements of Special Educational Needs. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the amount of time students spend out of school. Almost all of their week is now spent in local colleges or in regular part-time work experience. This enables courses to be provided that are exactly matched to the interests and ability of each student. Residential accommodation is provided in an excellent range of modern individual flats, with a laundry, a central kitchen / dining area and lounge. The school also has an attractive teaching area and well equipped workshops, but these are currently under-used.
63. The curriculum provided is excellent. It has been designed very well by two members of staff, one with a background in vocational education, and the other with experience of residential care. The result of this very good team work is that students receive a balanced curriculum with equal weighting to improving their academic qualifications and their independent living skills. Each pupil has an individually designed mixture of courses at a local college leading to relevant qualifications, work experience with local employers, basic skills support where necessary, and independence training. This succeeds very well and appropriate plans are in hand to develop this further with community work.
64. Students achieve very well. Their college tutors report that students are academically suited to their courses and that some could go on to further extend their qualifications. On a personal level, students show increasing confidence, manage their behaviours very well, are popular members of their courses and learn effectively to travel independently and take on responsibility. A measure of the success of the provision is that most of the students, who entered the school with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are enabled to independently take on further training and full time employment.
65. These successes at post-16 are built on a foundation of vocational education lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11, that are taught by the same staff. All pupils have careers guidance, and start preparing in Year 10 for short link courses at college the following year. The head of post-16 provision attends transitional reviews and the school provides an excellent transition for pupils leaving school. There is a very good scheme of work in vocational education lessons, including topics such as discrimination at work and what to do about it, and pupils' rights and responsibilities on work experience. Visiting speakers are invited to contribute to the course, for example a local policeman and a local employer, who also helps students with 'mock interviews'. Teaching is very good with very clear aims, high expectations and a good pace. New facts are presented very clearly. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together, and for reflection. Assessment is good and records of achievement are compiled through the school. Relationships between pupils, students and staff are excellent. In response to the quality of provision, pupils make very good progress and achieve well.
66. There is a high level of co-operative planning with other agencies at post-16, both locally and in the student's home area. Parents are consulted and introduced to teachers, tutors and other staff as well as being informed regularly of progress. Residential care staff pass on information to teachers routinely every morning. Employers and colleges have good relationships with teachers and school staff through regular personal contact. Record keeping is exemplary, and includes evidence of monitoring college courses and work experience placements that shows how well students are doing and how much they have improved. There is space for six residential students but there are currently only three attending, and this is not cost effective.

## ENGLISH

67. Pupils' achievements in English are good. They enter school with a history of disrupted education and generally poor literacy skills. Their levels of attainment in the subject are below national expectations in all key stages when compared to mainstream schools. However, the pupils' results in statutory assessments at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3, and in GCSE examinations, are significantly better than the average for similar special schools. Analysis of the pupils' results shows that standards are rising steadily and that a small number of pupils attained GCSE Grade C in July 2000. There has been significant improvement in standards in English since the last inspection. Teaching is now at least good and often very good. The response of pupils to the subject in Key Stages 2 and 3, which was previously described as unsatisfactory, is now good. Overall achievement in the subject has improved from satisfactory to good, and this is reflected in the impressive results achieved in assessment and examinations at the end of all key stages.
68. Pupils make a very good start in all areas of the subject in Key Stage 2 in response to the very good teaching provided. Their speaking and listening skills develop rapidly, encouraged by the very good relationships in class and by the clear respect with which staff listen to their opinions and suggestions. By the end of the key stage, pupils are talking with confidence and using a varied vocabulary. Their ability to listen to others enables very productive whole-class oral work to take place. There is a very well-planned programme of work on the basic skills of reading and writing to which pupils respond with enthusiasm. There is a strong focus on spelling, for example, and in one lesson observed pupils were discussing the spelling of "rhythm" and "lynx" with keen interest. Very good opportunities for work of this kind are constantly presented by staff in a stimulating and often humorous manner and expectations are high, particularly in the language and vocabulary used. As a result, pupils' written work shows very good progress in both accuracy and the range of writing attempted. Teaching also promotes an interest in books very effectively, through the use of a local library, for example, to enable pupils to look at and discuss a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils display very positive attitudes to reading and are making very good progress in tackling increasingly demanding texts and in talking and writing about their response to them.
69. In Key Stage 3, pupils move on to a wider range of work, both in their reading and writing, in the study of different genres of literature, for example. Poetry is not well-represented and insufficient emphasis is given to performance in drama but a good variety of well-chosen texts, including modern television scripts as well as Shakespeare and Dickens, engages pupils' interest and their written work shows good understanding of plot and character. Their reading skills, such as the recognition of whole words and the use of phonics to tackle more complex words, continue to develop well and they are beginning to use dictionaries and other reference books with more independence, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Their attitude to reading for pleasure in their own time, however, is one of reluctance and their willingness to give a personal response to books is also very limited. The school library, although used well by some pupils, does not provide positive encouragement to pupils to read more often and more widely. Books are not organised with easy access in mind and are not attractively presented or displayed. A stock of suitable fiction is being developed but non-fiction is very limited in scope and quantity.
70. The teaching of English in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good, and is notable for teachers' high expectations and for the very good response this elicits from pupils. The use of computers for word processing is particularly effective in promoting pupils' ability to draft, edit and organise increasingly ambitious pieces of work and by the time pupils start to produce GCSE coursework they are showing very impressive levels of independence and competence in these aspects of their work. Teachers encourage the expression of individual style and opinions very effectively in both oral and written work, and the effects of this are seen very clearly in pupils' work on subjects as diverse as homelessness, presented in journalistic style, and the representation of women in films, written in a formal essay. Challenging questions, for example, on the use of imagery in Shakespeare and on the variations of language between different genres, are used very effectively to prompt pupils to think more deeply about the work they are doing.

71. The good progress achieved by pupils in all aspects of English is reflected in other subjects of the curriculum. A minority of pupils do require additional support in literacy and very good provision is made for them by very skilled support assistants through a structured programme of work on their phonic skills. Very good assessment and use of assessment information to plan individual work for these pupils does much to enhance the quality of this support. At the time of the inspection, the school was making temporary teaching arrangements whilst waiting for a new teacher to take up post in January 2001. These arrangements are effective and ensure that pupils continue to receive good quality teaching in the absence of a regular teacher.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Pupil's achievements in mathematics at Key Stages 2 and 3 are good and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Results of national tests at age 11 and 14 show pupils are attaining levels above those of pupils at similar special schools. Due to inconsistencies in their previous experience, many pupils at Key Stage 4 have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. However, three pupils achieved GCSE passes in 2000 with grades D-G and there were similar results in 1999. Pupils also take the Welsh Joint Examination Council Certificate in Educational Achievement (CoEA) and five pupils were successful in 2000 (three with merit and two with pass grades) and six pupils were successful in 1999. Pupils have also had success in the Associated Examination Board Numeracy Skills test taken as part of the Vocational Education course. The level of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching has risen and pupils are better motivated to learn. Examination results have been sustained at Key Stage 4 and there is now a secure system of planning which supports pupils in their learning as they move through the school. ICT is being used well and the subject is developing a secure basis for further improvement. However, despite their success, pupils could be doing better, as they are achieving more in English and science than in mathematics.
73. In Key Stage 2, pupils are now taught from the syllabus of the National Numeracy Strategy with suitable adaptations. They are receiving a broad mathematical curriculum which includes 'mental maths' and solving a variety of mathematical problems. They know most of their tables and can recognise patterns up to nine times twelve. They know the properties of two dimensional shapes and simple three dimensional shapes such as cubes. They can collect simple data and record their results on bar charts. In lessons, they show a clear understanding of how numbers to 100 are made up of hundreds, tens and units and hence have a secure basis to add and subtract larger numbers. Overall, pupils at this key stage are making steady progress and consolidating their skills as a result of their teachers' consistent planning, delivery and record keeping.
74. By Key Stage 3, pupils are working at their own personal level using a variety of published schemes as well as Success Maker on the computer. This gives them appropriate opportunities to explore a wide range of mathematical knowledge including problem solving. They are secure in collecting data using tally charts and translating them into pie charts, bar charts and line graphs. They are beginning to understand the terminology of median, mode and frequency when using their data. Although computation is generally accurate, pupils are not secure in knowing their tables and often rely on a known formula without understanding the theory behind that method. This means that pupils get confused when faced with a new problem. Pupils use the Success Maker computer programme well to practise skills of computation using money, measures and time and this is helping them to develop the confidence to work independently.
75. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are working towards national accreditation in GCSE and CoEA and teachers' plan a suitable range of experiences for this. Many of these pupils have gaps in their mathematical understanding for instance, they know about probability but are unclear as to its relevance and hence need support to apply the theory. They are confident when applying a known method and understand for instance what factors are and how to find them, but are not secure in using that knowledge when confronted with a problem in a different context. For instance in translating percentages into fractions. Pupils developing their knowledge of powers to ten are secure in using calculators to find complex numbers to a higher power. They can also find square and cubed roots using the calculator.

76. Pupils use their numeracy effectively in many other subjects. In science they are able to use formulae to compute speed and they are recording information on bar charts and line graphs. In design and technology they can mark out work accurately and make prototypes to accurate scale. They can also make three dimensional drawings of artefacts. In ICT they can transform information from spreadsheets to graphs use the computer in their study of symmetry.
77. Pupils' learning is overall satisfactory. In many lessons they are consolidating known ideas and are making small advances in applying them. Pupils show interest and the majority work at a good pace. They are willing to join in discussion but need a wider knowledge of correct mathematical vocabulary to enable them to explain themselves clearly and accurately. Teachers are keeping clear records of pupils' attainments over time but pupils are only aware of the progress they are making in general terms and require self evaluation to motivate them to persevere and focus their efforts. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are good. They settle to work quickly and follow instructions well. Work in their books is generally neat and well set out. Relationships between pupils are good with younger pupils taking turns sensibly and older pupils helping each other, sharing their ideas and solutions.
78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with examples of good teaching at all key stages. Teachers have secure subject knowledge for the level at which they are teaching and are able to broaden pupils' knowledge by bringing in examples from other subjects. Work is well matched to pupils' individual needs by careful use of resources. When teaching is good, the work set is challenging for each pupil, mistakes are picked up precisely, but teachers are not over-critical and this means that pupils are not 'put off' from learning. In these lessons, teachers use focused questions and observations to check that each pupil's understanding is correct. Behaviour management is calm, good humoured and purposeful so that pupils remain on task and persevere throughout the lesson. Whilst elements of the National Numeracy Strategy have been introduced, particularly at Key Stage 2, teachers have not had sufficient training to give them confidence in using the full range of teaching methods recommended. For example, too many lessons involve pupils just 'getting on' with the next page in their textbook, instead of having lively mental calculation sessions and 'whole group' teaching of mathematical concepts. This is needed to help pupils extend their capacity for mental mathematics, and to develop their use of accurate vocabulary. Without these tools, pupils are insufficiently able to explore and explain the many methods they could use to solve problems and gain a real breadth and security to their mathematical thinking.
79. The co-ordinator has worked very well to establish a consistent scheme of work in mathematics throughout the school. Pupils are now motivated to do well and teachers have the resources to help them to do so. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment is now secure at Key Stage 2 and the teacher is aware of the need to include references to National Curriculum levels in this recording. The schemes used in Key Stages 3 and 4 give ongoing attainment information and the co-ordinator monitors the outcomes of this appropriately. The co-ordinator has suitable priorities for developing the subject, which include setting targets for specific year groups, developing the role of ICT and widening the use of mathematics across the curriculum. However, the main priority should be extending the range of teaching methods used so that the pupils achieve as highly in mathematics as they do in other subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

80. The pupils' standards of attainment in science, shown by statutory tests and examination results, are above those in similar special schools. Pupils in all key stages make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of the subject, working through a broad, relevant programme that progressively builds their skills as they move up through the school. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, and satisfactory progress for other pupils. Science provision, now, makes a positive contribution to the life of the school and the academic and social achievement of pupils.

81. By the time that they are eleven, pupils are keen to investigate and explore, using close observation in their experimental work. When seeing what affected the pitch of a plucked rubber band, for example, they were able to apply their knowledge of sound and vibrations and hypothesise about what might make a difference. They follow a programme enriched by visits, for example to London museums and wildlife centres, and are encouraged to research and follow their own interests. They learn about food chains and habitats using resources from the Natural History Museum. They understand that materials can be changed, sometimes irreversibly, by heating and have recorded the changes in temperature as water boils. The topic approach ensures some good cross-curricular links and the study of the earth in space is well linked to work in geography, helping to reinforce new concepts. Much of the good progress that is made in lessons is due to good interaction between teachers and pupils rather than through careful planning and record keeping. Teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' knowledge and focus attention on each pupil during lessons. Standards, however, could be still higher in Key Stage 2 if some specialist teaching and good resources, currently used with secondary pupils, were incorporated.
82. Throughout Key Stage 3, adults and pupils work well together, and there is a positive and distinctive ethos in the laboratory. By the time that they are fourteen, pupils are able to set up apparatus for their experiments and can carry out a number of analytical processes independently, such as condensation, filtration and chromatography. They find and organise their own equipment sensibly, for example setting up and lighting Bunsen burners. They formulate good hypotheses and think of how these can be tested. The pupils draw neat, detailed, labelled diagrams of their experiments. They are very motivated by this type of work which develops their self-esteem and positive image of themselves as learners. They know what to do to keep healthy, can name many internal organs and describe their functions. Higher attaining pupils give considerable detail of bodily systems, others give less but still use the correct terminology. They develop a wide technical vocabulary in a broad range of scientific topics, such as classification, gases and forces.
83. The pupils in Key Stage 4 follow a GCSE course and several pupils each year gain passes. Sometimes pupils' literacy skills have prevented them gaining accreditation; however, there are now more suitable arrangements for providing amanuenses for examinations. The programme of work is well organised and focussed, with pupils given good support to develop the required knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils have a good grasp of experimental and investigative science. They design their own investigations, such as to see what factors affect the speed of a toy car rolling down a ramp. They work independently to identify and control variables, select the appropriate resources and record results with tables and graphs. They study cell structure and how cells divide, understanding the process of plant and animal reproduction. In their study of materials they use appropriate chemical symbols in equations, and learn about the behaviour of particles in different states of matter. They describe different forms of energy, carry out experiments using electrolysis and investigate conductivity. In their experimental work they apply the physical principles and formulae, for example for pressure or speed, that they have learned in previous years. Pupils are particularly motivated by following examination courses and work hard to gain accreditation. Year 11 pupils generally behave in a mature and settled way, encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and success.
84. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching was excellent for Year 7 pupils in an exciting and imaginative lesson when pupils were 'detective' scientists finding out what was in a mixture of liquids and solids. This lesson was carefully planned and resourced to allow pupils to apply their recently acquired scientific knowledge of materials and analytical techniques, and not only helped them to demonstrate mastery of this work but develop independence and excitement in learning. The glow, and consequent very positive behaviour, lasted well beyond the end of the lesson. Many lessons give ample opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge through experimental and investigative work, which helps to develop appropriate skills and also consolidates knowledge and understanding, contributing to good standards. Basic skills are effectively developed through opportunities for independent recording in graphs and tables, writing up experiments and answering questions, working out formulae, as well as measuring and taking readings. Pupils are usually well managed, leading to settled lessons where everyone can get on with their work. Co-operation is effectively encouraged by accepting and gently reinforcing pupils' moves towards participation in lessons. Teacher and support staff know each pupil well and provide individual coaching and

support. Time is very well used. There are occasions in Key Stage 2 where risks are not sufficiently assessed - such as the dangers of horse-play with rubber bands. Teaching across the school could be further improved by more detailed plans to match activities and worksheets to the learning needs of individuals and to make more lessons as interesting and exciting as the best.

85. The curriculum is broad and balanced, at all key stages. The specialist accommodation is well used, and the very well organised resources help secondary pupils to develop independence and experimental skills. The school pond is a useful and well-used resource, but more could be done to develop wild areas and woodland habitats in the extensive grounds. Aspects of ICT are used well in some lessons, but this requires further development to permeate all classes. Assessment is thorough and useful. Records are good and show what pupils have covered during the year as well as the progress that they have made. The information about what pupils have covered is used to plan lessons, but more use should be made of the levels that pupils attain to match work more closely to individual needs. Science is well led by a skilled and experienced member of staff. There is appropriate collaboration between primary and secondary staff, but provision for the youngest pupils could be further improved by closer links and more specialist input. Provision would also be improved by additional specialist technician support to help with preparation, maintenance and support during lessons.

## ART

86. Since the last inspection, very good improvement has taken place in the subject. A very knowledgeable specialist teacher has been appointed, the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen significantly so that art is now a strength in the school's curriculum.
87. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a knowledge and understanding of art at the level expected for their age in mainstream schools. This represents good achievement as most of the pupils have had a disrupted educational experience before entering the school. Pupils recognise paintings by, for example, Kandinsky and Monet and use colour effectively themselves to express their ideas. Through discussing the relative merits of work by other artists, pupils show an understanding of the principles of abstract expressionism and use mixed media effectively to portray their own emotions.
88. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils use reference texts and illustrations to support and extend their work so that, for example, they use line effectively to draw in the style of Escher and blend pastels well to produce a good range of skin tones in their portraits. In addition, pupils use computers effectively to enhance digital images and try out different ways of presenting their work. They handle materials and resources carefully and produce finished work at a standard expected for their age.
89. Pupils in Key Stage 4 build very well on their previous knowledge and achieve very well throughout their GCSE course. All the current pupils are expected to attain at least Grade C and two pupils in Year 10 are already working at this standard. Every pupil in the school takes art GCSE in Year 11, compared to mainstream schools where pupils choose art as an option. In this respect, standards are above the average expected of mainstream schools and represent a considerable achievement for the pupils. For example, pupils were seen to use their sketchbooks to develop 'thumbnail' sketches which they scaled up successfully onto stretched canvas ready for painting. They produce imaginative and observational drawings of good quality with due regard to perspective, tone, vanishing points and fore-shortening. One pupil prepared and used acrylic 'scraper board' techniques to etch horses in preparation for a final piece. In all their work, pupils show very good artistic technique and methodically seek to improve their work and produce final pieces of good quality.
90. These high standards are directly linked to the quality of teaching that is consistently good throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils very well to think about their response to art and to discuss it in depth. This led pupils directly to reflect on how to portray emotions with colour and line so that one pupil remarked, as he painted, 'I am doing waves to show my sadness'. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 benefit from specialist subject teaching. The teacher is very knowledgeable and talented. He brings a genuine love of art to each

lesson that enthuses pupils and often leads to lessons buzzing with excitement as pupils discover more about art, other artists and how they are improving their own expression. A very good six step procedure is clearly in place and now influences pupils successfully to: record their ideas; draw from observation and imagination; use art history for inspiration and reference; produce thumbnails of compositional ideas; prepare and produce a final piece; and evaluate their work to see how to improve it in future. This procedure is clearly followed by all pupils, who also learn to work independently to deadlines to complete their projects ready for marking.

91. The specialist teacher provides very good leadership for the subject and has written a very useful scheme of work that sets out clearly the projects and learning experiences to be completed by each year group. This is evaluated and refined after each course and is developing into a very thorough and high quality programme of learning. Pupils are assessed very well throughout their course and know how well they are doing. Their success in GCSE is motivating younger pupils to do likewise. In particular, teachers place very good emphasis on helping pupils to show what they can do. This leads to a raising of self-esteem and leads pupils to try techniques and ideas they may otherwise have found too daunting.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

92. The achievements of pupils in design and technology (DT) were satisfactory in all lessons seen in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. They are good in Key Stage 4 where pupils are working towards GCSE. Achievement in Key Stage 2, however, is unsatisfactory overall since the programme is very narrow, focused mainly on introducing pupils to workshop practice and tools. Provision has improved since the last inspection, when there was no scheme of work and little evidence of design or work with tools at Key Stage 2. The subject clearly motivates many pupils and the number of boys coming to continue work during break times indicates that they appreciate the facilities and resources available to them.
93. Senior pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4 in design, drawing and making skills, although most work is done with wood, plastic and metal, and pupils have limited access to activities with food and textiles. This progress is due to sound and sometimes good teaching by a teacher with secure subject knowledge who is interested in the pupils and the products that they make. Key Stage 4 pupils are motivated by external examinations too.
94. By the age of 11, pupils are familiar with conventional classroom materials and tools. Their play with construction kits teaches them about building structures and using pivots. They learn DT in the workshop with a specialist teacher. This is a recent initiative and shows the boys making sound progress in lessons. They become familiar with workshop routines and respond well to the more grown up ethos. They are currently making small wheeled toys from wood, learning some basic design processes and learning to use saws, drills and glue guns.
95. By the age of 14, pupils have experienced some work with textiles, doing a little embroidery and making a simple bag. Residential pupils have opportunities to cook in the evenings, although this is not co-ordinated with the rest of their DT work. They begin to develop good routines for design work, using the teacher's proforma. They make 3D drawings using appropriate drawing instruments, showing precision and control as they render these attractively. Some pupils use the computer too for this work, although the program that they use for this is not the best for the purpose. They build strong structures, such as a model of the Dome, from lightweight components, with awareness of how to use struts and ties. They design and make a range of items from card, wood and plastic including puppets, bridges and wooden toys with wheels and simple mechanisms. The teacher's high expectations of detail and finish ensure that the end products are items that the pupils are proud of.
96. By the age of 16, pupils use a good range of tools with confidence and skill. They use a soldering iron when making a transistor radio from a kit, a polishing machine to finish a trophy made from acrylic, a socket set to fix the brakes on a bicycle and a band facer to shape and smooth wood.

They work safely and follow the correct procedures. Pupils who enter a lesson boisterously and angrily, quickly calm and begin to work methodically with attention to detail. This has a very positive impact on the way that they manage their own behaviour. When carrying out their GCSE projects they create a design portfolio demonstrating their ability to research, design, cost and improve a product, thinking about its fitness for a particular market or purpose. The highest attaining pupil thinks about manufacture of his product and plans to make components by vacuum forming. This work is undertaken over a long period, showing that most pupils can work steadily towards long-term goals and stick with a project to its conclusion.

97. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3 and good for pupils in Key Stage 4. The best features of teaching are the attention to the detail of pupils' products and the way in which secure subject knowledge permeates activities, providing support at point of need, modelling and developing skills effectively. Time is used well in lessons and good materials and tools motivate pupils to work well. Behaviour is generally managed safely. Pupils usually want to get on with practical activity and so cooperate well but there are times when pupils opt out and are not sufficiently encouraged to join in again. Pupils are taught good routines. All work with power tools was undertaken safely with the appropriate protective equipment. However, overalls are often not worn and paint and glue gets on to school uniforms. A potentially unsafe situation was seen when a group became disruptive and there was no other adult support; as a result, it was not possible to monitor the activity in the room effectively and teach at the same time.
98. Good records are kept of pupils' attainment, and although these are used to ensure that pupils experience a range of activities, they are not sufficiently used to match activities to individual learning needs. The subject is appropriately co-ordinated on a day to day basis in school, but more work should be done to look at the programme within the 24 hour curriculum so that food, textiles and motorbike maintenance are included in the subject. Plans to make better use of some very good accommodation are proceeding too slowly, while the workshop, planned to hold groups of four, is overcrowded and limits what can be done by whole classes. Support is provided by learning support assistants who help to focus and motivate pupils, but a technician or assistant permanently based in the workshop would have a more positive impact on skills and standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. Pupils' standards of work in geography are below average when compared against national standards. However, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and there is an improvement in standards since the last inspection. At Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils interpret local maps at different scales and make realistic suggestions about what limits the expansion of settlements. Lower attaining pupils still have difficulties with understanding a plan view and are happier with photographs, where they can identify old and new buildings. At Key Stage 3, pupils show increasing neatness and effort with their work so that their progress is good by the end of Year 9. They learn about contrasting parts of the world, for example Japan and Brazil, and the arguments for and against giving aid. They also understand that there can be benefits and drawbacks from the same action, for example, through their discussions of the development of Amazonia. This contributes to their moral development. This is the first year, after a gap, that geography has been taught at Key Stage 4. Despite below average literacy skills, pupils in Year 10 are aiming at GCSE. Their work is closely geared to the examination course and they are gaining a good grasp of geographical terms. They are expected to achieve success in their examinations, though not at the highest grades.
100. Since the last inspection when standards were judged to be 'at least satisfactory' there has been a period without specialist teaching. Early this year an experienced specialist teacher was appointed as co-ordinator, and this has brought about revitalisation of the subject and an appropriate emphasis on academic achievement. A balanced scheme of work has been introduced, and new accommodation and resources provided at Key Stages 3 and 4.
101. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. All pupils are skilfully enabled to contribute to lessons, and the teacher uses resources that are well suited to their age

and ability. Beautiful displays contribute to a feeling of care for the environment. Local studies give a valuable focus to geography lessons and adventure trips further afield give lots of incidental learning. Pupils describe similarities and differences between places they have visited, and are keen to find out more. While the teacher has a system for assessing how pupils are progressing academically, this would benefit from including some reference to National Curriculum levels to help teachers in Key Stage 3 build more effectively on their knowledge. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in a lesson for Year 7 where time management was weak. In other lessons, teaching is satisfactory although there is an over-reliance on worksheets and insufficient emphasis on using pupils' experiences and previous learning as a basis for making geography exciting. Sequences of lessons are well planned and short well-managed games are used well to settle the class, assess their knowledge at the end and consolidate their vocabulary. Teaching of pupils in Year 10 is good, with clear, high expectations of behaviour and work. Humour is used well and there is good questioning to assess how much has been learned. There are regular tests, but again no reference to the National Curriculum levels, which would clarify progress. The teacher maintains effective links with a mainstream school to compare results and to plan coursework. Homework, though not obligatory, is offered appropriately to pupils. In all classes, support staff make a very good contribution to behaviour management and learning.

102. While staff at Key Stages 3 and 4 share a scheme of work, there is currently insufficient monitoring by the subject co-ordinator of teaching at all key stages to ensure a consistent quality of provision. Resources are good, but there is still scope for improving practical equipment. The Internet has yet to be utilised for enhancing the excitement of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

103. Pupils' achievements in history are good at all key stages. History was not taught consistently in the time between inspections so that some pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have gaps in their learning. The subject is now firmly established again and pupils at all key stages are making good progress. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is higher and the pupils' rate of progress is improving. Pupils' assessment at the end of each module of work is now being effectively established.
104. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 2 are presently learning about the Vikings, they have a thorough knowledge of the life style and some of the customs of those people. They have a good understanding of chronology and are able to use previous knowledge of, for instance, the building of wattle and daub houses seen on a visit to the Dowland Museum in their work on thinking about how the Vikings built their houses.
105. Pupils in Year 7 are learning about the Romans and are able to describe in detail some of their technological achievements such as under floor heating and aqueducts. They are beginning to use contemporary sources as evidence to consider questions such as what methods the Romans used to control such a large empire. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 9 can discuss maturely the voting system of the early nineteenth century and the need for reform. They are able to compare both sides of the debate and are beginning to consider how biased or exaggerated evidence can be misleading. In the lesson seen they are able to come to a judgement and express their views through writing a newspaper article describing the events at St Peters Field in 1819. Pupils in Year 10 have just started work towards a possible GCSE examination in Year 11. They are studying the period of American history around the time of the Great Depression. They are able to discuss and hypothesise the political and economic causes and effects of the depression from a sound basis of accurate knowledge. They are learning to discriminate between accurate and biased evidence and they have produced good quality display work using contemporary photographs of poverty which show real empathy for the plight of the unemployed.
106. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good. They are interested and attentive, asking and answering questions willingly and working with enthusiasm. Written work is completed carefully and neatly and display work, often computer generated, is of good quality. Skilled behaviour management by

staff encourages pupils to stay on task. Relationships are good and pupils at Key Stage 4 show real maturity in the way they respond to challenging tasks.

107. The quality of teaching is overall very good with examples of excellent teaching at Key Stage 4. This is mirrored by the good rate of learning by pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 and the very good rate of learning observed at Key Stage 4. There is a high level of expertise in the staff who teach history so that lessons are presented in a lively and knowledgeable way and pupils are motivated to extend their understanding often comparing ideas and facts from previous work and applying it to the current lesson. Teachers use a good range of resources, including extracts from contemporary evidence and accounts giving different points of view as well as videos so that pupils are able to consider and discriminate between the evidence. For instance a Year 7 group watching a video explaining how the Romans would survey and build an aqueduct could easily relate what they saw to previous knowledge of Roman engineering. Teachers have high expectations of attitude and written work and are very skilled in presenting written tasks with prompts and information sheets so that any pupil with weaker literacy skills is supported and their skills extended. Lessons are well structured with a variety of activities, such as in a lesson on the Vikings which included identifying and explaining the use of artefacts inside a Viking house as well as tasting 'Viking bread'. Within the space of the lesson, the pupils were able to talk about the Viking lifestyle from a basis of sound and accurate knowledge. In the excellent teaching seen, the teachers' very high expectations encourage pupils to think deeply about the implications and background to the US election of 1932 and by asking them to take sides and present their argument for and against Roosevelt the pupils developed both their expertise in using evidence and their debating skills.
108. The co-ordinator has worked very well in a short space of time to establish a scheme of work for the subject which has real breadth, interest and relevance for the pupils. The integration of moral issues and discussion of historical dilemmas is an important element in the pupils moral and cultural development Resources are now adequate and being developed to include more use of ICT and historical resources in the locality. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate the work of the department.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. The curriculum provided for pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) is inconsistent throughout the school. Computers are used effectively in some subjects, for example to support writing in English and to assist design in art. However, insufficient attention is given to this in coordinating the school's provision for the subject. The last inspection reported 'mostly satisfactory progress'. At that time, a specialist subject teacher taught ICT through the school, continuity in learning was good and this led to pupils' success at GCSE. There is currently no examination for pupils at the end of Year 11, despite their high motivation. In addition, ICT is not taught as a separate subject at Key Stage 2, nor is it found in the planning for other subjects. At Key Stage 3, ICT is taught in Year 7, but not by a subject specialist. It is not taught as a subject in Year 8 although pupils have some time on computers, using a literacy and numeracy program. In Year 9, ICT is principally taught through the recently introduced media course. In Key Stage 4, ICT becomes a separate subject again, taught by a specialist. This lack of continuity affects standards and, as a result, they are below the expectation for the ability of the pupils. The most recent examination results have been poor compared to standards in other subjects.
110. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can load a CDROM, choose a program, and use a mouse, but their experience is mainly of games machines in the residential provision. ICT is used appropriately by teachers for display and worksheet preparation, and pupils are aware of the possibilities for using computers to enhance presentation. At Key Stage 3, progress in some areas of the curriculum is good and by Year 9, standards in communicating information are very good. Pupils use computers to handle information well and show satisfactory skills in modelling; but there is no use of ICT for control. In Key Stage 4, the pattern is much the same. While pupils become more confident repeating the techniques they have learned, for example compiling spreadsheets, they have limited understanding of why they are doing it, and most have difficulty applying the techniques in problem solving situations. At the same time, pupils with the potential for higher

attainment are underachieving because they are spending too much time repeating methods of presentation they are already familiar with, and there is no assessment that informs teachers of what they already know.

111. Teaching in the lessons seen at Key Stage 3 is good overall. In the best lessons, the teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses this in a clear structure with theory followed by application. The teacher has high expectations, and offers extension work for more able pupils. Pupils are enthused and ask to finish work in their own time. Where teaching is less good this is because of insecure subject knowledge that does not allow any flexibility to the lesson. Where this is so, pupils are happy with a narrow range of skills such as importing clipart, in which they are confident, but find it hard to follow or remember instructions for more complicated procedures. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 4, teaching is good. The atmosphere is calm and pupils are quietly encouraged and reassured with their work, without help being intrusive. Teachers and support staff work well together at both key stages. However, not enough time is allowed for rounding up what has been learned and assessing what pupils need to know next. Pupils are keen to have some accreditation at the end of Year 11 and this should be provided.
112. ICT is used in other subjects around the school, for example in English, geography and history for word processing, and in art and design and technology for drawing. There is not yet any initial assessment of ICT skills when pupils arrive in school, and this could help focus teachers' planning. There is no central mapping of where ICT could be used to improve learning in other subjects and progress could be improved by introducing skills that are then practised in other subjects. Some software is inadequate for its purpose, for example painting software that is too crude for design and technology, and there is no audit of resources available to all staff. The ratio of computers to pupils is very good and pupils have access to them in the evenings. All but the most recently appointed staff have had some training in ICT, which has been welcomed. ICT is used well for administration and display around the school, and an appropriate start has been made in exploiting it to meet the additional special needs of some pupils, for example in literacy.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. Despite the fact that pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress in some activities such as basketball, cross-country running and weight-training, overall achievements in physical education are unsatisfactory. This is because of the very narrow curriculum offered. There is not enough provision for indoor games, gymnastics, swimming or dance and opportunities for outdoor pursuits are very limited. The lack of adequate facilities at the school for physical education is clearly a major factor in this situation. There is a football pitch and a hard play area but the swimming pool and golf course are no longer used because of maintenance problems. There are inadequate facilities for both track and field athletics. Inside the school building, there is a multi-gym facility which is well used but there is no space for gymnastics or indoor games. A sports centre in a nearby village is used but there are sometimes problems over availability. The school has identified the need for improved facilities and is currently bidding for a government grant to help with the cost of developments.
114. These shortcomings are all the more regrettable because most pupils enjoy the physical activities which are available, both during the school day and in the evenings, when care staff make good provision, for example, for fitness-training and rugby union. It was not possible to observe a physical education lesson for Key Stage 2 pupils during the inspection week but some very good examples of the commitment of older pupils were seen. Year 10 pupils displayed very good levels of interest and effort in a basketball session at a local sports centre. They listened well to instructions and improved their skills in the several different forms of defensive techniques, which were demonstrated well by the teacher. In the weight-training room, Year 11 pupils were very self-motivated, working hard at each section of the equipment with confidence and good technique. They were very much aware of their own performance and they worked hard to improve their "personal best". As in other activities observed, the levels of attainment shown by these pupils reached and in some cases exceeded national expectations for their age. Good levels of specialist expertise were apparent in the teaching of this and other aspects of the subject. Pupils were also able to talk knowledgeably

and confidently about factors affecting their performance, diet and other aspects of a healthy lifestyle and to name the different muscles involved in their exercises. A GCSE course is provided and pupils are making satisfactory progress in the class-based elements of the syllabus. In other lessons observed, however, progress was unsatisfactory or poor. Pupils did not listen to instructions, did not co-operate and made little or no effort to improve their skills. Teaching, in which the management of pupils was inconsistent, failed to elicit a satisfactory response from pupils in these lessons. The lack of support staff added to these problems. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two out of the five physical lessons observed and its main weakness lay in the poor use of time. Pupils spent unacceptably long periods of time waiting for activities to commence or were allowed to wander unsupervised while others were changing or equipment was collected.

115. Pupils enjoy talking about their participation in football matches with other school teams and the school has a good record of success in athletic competitions at county level. Since the last inspection, however, when physical education was described as a strength of the school, the quality of provision and standards in the subject have deteriorated. The co-ordinator has some interesting proposals for the development of the subject but the major issue of facilities for the subject remains to be resolved.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

116. No lessons in religious education (RE) were observed during the week of the inspection due to timetable arrangements. It is, therefore, not possible to make judgements on pupil's achievements or the quality of teaching. Religious education is now consistently taught to pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3, but not yet at Key Stage 4, or to students post-16. Examples of teacher's planning in Key Stage 2 and 3 indicate that these pupils are now following an established scheme of work which is based on the locally agreed syllabus. This is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, given the other priorities in school development. However, religious education now needs to be included in the curriculum for Key Stage 4. Pupils are receiving a broad experience, which includes knowledge of Christianity and other world religions as well as consideration of moral issues and the wonders of the created world. As such, it is an important and successful element in the school's provision for pupil's spiritual, moral and cultural development.
117. Religious education has not been taught consistently in the time between inspections so that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Younger pupils have recently been learning about the creation and know the bible stories of Noah. They have been encouraged to think about the notion of God and how this was expressed through the Bible. Older pupils at Key Stage 3 are looking at what religion can offer people and the different customs, beliefs and festivals of Christians, Muslims and Jews. Teachers plan lessons which give pupils the opportunity to research customs which interest them, and pupils complete written work often using the computer.
118. Recent improvement in religious education has been good. There is now a secure basis to teachers' planning so that pupils are receiving a relevant and interesting course. There is now a designated and experienced co-ordinator and planning for future developments is secure. Assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are at an early stage and is appropriately part of the subject's development plan. Resources in terms of textbooks have been improved although there is still need to develop more artefacts, books and CD Rom's, which pupils can use for personal research. Links with the community to broaden pupil's experience and knowledge of other faiths and beliefs are at an early stage.