

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RIGBY HALL COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL**

Rigby Lane, Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 117049

Headteacher: Mrs Pamela Griffiths

Reporting inspector: Adrian Simm  
21138

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 226531

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Moderate and Severe Learning Difficulties

School category: Community Special

Age range of pupils: 3 - 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rigby Lane  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire

Postcode: B60 2EP

Telephone number: 01527 875475

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Ian Singleton

Date of previous inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21138	Adrian Simm	Registered inspector	Geography, History, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9880	Tony Comer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27424	Alan Dobbins	Team inspector	English, Music	How well are pupils taught?
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, Design and technology	
1358	Glyn Essex	Team inspector	Science, Modern foreign language (French) Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
3055	Clive Toombs	Team inspector	Mathematics, Art and design, Equal opportunities	
20566	Mary Saunders	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum, Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rigby Hall School is a community special school for pupils aged between 3 and 19 years who have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Only three Nursery and Reception age pupils are on roll and are taught with a class of predominantly Year 1 pupils. Also, only two Post 16 pupils attend the school. They are taught with some Year 10 and 11 pupils. Pupils come from a wide catchment area. The number of pupils on roll claiming free school meals is average. The school is designed for a maximum of 108 pupils. One hundred and two pupils have been on roll during the current year; 70 boys and 32 girls. Eighteen of these pupils have severe learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is low in comparison to their chronological age. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Nearly 40 per cent of teaching staff are new to the school in the last two years.

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

The ethos of the school is one that values all individuals and celebrates all achievements, however small. It is a good school that has made substantial improvement since its last inspection. Overall, standards are good and pupils achieve well. This is because very good leadership and management by the head teacher, senior managers and all staff with responsibilities have ensured good teaching and learning throughout the school. This, together with an effective curriculum, are some of the 'building blocks' that ensure the school offers good value for money.

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

- Provides good quality teaching and learning overall that ensures pupils achieve well. This is within an approach that places pupils' welfare as a very high priority.
- Planning for pupils' learning so that it builds step by step as they move through the school. This includes excellent preparation for pupils' life beyond school such as work related learning and accredited courses.
- Ensures staff are very clear about how to improve pupils' learning. This is because the head teacher and assistant head teachers, who have the support of an effective governing body, lead the school very well. Together, they are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Staff provide very good support overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This ensures pupils' attitudes to work, behaviour and personal development are good. As such, pupils' attendance and their relationships with staff and each other are very good.

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

- How the school finds out just how well it is doing in comparison with similar schools so that it is even clearer that all pupils are learning as much as they can.
- The library, information and communication and science accommodation for all pupils and the outdoor play provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April 2000 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in management and in teaching with pupils in Years 7 to 13 which resulted in underachievement by pupils in science, art, information and communication technology, religious education and French. Unsatisfactory planning for the curriculum and insufficient improvement since the previous inspection contributed to the weaknesses. A two-day follow-up inspection in October 2001 confirmed that the school had made reasonable improvement. This has been built on significantly. All identified weaknesses have been eradicated. The school is now effective and has improved very well since the last inspection.





## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	very good A
reading	B	B	B	B	good B
writing	B	B	B	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

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

Based upon improved assessment and ways of evaluating pupils' achievement, the school set targets for Year 11 pupils to attain in Certificate of Education Achievement for the Year 2001/2002. This was, amongst other areas, in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, food studies and skills award. Pupils are online to meet or exceed these targets in all areas including at merit or distinction levels. These targets were sensitive to individual pupils' progress. For other pupils in school in different year groups, achievement is good overall in English and mathematics and in science except at Years 7, 8 and 9 where it is satisfactory. Achievement by all pupils is good in other subjects apart from in music and French, where it is satisfactory. At the Foundation Stage, pupils are making good progress towards their Early Learning Goals in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Those pupils with English as an additional language, autistic spectrum disorders, more complex behavioural difficulties or speech and language needs generally achieve well. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties, who are taught in two separate classes for Years 7 to 12, achieve well also although a specific programme for the extremely small number of Post 16 pupils is not provided.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved with the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is good in the classrooms. Pupils move around the school in a sensible and polite manner.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships with each other and with staff are very good. Pupils' initiative and personal responsibility are developing adequately.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is very good and has also improved significantly since the last inspection.

Because all pupils are valued as individuals and all achievements are celebrated, this helps to ensure that pupils respond and learn well. Restrictions of the library, science and computer accommodation means that pupils do not show as much initiative and personal responsibility as they might in independent work.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, teaching and learning are good. The effective support given to pupils with additional or more severe learning difficulties ensures that all pupils' learn and achieve well. There is consistently good or better teaching with Reception pupils. Some lessons are on rare occasions unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 9 but overall, in all areas of school teaching and learning are good with examples of some very good teaching. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. In subjects, the teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science with Year 1 to Year 6 pupils are good. Overall teaching and learning in other subjects are good. The only exceptions are in science and art with Years 10 and 11 and French with Years 1 to 6 where they are very good and in French and religious education with Years 7 to 12 and in science with Years 7 to 9 where they are satisfactory. Teachers plan well within a school framework for each subject, which helps pupils' learning build through the school. Staff are self-critical and review their work to see how it could be better. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior staff in school contributes very well to this. Teachers frequently link lessons to practical experience, which is effective in enthusing pupils. Teaching is particularly successful in lessons where teachers use methods that are advocated in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This particular style is used also in most other subjects. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, teachers did not manage the lessons as well as they might to pick up on pupils who found the particular work either too hard or too easy or were short of strategies to ensure that pupils with more complex behaviour learned as well as they should. This happened on very rare occasions in Years 3 to 9.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is good. Planning for teaching and learning is consistent between teachers and ensures pupils' new learning builds on what they know already.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is good overall although where speech and language therapy is indicated, this is not provided consistently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good. In lessons, pupils learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work in groups.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is very good overall. The school is a secure and safe environment in which to work. The teachers know the pupils very well and they are given good encouragement in their activities. The school has suitable systems to safeguard pupils' access to the internet, which parents have been told about recently.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The use the school makes of learning opportunities offered by exploring the local community and further afield is very good. The way the school prepares pupils for life beyond school such as work related learning and for taking accredited courses is

outstanding. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and makes good use of this information in the planning for teaching. The school is planning to make even better use of this information to ensure the most precise targets possible are set for raising pupils' standards. The school does not yet offer to the few pupils in Year 12, a curriculum that is sufficiently different from that offered to Year 10 and 11 pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and assistant headteachers are very good in ensuring that the school sets out to improve continually and is effective in what it offers pupils and their families. The school has developed an atmosphere and methods of working in which all staff with responsibilities lead their areas very well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors know the school well both informally and from planned visits as part of their evaluation procedures. They are effective in their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed a good range of techniques to monitor, analyse and use data to further improve pupils' achievement. Standards data is available now in most subjects and the school is working on how to take this more fully into account in school planning, self-evaluation and comparing how well it is doing against similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	The school's day-to-day priorities are supported by careful financial planning. Governors have been planning to improve the school's accommodation for library, science and information and communication technology. However, costs have been exceeding savings and the strategy is now being revised.

Overall, the school has satisfactory staffing levels. Staff have a good range of experience in teaching pupils with learning difficulties, although staff development has not yet covered sufficiently for all staff, the teaching of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and more complex behavioural difficulties. Overall, the school's accommodation and learning resources are good. The school has introduced so many initiatives in the last two years that it is rightly taking a period of reflection to evaluate just how well these are working in practice. The school applies soundly the principles of best value although it does not yet have ways of formally sampling the views of parents' satisfaction with the school to balance out its informal knowledge of this. It is strengthening also the way it can compare how well it is doing with similar schools.

## 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>• How easy it is for them to raise issues or discuss problems with the staff;</li> <li>• the support the school gives pupils to become mature and responsible;</li> <li>• how much the children like going to school;</li> <li>• the level of good behaviour in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons;</li> <li>• the amount of work pupils do at home;</li> <li>• how parents find out how well their children are achieving;</li> <li>• how closely the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents but does not support fully the negative views held by some of them. Given the current length of lunchtimes and the pupils' travel arrangements on Local Education Authority transport, what is offered to pupils outside of lessons is satisfactory. Whilst the quality of information and of pupil reports has improved since the last inspection, there are some areas of communication and consultation that are not yet fully effective. The school intends to

separate the meetings for reviewing annually each pupils' statement of special education need from those reviewing the pupils' general progress in all subject areas, which will help them achieve the correct focus at these meetings. Homework procedures are satisfactory but come under strain when staff are off work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. All pupils have learning difficulties; some are moderate and some more severe but the majority make good progress and achieve well. This is against targets in their individual education plans, in relation to their Early Learning Goals for pupils in the Foundation Stage, in relation to the learning outcomes planned for them in lessons and in the accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. In most subjects this represents at least good improvement since the last inspection. It represents very good improvement in art and design, science with pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in information and communications technology. Only in music have standards fallen, but here, the school has been affected by staffing difficulties. A subject co-ordinator has been appointed from September 2002.

2. Achievement is good overall in English and mathematics. It is good in science except at Years 7, 8 and 9 where it is satisfactory. Achievement by pupils is good in most other subjects. The only exceptions are music and French, where achievement is satisfactory. Those pupils with English as an additional language, autistic spectrum disorders, more complex behavioural difficulties or speech and language needs generally achieve well. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties, who are taught in two separate classes between Years 7 to 12, achieve well also. A specific programme for the extremely small number of Post 16 pupils is not provided although their achievement in with a group of Year 10 and 11 pupils is good. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls despite there being very few girls in some classes. Teachers are conscious that they have to ensure the girls are fully included in lessons. This works well. Some pupils do not receive the speech and language therapy support to which they are entitled as set out in their statement of special educational needs. This is due to staffing difficulties with speech and language therapist provision that is outside the control of the school. Teaching staff make every effort to compensate for this and to ensure that pupils are progressing in their work. This is certainly the case for the majority.

3. Children in the Foundation Stage of their education make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in relation to their abilities on entry to the school. Most pupils joining the school at or around the age of four are attaining at Level 4 or 5 in the National Framework for pupils working below National Curriculum levels. Most make progress of at least one level of this framework in all areas of their curriculum during the Foundation Stage and are working within the first 'stepping-stone' of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year.

4. Achievement by pupils in English is good in all year-groups in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This shows good improvement since the last inspection, especially in writing. Since the last inspection, results gained on the Certificate of Educational Achievement of the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) have improved. This year, two pupils, who take some of their English lessons in a nearby mainstream secondary school have been entered for the GCSE examination. In speaking and listening, by the end of Year 2, the highest attaining pupils speak clearly and confidently when they ask for what they want. Facts from previous lessons are easily recalled and simple questions are answered quickly and accurately. They are working at Level 8 in the National Framework for pupils

working below National Curriculum levels. The lowest attaining pupils use a combination of speech, signs and, occasionally, picture exchange to identify their needs, for example to use the toilet or to choose their favourite food or drink. By Years 10 and 11, pupils have built well on this. As part of their work towards the Certificate of Educational Achievement, they prepare a talk and practice telephone conversation skills. By this time they have learned to communicate clearly and make their points logically and sensibly. Most do so with good success.

5. Pupils' reading skills are poor on entry to the school. They make a good start in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 pupils identify key characters from popular stories, such as Little Red Riding Hood and touch or gesture to the initial letter of their name. They are approaching Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The lowest attaining pupils identify words and symbols with support. By the end of Year 11, most pupils read independently. They read newspapers and magazines for pleasure and read well enough to support their learning in other subjects, for example through using the limited library provision or occasionally the Internet. Literacy skills are developed well through a broad range of subjects.

6. In writing, in Years 1 and 2 there is an appropriate emphasis on fine motor skills to assist accurate letter formation. The highest attaining pupils copy simple words and phrases with good accuracy. The lowest attaining pupils make directional marks on paper using marker pens, crayons and pencils. Their fine motor control is more limited. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work on writing for different purposes when they follow the syllabus of their certificate course. The best writers know how to compile a letter to a friend or to a stranger and produce good free writing that is well-organised, characterised by good descriptions and is imaginative and clear. Their best work approaches Level 4 of the National Curriculum.

7. In mathematics, pupils make a good start in Years 1 and 2 by acquiring the correct mathematical language. For example in work on time, they know 'o'clock', 'hours' and 'minutes'. Higher attaining pupils recognise and write numbers 1-12 on a blank clock face and have made an encouraging start in recording their mathematical experiences. Lower attaining pupils join in the nursery rhyme 'Hickory Dickory Dock' and identify the mouse running up the clock. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions and in this way speaking and listening skills are reinforced. By Years 10 and 11 pupils' learning accelerates. Higher attaining pupils are accredited through the Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA). Last year pupils obtained one distinction and five merit awards. This accreditation has been introduced since the last inspection and is a great incentive. They show a good awareness of the importance of time and money in their planning and discussions and are well prepared for the challenges of life after school. Lower attaining pupils in this year group and two Year 12 pupils consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding of money. They make good progress in making up amounts to 20 pence with a variety of small coins. Pupils develop their numeracy skills well in a broad range of subjects although this is because of good individual teaching rather than a planned approach.

8. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 experience a good grounding in simple scientific ideas. They know the difference between living things and things that have never lived. They know that plants need light and water. They carry out simple experiments, for example, to determine the absorbency of paper. Their understanding and use of technical vocabulary increase as they get older. The subject makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Written work develops well. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievement slows a little because expectations by teachers of what pupils can do, particularly for the higher-attainers, are lower. As a result, the response of the pupils to their science lessons does not display the same levels of interest and co-operation as in the other year groups. However, by Years 10 and 11, pupils show evidence of good and very good achievements. They carry out investigations with increasing independence, organise their work very efficiently, and

communicate clearly, both orally and in writing. They are highly motivated by the examination course they are following and the very good results, including a high proportion of distinctions achieved in the final examinations, reflect both their hard work and their genuine interest in the subject.

9. Across the school, pupils make good progress in information communication technology (ICT). They achieve well. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when the overall progress was considered to be poor. Pupils, including those with additional special needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and English as an additional language, make good progress. They make a good start in their early years in the school, especially in the key areas such as using a keyboard and a mouse. They are able to identify icons, click on specific objects, select, drag and drop across the screen. This is built on carefully as pupils get older so that by the end of Year 11, pupils including two Post 16 students, work independently to create a set of labels for their enterprise project. They discuss maturely how to produce the labels and what size, colour and font they need to be.

10. The achievement of pupils in religious education is good. Most pupils enter the school attaining around Level 4 on the National Scale for those achieving below National Curriculum levels. They begin to listen and respond to familiar religious stories and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. As pupils move through Years 7, 8 and 9 they identify the major world religions and related festivals. They know facts such as the important features in a Mosque or the significance of Poppy Day. The lower attaining pupils retell stories and begin to discuss ideas such as 'sacrifice'. Achievement of the higher attaining pupils between Years 10 and 11 is limited by the small amount of time given to the subject within their curriculum.

11. Pupils in all year groups achieve well in their personal, social and health education. The subject has been extended to incorporate citizenship education introduced nationally since the last inspection. Achievement in social and moral development is very good. The very good relationships between pupils and staff help the pupils to become confident learners in lessons and in the very broad range of learning that takes place out in the community, including in other schools and colleges for those on link courses. This contributes greatly to their social development. The school places particular priority on provision for work-related learning and careers guidance and these are both excellent in preparing pupils for life after school. Pupils achieve very well in this particular work.

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

12. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved with the life of the school. Parents believe that the children like coming to school, are encouraged to work hard and to do their best, and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents also believe that behaviour is good.

13. Overall, behaviour is good. In class, behaviour is generally good and occasionally very good or excellent, particularly where teaching is effective and is focused on the needs of individual pupils. Pupils move around the school in a sensible and polite manner. They play well together in the playground and respect each other's feelings. There is no evidence of poor behaviour and there have been no exclusions during the past year.

14. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Teachers and support staff work hard at establishing these relationships and as a result, pupils develop high self-esteem. Pupils' excitement is matched by their maturity in celebrating their success or that of others each week when the results of the system of awards is celebrated at Friday assembly. Pupils involve themselves thoroughly in the range

of educational visits, the programme of work-related learning, the recently introduced programme of mentoring in Years 10 and 11 and the provision for careers guidance. The emphasis that the school places on personal, social and health education throughout the school contributes to pupils' personal development. Although pupils take some responsibility for tasks in the classroom and in assemblies, there is a lack of opportunity for them to show initiative and develop personal responsibility for other aspects of school activity and their own learning. The unsatisfactory library facilities and lack of specialist science and information and communication technology facilities hamper this.

15. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a positive contribution to learning and standards that have been generally maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' attendance is very good being well above the national average for schools of this type. This has improved significantly since the last inspection.

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

16. Over all the school, the quality of teaching is good. There are no significant differences in the quality of teaching from class to class. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching was very good or better in 20 per cent of lessons, good in 37 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory or poor in 11 per cent of lessons. Now, it is very good or better in 30 per cent of lessons, good in 48 per cent and satisfactory in 23 per cent of lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced to three per cent with no poor teaching and learning. This represents a good improvement overall, particularly in Years 7 to 11.

17. The range of pupils' learning needs in any lesson is considerable. Consequently, teachers are frequently challenged to select lesson tasks that match with pupils' objectives for learning. Very good planning helps them do this very effectively. They know their pupils and their learning needs very well. In most lessons, they have a very good knowledge of the subject they are teaching, although this is not the case for music. The relationships they and their learning support assistants (LSAs) have with the pupils are very good. This allows pupils to be confident as learners, to ask questions when they are not clear of the demands of their tasks and to engage in discussion that helps promote their learning and, generally, helps them manage the pupils well. Each makes an important contribution to the good standards pupils achieve and the good progress they are making in many of the subjects.

18. Lessons are planned well. Those in English and mathematics routinely incorporate many of the principles of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Those for promoting literacy are regularly incorporated into lessons in other subjects, especially for pupils up to Year 6. Teachers have very good expectations for pupils' learning. Individual educational plans are better than at the last inspection. They contain targets for learning for each pupil in all subjects, which have been derived from a commercially available scheme. In lessons, these guide the work of teachers and LSAs. In most lessons teaching and learning is effective because tasks focus on appropriate new learning or on the sensible reinforcing of recent learning. The procedures for assessing the gains pupils are making are very closely linked to their learning targets in their individual education plans. In most subjects very good information is provided that is well used in planning lessons. In many lessons, learning is very well promoted by the good contributions of the LSAs, although this is not always the case. In the lessons where their contribution is pre-planned, they make an important contribution to pupils good quality of learning, especially when they are working with individual pupils or with small groups of pupils.

19. The good quality of teaching motivates pupils to do well as learners. In 29 per cent of lessons learning is very good or better. In 48 per cent of the lessons it is good and in almost all of the other lessons it is satisfactory. Pupils make too few gains in only a few lessons. In



most they make a considerable intellectual effort to learn, for example as Year 9 pupils did in a lesson in English on the difference between fact and speculation. In this lesson, they worked hard at applying their new knowledge to gaining factual information, from worksheets, reference books and the Internet about the life of Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of *Treasure Island*, the book they were currently studying. In lessons in physical education, they make a considerable physical effort, as did a group of Year 3 pupils who were taking the Riding for the Disabled Certificate at Level 3 at a nearby stable. Generally, pupils are very interested in their work, concentrate very well and take pride in producing their best work. In most lessons, only rarely is there a need for teachers to remind pupils of their responsibility as learners. When this is the case, teachers and LSAs act quickly and appropriately according to the behaviour management plan for the pupils, most often with little or no disruption to the learning of others in the class.

20. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, teachers did not manage the lessons as well as they might to pick up on pupils who found the particular work either too hard or too easy. Also, it was unsatisfactory where teachers were short of strategies to ensure that pupils with more complex behaviour learned as well as they should. This happened on very rare occasions in Year 4 in one history lesson and Year 9 in one art lesson and one science lesson.

21. Homework, especially for English and mathematics is making a good contribution to the standards many pupils are achieving because it relates very well to class work. Marking homework with the pupil is good practice because it provides teachers with the opportunity to reinforce learning in a direct fashion. The home-reading programme, which requires parents or carers to read with their children and to keep a record of what is read and how well it is read, makes a good contribution to gains in reading.

22. Since the last inspection, the improved quality of teaching and learning has improved all pupils' achievement in many subjects including that of pupils with additional special needs, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, English as an additional language and speech and language difficulties. An example of high quality teaching and learning was in a Year 2 food technology class where pupils with additional difficulties were part of the group. There was very good use of oral language, signing and challenging questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils responded very well and made very good progress.

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

23. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are good. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in developing a consistent way of planning subjects for all age groups including the use of national guidance materials. Opportunities for the oldest students to gain accreditation to at least Certificate of Achievement level now exist in English, mathematics, science, information and ICT, art and design and technology and food technology. Life skills and ICT are studied and accredited through the local college of further education.

24. For the youngest pupils a good range of learning opportunities is provided to promote progress towards the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and creative development. Provision for physical development is satisfactory but is limited by shortage of time on the timetable and by the lack of an adequate outside play space.

25. For pupils between Years 1 to 9, the school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education and religious education. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11, do not study history, geography or music but the curriculum is planned appropriately to place particular emphasis on work related learning. This provision meets all statutory requirements, as does the overall length of the school day. The morning sessions are especially long in comparison to the afternoon, which leads to some pupils finding it difficult to maintain focus in the last lesson of the morning. Those few students who stay in school after the age of 16 are taught within a class of slightly younger pupils. While their curriculum is supplemented by courses at the local college of further education, it is insufficiently tailored to fully meet the needs of this age group and is unsatisfactory.

26. The curriculum in all subjects is now planned much better than at the time of the last inspection. Subject co-ordinators have introduced 'learning outcomes' so that all staff are clear what pupils are expected to know by the end of a module of work. Provision for teaching all elements of the subject is good in English, mathematics, ICT, geography, design and technology including food technology, art, French, religious education and personal, social and health education. Provision in science is restricted by the small amount of time available for pupils between Years 3 and 6 and this affects the amount of investigative work that can be done. While the school has ensured that games activities no longer predominate physical education lessons, the opportunity given to pupils to attend swimming sessions takes a substantial amount of the time available and therefore limits other elements of the subject. Some anomalies remain in the amount of time spent studying different subjects in particular age groups. The Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils have only half the amount of time for physical development in comparison with that timetabled for religious education. Across the school time spent on English and personal and social education is not consistent from class to class. The insufficient access to computers identified in the last report has been improved with all classes now having access although the number of computers available for lessons varies from class to class, which still causes some inequality in learning opportunities. In some lessons, each pupil has a computer to work on whilst in others, this can be restricted to four pupils per computer. However, overall, ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum.

27. The principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been well implemented. The three-part lesson is used well and the quality of this provision has led to improvements, especially in the standards in writing. Similarly the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully applied across the whole school but there are insufficient planned opportunities to reinforce numeracy skills and understanding across the curriculum. The National Strategy for pupils from Years 7 to 9 has been introduced more recently and is beginning to be effective with this age group.

28. The school provides a limited number of extra-curricular activities. Older students can attend an annual residential trip and pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of performances and special events such as the Jubilee Celebrations and African Art Week. These are within the school day. Groups participate in Riding for the Disabled and some pupils take part in the Special Olympics but there are no competitive sports fixtures. While the difficulties created by the very wide catchment area for the school are recognised by parents, this provision could be improved to extend the range of opportunities available. It remains satisfactory.

29. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good both through the taught timetable and the ethos the school creates. The subject has been extended to incorporate citizenship education introduced nationally since the last inspection. Taught modules in each age group build progressively on the four themes of 'me/growing up', 'keeping safe and healthy', 'relationships and emotions' and 'citizenship'. An appropriately

high proportion of the timetable is devoted to these themes and this important area of work. All pupils have personal development targets as part of their individual education plans and progress in these is good and evaluated regularly. Some older pupils have access to a programme of self-advocacy designed to develop confidence in expressing a point of view and based on important skills in adult life such as making friends. This aspect of provision is arranged with the support of the local MENCAP group. The school has good provision for drugs, sex and relationships education with these learning areas being supported also by other organisations such as the local police and health promotion team. Pupils have the opportunity to consider the use and misuse of drugs, both legal and illegal and learning about sexual health and contraception in the context of relationships.

30. The school places particular priority on provision for work-related learning and careers guidance and these are both excellent in preparing pupils for life after school. Work related learning starts with the youngest pupils as they consider “people who help us” and this work is developed to encourage an awareness of a variety of jobs. Careers education starts formally for pupils in Year 9 as they begin to consider the options available to them on leaving school. Specialists from outside of school are involved with all students from this age until they leave school. The work experience programme for pupils in Year 9 and upward is a strength of the school. In Year 9 students make work focused visits in a group to such venues as a shopping centre. In Year 10 individual placements are found for all students who attend for half a day each week initially building up to a full week in the summer term. Year 11 students have a two-week individual placement. The school has been successful in attracting additional funding through the European Social Fund to support this programme and is therefore able to purchase very good additional support through an agency, which negotiates individual work place opportunities and provides individual support to students to ensure that the experience is as successfully as possible. Careful attention is given to evaluating these placements with students during lessons to ensure that they learn from both positive and negative experiences and become realistic in their view of the world of work. Plans are in place to introduce a mentoring system that will provide additional support to some pupils as they try to decide about their future. The school has in place a system for monitoring the outcomes of its work experience and careers programme once the pupils have left school and is hoping to be awarded a Careers Quality Mark through the Learning and Skills Council shortly.

31. The school has developed a good range of links with other schools and colleges in the area and these are effective in extending the opportunities of pupils in most age groups. A longstanding link exists with a local first school who welcome a group of younger pupils for an afternoon session on a fortnightly basis. In return, the first school pupils make use of the Rigby Hall gymnasium for their physical education lessons. Older students have the opportunity to take part in events with other schools such as the recent performing arts link with the Malachi Trust. Links with the local high school enable students for whom it is appropriate to successfully follow specific GCSE courses. College links offer good opportunities for most pupils over the age of 14 to develop their skills and gain accreditation in such areas as ICT, childcare, food technology and life skills.

32. Links with the local community are very good. The work experience and mentoring scheme rely heavily on the support of the local business community in providing opportunities to pupils. The school makes very good use of its minibus with visits and activities in the community and these are an important part of the curriculum. Pupils visit museums, shopping centres, conservation areas and the theatre and receive visits in school from such agencies as the Fire Service, performing arts groups and the local vicar. The whole school attends the local church to celebrate the festivals of Christmas and Easter. Pupils are encouraged to give something back to their community by supporting local and national charities. These activities extend the opportunities available to students and support their

personal and social development effectively. Overall, the good learning opportunities are planned for all pupils, including those with autistic disorder spectrum, and those with English as an additional language and speech and language difficulties.

33. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Overall this has improved since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. There are opportunities during class and whole school assemblies for pupils to understand and reflect on topics such as 'the Creation' and the world around us. Christian festivals are celebrated at the local church. The religious education curriculum, including the study and recognition of other faiths and traditions, underpins this spiritual development. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements.

34. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. There are clear school rules, which are known and understood by pupils. The 'Rigby Hall promise' forms a solid basis from which pupils develop a sense of right and wrong. In lessons, pupils learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work easily in groups. At lunchtime, pupils have the opportunity to develop their social skills very well with adults and with each other. Teachers and support staff provide good role models. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme helps pupils cope with situations that they might find difficult to cope with on their own. The 'house system' encourages, very successfully, a healthy competitive spirit and a sense of teamwork.

35. The provision for pupils to study their own and other cultures is good. Through art, religious education, geography, history and the personal, social and health education curricula, pupils effectively learn about their own and other cultures and faiths. The planned West African experience and the study of 'charities around the world' are good examples of this provision.

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

36. The support and guidance which pupils receive, both formal and informal is good. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils very well and respond to their needs. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and those with additional needs, such as those for whom English is an additional language or who have more complex behaviour needs, all receive good support.

37. The procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils' individual education plans provide clear evidence of this. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are good. Pupils' annual reports provide a careful analysis of what they know, understand and can do, as well as focusing on areas for future development. Reports give parents an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and personal development.

38. The school policies and procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are good. The school's effective use of 'behaviour contracts' is one example of good practice. However, the school does not ensure that all instances of restraint are properly recorded. Policies and procedures for promoting health and safety are also good, including teachers promoting healthy and safe practises in the classroom. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. There are close working relationships with the education welfare service and with a variety of other agencies that contribute to the effective care of pupils.

39. The school has developed good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. There is an assessment file for each pupil, which contains comprehensive

information about both their academic achievements and their personal development. This information is well organised and clearly set out. It is updated and reviewed on a regular basis and reflects both the well-established understanding among all staff of the school's policy and procedures for assessment and their very good knowledge of pupils.

40. The information produced by these systems is of good quality. It is linked directly with National Curriculum and pre-National Curriculum levels and clearly shows the rate of achievement. It describes progress in clear and specific terms of what pupils know, understand and can do. As a result, termly reviews are able to identify whether objectives have been achieved or not and to set precise targets for the following term. This is the first full academic year in which these systems have been operated but good levels of consistency have already been achieved in their implementation in English, mathematics and science and they are developing well in the other subjects of the curriculum. This has yet to start in history but was delayed pending the appointment of the subject co-ordinator.

41. Staff use annotation of samples of pupils' work very effectively to explain and support their judgement of pupils' attainment. Their notes include a description of the task, the amount of support given and brief reasons for the level awarded. They also note generally, the difference between a task that was experienced and one that was achieved. Formal assessment records in subjects give the same opportunity although the use of these is not fully consistent, as in geography. Here, at times, staff either date or tick the expected learning outcomes of units of work and it is not clear just how much pupils know or have understood.

42. The good quality of assessment practice in subjects and in pupils' personal development feeds into the pupils' individual education plans. The targets set relate to the same criteria used for the assessment of progress in the core subjects and in pupils' personal development. As a result, most targets are specific and measurable and a clear picture of the pupils' progress emerges, which is reported in the pupils' annual reviews of special education need.

43. The school is making increasingly effective use of the information produced by its assessment systems. This is in subject planning, lessons and for the setting of whole-school targets for the raising of standards. It has worked hard to develop and implement new assessment practices and has achieved a very good level of improvement in them since the last inspection when this aspect of the school's work was unsatisfactory.

44. However, for a small number of pupils across the school, the statutory requirements of their statements to ensure speech and language programmes are prepared and delivered are not being met. This has been the case since September 2001. The school and speech and language department are aware of this unsatisfactory situation and are negotiating to ensure this is remedied next term.

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

45. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, or who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting, have positive views of what the school provides and achieves. However, a significant minority of these parents feels that the school does not work closely with them or keep them well informed about how their children are getting on. Also, that their children do not get the right amount of homework or that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom.

46. The inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents, but does not wholly support the negative views held by some of them. There is much communication between

the school and parents, with information provided through newsletters, parents' meetings, individual education plans and annual reports. However, newsletters and the governors' annual report to parents tend to give the minimum amount of information and do not celebrate the success of pupils or the school. The home learning folders and home-school books provide an effective means of two-way communication between the school and a majority of parents and carers. The provision of homework has improved since the last inspection and has a significant impact on learning for the majority of pupils although this comes under strain in classes where teachers are away from school for any length of time. Pupils' annual reports are well written and informative. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now contain all required information.

47. The school makes appropriate efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school. The 'Friends of Rigby Hall' are very supportive and raise a significant amount of additional funds for the school. Parent governors are enthusiastic and committed to the school. Despite this, there is little day-to-day parental involvement in school activity.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. Since the previous inspection in April 2000, the school has improved significantly. The ethos of the school is one that values all individuals, pupils and staff alike, and celebrates all achievements, however small. All staff have done their very best to put in place a range of strategies that have set the school firmly on the road to improvement. Improvements are happening at a pace and supported by the Local Education Authority. Since September 2000, the school has, amongst other things:

- improved curriculum planning so that as pupils get older and move from class to class, their work builds clearly on what they have previously been taught;
- ensured the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers had the time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and to lead ways of improving this even further;
- begun to introduce ways of targeting and assessing pupils' standards and achievement in their work;
- appointed new teachers with particular subject expertise to strengthen what is offered to the pupils in areas such as ICT, religious education, physical education and history.

49. The school is well aware of what else remains to be done. The head teacher and her senior staff are leading this process very well and are very clear what the school needs to do to improve further. This is clearly known in school and is prioritised and costed in the school improvement plan, which has clear measures of success. As such, the management of the process is very good. Particular areas for development include:

- the development of science for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9;
- continuing to develop ICT with a 'network' throughout the school for pupils and staff;
- establishing a programme of events for the performing arts;
- extending ways of recognising the excellent provision for careers and work related learning such as the 'Careers Quality Mark';
- extending ways of evaluating just how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools;
- improving the school accommodation with new library, science and ICT facilities.

50. All other staff with management responsibilities have played their part in this improvement. All staff have had time that has been targeted for development. This has given them the time to check that agreed ways of working are actually happening. This has been successful overall although the recording of pupils' achievements against the learning

outcomes for lessons is still not consistent. Subject development has been very good overall, curriculum development and assessment is far more advanced than it was two years ago and teaching and learning have improved well because of the support offered to staff as a result of monitoring by the head teacher and senior staff. They have worked extremely hard to ensure that, whoever is carrying out the monitoring, they are using the same criteria and with the same understanding of what is good quality teaching and learning. Subsequent discussions with those staff observed helped to raise awareness of individual strengths and how teaching can be improved. The Local Education Authority has been supportive in moderating this.

51. The school has introduced so many initiatives in the last two years that it is rightly taking a period of reflection to evaluate just how well these are working in practice.

52. The school is socially inclusive in its aims and organisation. It operates a clear and effective equal opportunities policy. All pupils, regardless of race, background, gender, ability or religion, receive an appropriate and similar high quality education and are fully included. Pupils with severe learning difficulty or complex special needs for example, are organised into smaller classes and receive additional support from teacher assistants. Signing ensures that pupils with communication difficulties are included in all activities. Setting in English and mathematics is used in the senior school as an effective way of targeting teaching, support and resources. Good assessment procedures make certain that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level and with appropriate methods and materials. There are good opportunities for higher attaining pupils to access GCSE courses at local secondary schools and for other pupils to benefit from mixing socially with pupils in mainstream schools. The exception to this, are a number of pupils, who do not have access to speech and language therapy as specified in their statement of special educational needs. Additional professional support for the school in this has been intermittent recently but the school is working hard to rectify the problem.

53. The school enjoys the support of a hard-working governing body that has a strong relationship with the staff and pupils. Their contribution to the school is good. Governors visit the school frequently. At times this is informally and at other times, for example, in a monitoring role for the curriculum or for health and safety issues. The governors are effective in their monitoring of standards and the day-to-day financial control of the school. The school has benefited from a full audit of its budget in 2001 and minor points for improvement have been carried out. The school was building a budget surplus to help fund planned improvements to the accommodation. This had reached around ten per cent of the budget by April 2001. However, predicted costs were out-pacing this and the governors have now focussed correctly on other priorities. Overall, governors are successful in carrying out their responsibilities. They are clear about the importance of performance management and how this must link to school improvement planning, self-evaluation and continued professional development for the staff.

54. The school has appropriate staffing levels and good experience. A major strength is the way all staff work closely together as a whole school team. The number of teachers is adequate and their match to the curriculum and their responsibilities is good. Many of the teachers have been at the school for over seven years and the majority of these have additional special needs qualifications. The school has increased the number of teachers who have specialist qualifications, such as English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT and physical education. A music specialist is to be appointed in September 2002. One member of the teaching staff started at the school as a voluntary worker, became a learning support assistant and has recently qualified as a graduate teacher. This is one very good example of how the school monitors and mentors staff including those new to the school.

55. The number of support staff is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. They are mature, experienced and well trained. This group of support staff offer high quality educational support and work very much as part of a whole school team towards a common goal of ensuring that all pupils make maximum progress. This is beneficial in terms of ensuring that all pupils are very well supported academically and their personal, social and physical development.

56. All new staff follow good induction procedures to ensure that they understand their responsibilities to the pupils and the high standards the school expects. Staff appreciate the extra support and mentoring they receive as new members of the school. This is good practice. The staff handbook is comprehensive and a good additional guidance in terms of ensuring that the school's aims are clearly understood and procedures are consistently implemented. Over the last two years teachers, support staff and administrative staff have undertaken a wide variety of training courses to develop their knowledge and skills. Although staff have followed a wide range of appropriate courses, they have not yet been involved in specific training to support pupils on the autistic disorder spectrum.

57. The administrative staff, caretaker and his staff and catering staff make a very good contribution to the life of the school and feel valued for their efforts. Their training needs are identified alongside those of teachers and support assistants, and because of this pupils receive high standards of care and support in a safe and friendly learning environment.

58. Overall, the school's accommodation is good. There is a good art room, food technology and design and technology rooms, gymnasium, ball pool, medical room, sensory garden, adventure playground and seating on the playground. However, the library needs upgrading, the Foundation Stage children lack an appropriate outside play area, and there is no social area for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and students at Post 16. There is a lack of a discrete science area, which inhibits pupil progress particularly at Years 7 to 11. Computers in individual classrooms are used effectively, but the lack of a computer suite impedes pupils accessing modern technology as frequently as they should. The school is clean and well decorated. Attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors enhance the learning atmosphere of the school.

59. Overall learning resources are good. They are very good in religious education, good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, art, geography and physical education. They are satisfactory for music, history, and Modern Foreign Language, although there is insufficient use of ICT software in Modern Foreign Language.

60. The school analyses and interprets the data it has in detail, sets targets for itself and is approaching another similar school to help compare its standards and provision. The school has high expectations and is setting itself challenging but achievable goals to achieve in a broad range of areas; such as pupils' attainment in comparison with other schools. It is beginning to know how well pupils are progressing individually and is in the early stages of using computerised management information systems to support the processing of information and the target setting process. The head teacher, governors and staff recognise what is working and what else needs to be done. They have the drive and commitment to develop further and the planning is in place to support this. The school applies soundly the principles of best value although it does not yet have ways of formally sampling the views of parents' satisfaction with the school to balance out its informal knowledge of this.

61. Overall, the school has developed very well since the last inspection on an income that is slightly higher than other similar schools. The school knows where it is going and how



it is going to get there. As such, the school provides good value for money and has the team of staff and governors to ensure it improves further.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

Build on the very good improvement of the school in the last two years by:

- (1)
  - i. ensuring all pupils statemented for speech therapy receive their entitlement; (Paragraphs 44 and 52)
  - ii. ensuring staff use a broader range of strategies in teaching pupils with more complex learning and behaviour difficulties; (Paragraphs 20, 88, 93 and 94)
- (2)
  - i. introducing ways of sampling parents' views about their satisfaction with the school; (Paragraph 61)
  - ii. comparing more closely the school's standards and provision with those of similar schools. (\*) (Paragraphs 49 and 61)
- (3) Enhancing the school's provision by improving the accommodation with a more effective library, information and communication technology suite, specialist science room and outdoor play provision for the Foundation Stage. (\*) (Paragraphs 49, 59, 66, 78, 90 and 119)

(\*) These issues are already in the school's improvement plan

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed	104
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	29	48	23	3	0	0
Percentage	1	29	48	23	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	102
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	47

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

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

### KEY STAGE 4.

#### Pupils' course results in 2000/2001 accredited in the Certificate of Educational Achievement.

11 pupils in the group.	Pass	Merit	Distinction
ENGLISH	3	5	1
MATHEMATICS	2	5	1
SCIENCE	4	2	3
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY			9

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	97
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.7
Average class size	10.2

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	248.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	706648
Total expenditure	700187
Expenditure per pupil	6483
Balance brought forward from previous year	64750
Balance carried forward to next year	71211

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	92
Number of questionnaires returned	56

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	33	6	7	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	5	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	29	20	9	2
The teaching is good.	60	20	13	4	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	26	13	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	5	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	25	4	7	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	30	11	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	55	30	7	5	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	29	5	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	13	22	16	11

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

62. Children in the Foundation Stage of their education make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in relation to their abilities on entry to the school. Most pupils who join the school at or around the age of four are attaining at Level 4 or Level 5 in the National framework for pupils working below National Curriculum levels. Most make progress of at least one level of this framework in all areas of their curriculum during the Foundation Stage and are working within the first stepping stone of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year.

63. Teaching of pupils in the Foundation Stage is good with a particular feature being the very good teamwork of teaching and support staff. Lessons are planned thoroughly to reflect a balance of experiences in the areas of learning. Pupils' progress over time is assessed using the Local Education Authority's, Early Years Profile. This enables progress to be noted in all areas on a regular basis and links to the pupils' individual targets in language and literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. Relationships are good and pupils respond to the clear expectations to conform to classroom routines such as sitting in a circle and saying good morning to each other. Where difficult behaviour occurs it is managed in a firm and consistent way by all adults. Specific behaviour management programmes are drawn up in discussion with parents to support pupils for whom this is a specific area of difficulty. Pupils being led by the hand sometimes inhibits independence.

64. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to address the curriculum needs of pupils in the Foundation Stage by linking the planning for the Area of Learning to the National Curriculum subjects planned for older pupils in the class. This enables the youngest children to receive a curriculum appropriate to their age and stage of development. Improvement in this has been good.

65. Accommodation is good with the classroom providing a safe but stimulating area for pupils and staff. Resources are organised so pupils have some choice over their activities and move to different areas for specific elements of the curriculum. Space for physical play is more restricted but the planning provides for pupils to extend their skills in this area through visits and outings. Toilets and a cloakroom are adjacent to the room, thus making safe independent use possible. Staff working with pupils in the Foundation Stage have appropriate recent training. Whilst there are opportunities to work with colleagues in other special provision, it is important to ensure that links are also maintained with mainstream provision for Nursery and Reception pupils. Currently pupils do not have the opportunity to work in a supported way in other settings as part of their planned curriculum. Links with parents are maintained through home/school diaries and the telephone with meetings being arranged as necessary.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

66. Pupils learn to separate from their carers confidently. They choose appropriately between two offered activities, locate their personal possessions when reminded and are beginning to play co-operatively in 'pretend games' with an adult and other pupils. Most continue to need reminders to stay at one task but learn to pursue an activity independently for two to three minutes. For many pupils this is a specific area of difficulty and is included as a priority in planning for their individual needs. Pupils are assisted in developing their personal

care skills by sessions such as teeth cleaning and, for those who require toilet training, this is a matter of priority in their daily programme.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

67. Signing is used consistently by adults to support communication in all areas of the curriculum. This leads to pupils responding well to questions and instructions and to them being willing and enthusiastic communicators within the limits of their abilities. Pupils learn to listen to stories and most develop their ability to understand and use three 'information carrying' words in a sentence. Advice from the speech and language therapist is incorporated into the teaching in this area of learning. Many pupils use signs with confidence to support their communication with adults. They learn to share books, hold them correctly and understand the difference between words and pictures on a page. Some recognise letter shapes. Most pupils hold a pencil using a thumb and finger grip and are beginning to follow simple writing patterns.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Pupils show an increased understanding and ability to join in with number rhymes in their mathematical development. Some order numbers to three and match two small sets of objects. Most learn to sort and match simple shapes and colours and label a circle, a square and basic colours. Higher attaining pupils know more information about shapes and identify the corners on a square.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

69. In order to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world pupils observe the weather and note seasonal changes; help to look after class pets; look at toys from the past and present and consider where they and their friends live. A programme of regular visits using the school minibus supports these activities. Opportunities to extend pupils' skills in information and communication technology are provided across all areas of the curriculum and pupils make very good progress in this aspect of their education. Most use a switch successfully. They understand that it puts an appliance on and off. Also, they understand the use of the space bar on the computer. Higher attaining pupils use a computer mouse to 'click and drag' icons and are beginning to find letters on a large keyboard.

### **Physical development**

70. Physical development is promoted during sessions in the school gymnasium. Pupils learn to be more confident in large spaces, to move under, over and through large apparatus and to throw a ball to another person. Progress in this area is limited by the small amount of time given to physical development on the timetable and the lack of a suitable separate outdoor space where pupils can have regular access to bikes and other such equipment. Planning is in place to provide a weekly hydrotherapy session during the next academic year.

### **Creative development**

71. There are planned opportunities to support creative development which enable the pupils to make good progress. They learn to explore paint and some progress to being able to draw a face. In music, pupils use percussion instruments and learn to stop and start on request. Most pupils become confident in joining in to sing action rhymes. Imaginative play is encouraged by interaction with adults in the 'Pretend Play' area and most pupils join in successfully in role-play such as 'making tea'.

## ENGLISH

72. The quality of provision is good. All pupils achieve good standards and are making good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, especially in pupils' writing. There are a number of reasons for this. The principles of the National Strategy for Literacy are routinely and very effectively incorporated into lessons. The Key Stage 3 strategy is beginning to be effective in guiding lesson planning for pupils who are in Year 7 and beyond. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are set into groups of like ability, which helps make teaching focussed and more effective. Staff sign well for those pupils who need this. Resources to support teaching and learning have improved substantially since the last inspection and computers are used more effectively to promote learning. Each benefits the development of pupils' language and communication skills and their reading and writing. Since the last inspection, results gained on the Certificate of Educational Achievement of the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) have improved. This year, two pupils, who take some of their English lessons in a nearby mainstream secondary school, are being entered for the GCSE examination.

73. In speaking and listening, by the end of Year 2, the highest attaining pupils respond well to complex instructions such as 'Take the register, bring back the dinner board, then tell the class what is for dinner'. They speak clearly and confidently when they ask for what they want, for example 'Please may I have ...thank you'. Facts from previous lessons are easily recalled and simple questions are answered quickly and accurately. They attain at Level 8 in the National framework for pupils working below National Curriculum levels. The lowest attaining pupils use a combination of speech, signs and, occasionally, exchange pictures with staff to identify their needs, for example to use the toilet or to choose their favourite food or drink. They attain at Level 6 in the National framework. They respond quickly to instructions to sit, stand and to wash their hands. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils have progressed to Level 2 of the National Curriculum. They speak easily and clearly, for example when they greet visitors to the school and when they recall what they did during their visit to the swimming pool. The lowest attaining pupils continue to use signing to support their conversations and respond with single words such as 'yes' or 'no' when they answer simple questions. They have progressed to Level 1 of the National Curriculum. During Years 7 to 9 progress continues to be good, so that by the end of Year 9, the highest attaining pupils talk effortlessly and accurately in different contexts, for example about their work, hobbies or their family. They attain at Level 3 of the National Curriculum. The lowest attaining pupils are close to Level 1. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to build very well on their good foundation. For example, as part of their work towards the Certificate of Educational Achievement, they prepare a talk and practice telephone conversation skills. By this time they have learned to communicate clearly and make their points logically and sensibly. Most do so with good success.

74. Pupils' reading skills are poor on entry to the school. They make a good start in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, the highest attaining pupils read a small number of the high frequency words of the National Strategy for Literacy. They identify key characters from popular stories, such as Little Red Riding Hood and touch or gesture to the initial letter of their name. They are approaching Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The lowest attaining pupils identify words and symbols with support. They match real objects to pictures, for example to a fruit or to a doll when reading about Little Red Riding Hood. They are at Level 6 of the national framework for pupils working below National Curriculum levels. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils have progressed to Level 2 of the National Curriculum. They read simple books with some support. They name parts of a book unaided, including the title and author. They have a good technical vocabulary and know about capital letters, full stops and sentences and their use. They use phonic clues to decode unknown words such as 'but' and

'with'. The lowest attaining pupils recognise and match objects, such as tiger and cup to their names. They know that books are read from front to back, that text is written in straight lines and that the title of the book will be on the cover. They are approaching Level 1 of the National Curriculum. From Year 7 onwards, pupils read a wide range of texts with increasing fluency and understanding. These include reports of events such as the Queen's Jubilee, classic fiction such as Treasure Island or works of Shakespeare and Dickens. They gain a good understanding of how information can be presented in different ways. These include newspaper reports, for example of a football match or a film, adverts, instructional texts such as how to prepare a recipe or from searches on the Internet to establish facts about the life of authors, such as Robert Louis Stevenson. Most pupils read aloud enthusiastically and the best readers read fluently with confidence, accuracy and good expression. They select their own books to take home as part of the home-reading programme and talk about them critically. They use a range of strategies to read new words and make good attempts at reading irregular words of three and four syllables. By the end of Year 11, most pupils read independently. They read newspapers and magazines for pleasure and read well enough to support their learning in other subjects, for example through using the limited library provision or occasionally the Internet.

75. In writing, in Years 1 and 2 there is an appropriate emphasis on fine motor skills to assist accurate letter formation. The highest attaining pupils copy simple words and phrases with good accuracy. They are at Level 8 of the national framework for pupils working below National Curriculum levels. The lowest attaining pupils make intended marks on paper using marker pens, crayons and pencils. Their fine motor control is more limited and they are at Level 4 of the National framework. By the end of Year 6, the best writers are aware of the structure of sentences, write simple sentences of up to five words and use capital letters and full stops well. They have progressed to Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, the increased emphasis given to writing has provided good opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and develop their written work in order to improve spelling and presentation. Between Years 7 and 9, pupils learn to use speech marks, which they apply well in their free writing and when they write for a purpose, for example when they write an advertisement for a product. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are close to Level 3 of the National Curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work on writing for different purposes when they follow the syllabus of their certificate course. The best writers know the conventions for writing letters and produce good free writing that is well-organised, characterised by good descriptions and is imaginative and clear. Their best work approaches Level 4 of the National Curriculum. When they leave school, most pupils are functionally literate. For example, they can plan an evening of television watching, select their own books or magazines for leisure reading and can read and complete forms such as job applications.

76. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. This is because the school uses successfully the principles of the National Strategy for Literacy for pupils up to Year 6 and the Key Stage 3 strategy for pupils thereafter. Lessons are well planned and routinely include activities that match very well with pupils' needs so that all pupils are fully involved in all aspects of the lessons. Plenary sessions are well organised and teachers make good use of open-ended questions to reinforce learning. Staff know their pupils very well. This helps them motivate and engage pupils and makes lessons enjoyable events. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is very good. Pupils' levels of attainment are accurately recognised and achievement is evaluated. Teachers make very good use of this information in planning their lessons. Pupils are confident as learners because of the very good relationships they have with the staff. Their attitudes to their work and their behaviour are very good. They are eager to do their best to please. Each contributes to the good standards and the good progress pupils are making over all the elements of English. As a consequence lesson time is very well used. Pupils enjoy their lessons, even though they work very hard. Home learning procedures are well established. For many



pupils, the weekly homework is well supported by the home reading programme. Both make a good contribution to the progress pupils are making, especially in reading.

77. English is very well led and managed. Schemes of work are of good quality and match well with the relevant Programmes of Study. Teachers have been well trained in applying the principles of the national strategy. This has helped boost their confidence and has contributed to the improved quality of pupils' learning. All staff make very good use of signing and of picture exchange procedures when necessary.

78. The library is too small and has too few books and other resources, such as audio and video-tapes, CD Roms and access to the Internet, to make a satisfactory contribution to teaching and learning in English. Also, this affects the development of pupils' investigative skills in a range of subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. Pupils achieve well and make good progress overall because teaching is mostly good or very good and because teachers have high expectations that promote effective learning. This good progress builds up over time and applies equally to boys and girls and to all groups of pupils with different special educational needs. It represents good improvement on the findings of the previous report.

80. Since the last inspection, the school has effectively introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, including for pupils aged 11-16. As a result, all lessons are clearly introduced and structured and sufficient time is allowed at the end to review and share pupils' progress. The good guidance, training and support from the subject co-ordinator is a significant factor in maintaining the high standards pupils achieve. Good quality targets in pupils' individual education plans, which are regularly and effectively reviewed and revised, ensure that pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. In the best lessons, regular assessment of pupils' responses is part of normal practice. The minority of girls in the school makes equally positive contributions to all parts of the lessons. Good planning and organisation ensure that all pupils are included. Learning support assistants are usually well briefed and work well in partnership with teachers, supporting individual pupils and small groups. In some classes in Years 3 to 9, however, they are not sufficiently involved in the opening parts of lessons or the plenaries.

81. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make a good start in acquiring the correct mathematical language concerning time, for example, 'o'clock', 'hours' and 'minutes'. They examine a variety of clock faces and wristwatches and note the differences in size, colour, and face detail. Higher attaining pupils recognise and write numbers one to 12 on a blank clock face and have made an encouraging start in recording their mathematical experiences. Lower attaining pupils join in the nursery rhyme 'Hickory Dickory Dock' and identify the mouse running up the clock. They explore 'capacity' by playing in sand and water. The consistent use of signing ensures that all are involved and understand. Pupils are well behaved and co-operative. They listen carefully and follow instructions and in this way, speaking and listening skills are reinforced. A good plenary reviews progress and celebrates achievement. Pupils enjoy seeing their work displayed and this raises their self-esteem.

82. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding because teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, which provide a focus for the teacher. In one Year 4 lesson, for example, good warm up activities were used. Pupils clapped and counted numbers one to 30 followed by counting forwards and backwards in 5s and 10s to 100. This provided a brisk start and gave pupils confidence. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and this shows in

Careful questioning to confirm understanding and good use of resources and games to reinforce number skills. A short video, for example, developed pupils' awareness of the properties of a square, circle, triangle and rectangle. Learning is further consolidated by the experience of touching hidden shapes in a 'feely' bag and by guessing what they are. Pupils enjoy these 'fun' experiences and this enhances learning. Higher attaining pupils recognise and name common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and describe their characteristics. For example, a triangle has 'three points' and 'three straight sides'. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate an understanding of words that describe position, shape, size and quantity. Only in one lesson, where pupils were involved overlong in cutting and sticking activities, did the work lack challenge.

83. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, build on upon previous work and the positive attitudes developed in the subject. They make good progress in developing their familiarity with time, money, fractions and mathematical language because lessons are well planned and proceed at pace. Activities are well matched to pupils' ability levels and interests. Real money, real clocks and practical activities maintain pupils' attention and encourage them to handle resources carefully. All lessons start with a quick-fire mental/oral session. As a result, pupils understand number operations, see number relationships and recall number facts from five to 100. Good questioning altered to suit each pupils' level of understanding ensures all pupils take part and all are successful. Pupils in Year 6 recognise fractions as being part of a whole because the teacher demonstrates cutting and reassembling halves and quarters. In a lesson with pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9, the teacher set up a shop selling real sweets and lollipops to reinforce pupils knowledge of giving and checking change. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 learn the difference between 'big' and 'small' and 'bigger' and 'smaller' through matching full football kits to photographs of footballers of three different sizes. Higher attaining pupils in this age group understand the formation of numbers up to 100. They use mental recall of addition and subtraction to ten. They interpret data presented in a simple table or chart. They are familiar with halves and quarters.

84. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' learning accelerates. Higher attaining pupils are accredited through the Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA). Last year pupils obtained one distinction and five merit awards. This accreditation has been introduced since the last inspection and is a great incentive. Pupils take their studies seriously and are sensible and mature. Relationships are very good and this enables them to work effectively in small groups or on their own. Pupils in Year 11 who have finished their coursework, apply their mathematical skills in planning, costing and organising a trip the local safari park and for a Leavers' buffet. They show a good awareness of the importance of time and money in their planning and are well prepared for the challenges of life after school. Lower attaining pupils in this year group and two Year 12 pupils consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding of money. They make good progress in making up amounts to 20 pence with a variety of small coins because the teacher has a positive, patient and unremitting concern for learning. He communicates well with the pupils in short, unambiguous sentences supported by the use of signing where appropriate. Pupils are secure in their knowledge that coins should be written up with a pence sign. Younger pupils in Year 10, learn to order positive and negative numbers because the teacher is clear in her explanation and demonstration of a number line. Good questioning helps pupils understand and grow in confidence.

85. Mathematics is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 learn in ability groups and this is an effective and efficient way of targeting teaching and support. A good detailed scheme of work is in place, well linked to the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Good procedures for assessing pupils' progress ensure that teachers throughout the school make consistent judgements about pupils' level of performance. Resources are good and are well used to motivate pupils and enhance their learning experiences. The subject makes a consistent contribution to pupils' literacy skills

and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Homework is set weekly and helps to extend and consolidate learning. The school is aware of the need to improve the use of ICT to support pupils' learning and achievement. Whilst numeracy is well used across the curriculum it is not always sufficiently planned for. Pupils practise their mathematical skills when weighing and measuring in design and technology, when calling the register and counting those present at registration times or when recording data in science. However, a more formal whole school initiative would ensure that all teachers take the opportunity, in their subject, to reinforce mathematical skills and concepts.

## SCIENCE

86. Achievements in science are good. Between Years 1 to 6, progress in the subject is good. In years 7 to 11 it is satisfactory. In Years 10 to 11 it is at least good and in a significant number of cases it is very good.

87. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 experience a good grounding in simple scientific ideas. They identify living things and things that have never lived. They know that plants need light and water. They take part in simple experiments, for example, to determine the absorbency of paper. In Years 3 and 4, their ability to talk about what they observe develops well. In one lesson involving the planting of a sunflower seed, the higher-attaining pupils used the terms 'shoot' and 'root' when asked to predict what would happen to the seed. Teaching here, as in all science lessons observed, focused very effectively on key words such as 'investigation' and 'experiment'. The subject makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. By Year 6, good progress is apparent in the way pupils of all levels of attainment write up their experiments and record their findings. Their written work shows that they classify animals by different criteria, know about healthy and less healthy foods and are beginning to grasp the principles of food chains. In their science lesson, the higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 recalled the reasons why the sun only lights up one part of the globe and talked confidently about cause and effect, for example, in an experiment to make shadows bigger or smaller and sharper or less distinct. Teaching again reinforced key words such as 'image' and 'transparent' effectively. A lively pace and interesting practical work were common features of science lessons for this age range and high levels of interest and co-operation resulted.

88. The teaching of science for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is less knowledgeable in the subject. Expectations of what pupils can do, particularly for the higher attaining pupils are lower. As a result, the response of the pupils to their science lessons does not display the same levels of interest and co-operation as in the other year groups. In one lesson observed, for example, a class of mainly Year 9 pupils lost interest in the low-level tasks set on the subject of gravity and became disruptive and unco-operative. The written work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 shows they are covering all aspects of the science curriculum and they are beginning to understand concepts such as 'what makes a fair test'. Their experimental work, however, is limited in scope and is still dependent on simple worksheets and, particularly in the case of the higher attaining pupils, lacks opportunities for them to work on their own and carry out more systematic observations. This explains, at least partly, the lack of higher levels attained in the statutory assessments. Overall, however, pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of topics such as the human skeleton and the construction of simple electrical circuits. By the time they are 14, pupils with more severe learning difficulties have also made satisfactory progress within the lower levels of the programme of study.

89. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show evidence of good and at times, very good achievements. They carry out investigations with increasing independence, organise their work very efficiently, and communicate clearly, both orally and in writing, what they have done

and what their conclusions are. They are highly motivated by the examination course they are following and the very good results, including a high proportion of distinctions achieved in the final examinations, reflect both their hard work and their genuine interest in the subject. Teaching is very good. It challenges pupils to think for themselves, maintains a lively pace in lessons and is very adept at bringing in discussion, the impact of science on other areas of pupils' experience, such as the environment and their own health.

90. There have clearly been very significant improvements in science since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory overall. In the work of pupils in Years 7 to 11, for example, in the planning of the subject and in the assessment of pupils' progress development has been very good. The lack of a specialist science room continues to limit developments in some areas of the curriculum, particularly for the older higher attaining pupils in their work on materials and physical processes. The reduced time available for the subject in Classes 3 and 4 means that the amount of investigative and experimental work which pupils can do is less than it should be. The use of information and communications technology is not yet fully developed. The co-ordinator is aware of these and other areas for development and the capacity of the subject for further improvement is good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. Pupils achieve well in art and design and make good progress as they move through the school. This is as a result of teaching that with few exceptions is consistently good and often very good. Teachers have good subject expertise and provide a range of art that is broad, varied and challenging. This good progress applies equally to the minority of girls and to all groups of pupils with different special educational need. It represents very good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when teaching and learning were judged to be unsatisfactory.

92. No teaching was observed for pupils in Years 1 and 2. However, a scrutiny of their work and classroom display shows that pupils are making good progress in acquiring basic skills in art and design. They use different materials for drawing, painting and weaving, for example, pencils, crayons, pastel, paint and wool. They explore different ways of applying paint, using brushes, fingers and 'hand dripping' techniques to textured wallpaper and a large collage. Higher attaining pupils use a digital camera to record their own image and use a computer photo editing software package to manipulate their image. Design work focuses on them choosing colour and materials in deciding how they wish something to look. Lower attaining pupils contribute, with support, to whole class projects like building and decorating a house for the 'three little pigs' or painting a large train. A lovely weaving display outside the classroom is testament to pupils' ability to persevere with a difficult task.

93. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on this good start and consolidate their art and design skills. Pupils in Year 4, for example, create their own sculptor similar to the large spouting face sculptor seen in the Centenary Square Birmingham, on a recent visit. They work with plastic milk bottles building up the features of the face by gluing strips of newspaper and tissue paper. They make good progress because the lesson is well planned and organised. The management of the disruptive behaviour of one pupil is immediate and effective and he is quietly led out so the learning of others is not affected. He does, however, miss out on the learning opportunities of that class. Timely and appropriate interventions by the learning support assistant ensure that the remaining pupils stay on task and make good progress. Pupils are well motivated by the activity. They work with sustained effort and some imagination. In one lesson a pupil was particularly creative – "I've got an idea Miss. I could get some tissue paper...etc" and he was encouraged to explore his design. Pupils in Year 6 make templates from photographs of local buildings and transfer them to clay slabs. They show improving manipulative skills in softening the clay and cutting around the templates.

They work carefully drawing their outlines with wooden scalpels. The lesson is successful because the teacher clearly explains the task and ensures that lower attaining pupils are fully supported. A good plenary, during which pupils walk around the tables and assess each other's work, encourages co-operative learning and evaluation.

94. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, with the exception of a Year 9 class, continue to make good progress. They improve their hand-eye co-ordination and manual dexterity, as they work with a variety of media and refine their designs. Pupils in Year 8, for example, work in cane and strips of reclaimed plastic bags. They create sculptures – birds, fish, and trees – to enhance the school drive. The modern sculpture of the Angel of the North and the work of Henry Moore inspires their work. There is a 'buzz' of excitement as pupils respond positively to the personal and practical nature of the task. They work well together in pairs or small groups in a productive way. The teacher is confident in her subject knowledge and in her management of pupils' behaviour. Good questioning, for example, "How could we make this a stronger structure?" encourages pupils to think and come up with ideas like binding with string or rubber bands. A review of progress at the end of the lesson gives pupils the opportunity to explain and evaluate their designs. By contrast, pupils in a Year 9 class make unsatisfactory progress in what was a well-planned and interesting lesson, because of their continual disrupted behaviour. The teacher's behaviour management strategies were linked and there was insufficient support from other staff; for example, there was no teacher assistant with this group and this contributed to an unsatisfactory experience for all concerned.

95. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress in refining detailed observation and in understanding concepts and techniques such as proportion and composition. They do so because the teachers have a developing knowledge of the subject, the Certificate of Educational Achievement accreditation requirements and the most effective methods to help pupils achieve them. This accreditation has recently been introduced and is an improvement since the previous inspection. It gives the subject status and is a great motivator for higher attaining pupils. In addition, two pupils are following a GCSE course at a local secondary school as part of the school's inclusion initiative. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils worked with sustained concentration to create a logo for a mobile phone company. They made good use of their sketchbooks to refine their ideas and decided the media in which to work. They researched the Internet, posters, adverts and magazines to see what was currently available. The teacher circulated the class, involving pupils in discussion about their work, challenging, questioning and suggesting in a positive way so that pupils were not discouraged and their work improved. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of landscapes because the lesson was clearly introduced and good reference was made to the work of other artists, Van Gogh, Monet, El Greco and Goldsworthy, and the style, times and emotions in which they painted. In doing so, pupils learned about the importance of proportion, composition and tone. Good use is made of the digital camera to record direct observations of landscapes around the school and the software for altering and adapting them.

96. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 and two Year 12 pupils, have begun to understand the process of weaving because the teacher takes great care to display a fleece in its natural state and explains how it changes. They are fascinated, although react with some reticence as they touch the greasy, discoloured, soft fleece. Their wonder increases when they are told it will eventually finish up as one of their sweaters. The teacher patiently takes pupils through the cleaning, carding and spinning process, so that pupils become familiar with the technical language of 'loom', 'warp' and 'weft'. They make good progress themselves in learning to weave with a large needle, wool and cards with slots because the teacher clearly demonstrates the task and with her teacher assistant gives individual pupils good support. The teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm transferred to the pupils.

97. In addition to the improvements in teaching and learning and accreditation, there have been a number of other significant developments. The subject now is very well led by a co-ordinator who provides advice and support for her colleagues and monitors their planning. There is a policy and scheme of work in place which, ensures that pupils build steadily on their art and design skills and knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. New assessment practices are developing so that pupils' progress can be monitored, annotated and levelled. Resources for the subject are good and used well to provide exciting activities. Accommodation is also good. The art room has adequate working surfaces, lighting and display areas and its use is now timetabled. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and information and communication technology skills and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits into the community, to art galleries and museums and 'Artists in Residence' broaden pupils' experience. The school also takes part in art exhibitions in Bromsgrove and at the County Hall. This raises pupils' self-esteem. Displays of pupils' work, in a variety of media and techniques, are well organised and make a vibrant contribution to the ethos of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. The school has made good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. Teaching and learning, and pupils' attitude towards the subject have all improved. This has had a positive effect on the progress pupil's make. Pupils across the school make good progress, including those with additional special needs; they make the same progress as others.

99. In Years 2 and 3, pupils shop for their ingredients for their food technology lessons. They buy the food at a local supermarket. In the food technology room, they enter in a very business-like manner, follow hygiene and health and safety rules meticulously and wear protective aprons and hairnets to ensure the best possible conditions for preparing food. They show a good understanding of changes in food, from powder to liquids and from liquids to solids, such as when they make jelly. They discuss heating and cooling, and understand which changes are reversible and non-reversible. They identify and name, verbally or by sign, the utensils they need, such as 'jug', 'spoons', 'bowl', 'kettle', 'scissors'.

100. By the end of Year 6, pupils design and make a puppet with moving parts. They understand the need for following safety rules within the workshop. They wear protective aprons and safety goggles when required. They cut out the body and limbs, use punches and scissors safely, insert split pins and check the model moves correctly.

101. By the end of Year 8, pupils design and make fabric pencil cases. They are confident using a computerised sewing machine. They input data and print out their names, which they sew onto tie-dye fabric. Pupils design their individual pencil cases and use fabric paints to make attractive designs. Pupils build well on their previous knowledge and skills and, by the end of Year 9, design and make perspex compact disc holders. They acquire new skills as they mark and cut out perspex shapes. In food technology, pupils with more severe learning difficulties plan and make sandwiches for their educational visit to an adventure park. They spread butter on the bread, put in fillings, make the sandwiches and wrap in cling film. With support they managed to complete this work in the correct sequence.

102. In food technology, pupils by the end of Year 11, and the few students in Year 12, complete their Certificate of Educational Attainment by completing practical assessments including choosing menus and preparing meals in a set time. Pupils use food technology to produce snacks for their enterprise project. They use word processing to record the menus they use, and cost all products they make.

103. Teaching and learning are good. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The progress of pupils is a result of good teaching. This was evident in a lesson for Year 9 pupils when they showed interest and enthusiasm to skilfully draw and design the compact disc holders. The highlight of the lesson being when pupils used a power saw to cut out their designs. The teacher developed pupils' skills well by effective use of questions, good support and challenging the pupils. The important use of support assistants was also illustrated in this lesson as she provided pupils with extra support, praise and encouragement, resulting in increasing confidence and self-esteem. Strengths of the teaching are subject knowledge and the way pupils are managed. Teaching offers appropriate and interesting activities and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Well-focused support maintains pupils' interest and keeps them on task. Pupils enter the workshop or food technology room prepared to work hard, organise themselves for the practical work and follow health, hygiene and safety rules carefully. Relationships in lessons are very good and as a result, pupils respond well and have very positive attitudes to their work. Lessons are well planned and enable pupils to develop their skills well. Questions are used effectively to enable pupils to recall what they know, and how to make them think about what they will need to do for the project they are working on and how to organise their work. Good use is made of the questions what, if and why? High standards of work and behaviour are insisted upon and, as a result, pupils produce a high standard of work in which they take great pride.

104. Pupils now use a greater range of materials than at the last inspection. There are also now better links with information and communication technology through the use of control technology and electronics. Pupils have access to the Internet and opportunities for research. Studying and preparing foods of other countries enriches pupils' cultural understanding. Staff obviously enjoy their work and pass on that enjoyment to their pupils. There is a healthy working buzz of activities in lessons.

105. The subject is well led and managed. The curriculum, learning opportunities and assessment have been improved and are now linked closely to the National Curriculum. Accommodation for both aspects of technology is very good. Resources are good and well maintained. Design and technology makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. Achievement in geography is generally good by pupils in Years 1 to 9. The subject is not taught to older pupils except for those with more severe learning difficulties; they also achieve well. Pupils make progress in lessons and scrutiny of previous work shows that good progress is made over time. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about homes. They know the differences between different types of house and bungalow, recall their own address and write a letter home so that the postman will deliver it their address. They describe the different buildings found in the town to the countryside and build on this by exploring maps both locally and abroad. In their project on 'Where in the world is Barnaby the Bear', pupils recognise England on a map, know it is small in comparison with Africa and respond well to questions about weather and climate. They know that it is hot in Africa and cold at times in Switzerland, particularly when Barnaby has gone skiing.

107. This is built on so that, by Year 6, pupils have investigated their own area and compared it with different places in this country and abroad in greater detail. Pupils come to understand how it would be different going to school in another country, and how food would be different because of the different climate, such as in India. Pupils learn how cultures are different and build up likes and dislikes about the differences. Closer to home, pupils work on grid references linked to part of the school grounds that they wish to develop. They plan how they can change their environment for the better by designing a garden with shrubs, plants

and small trees. Higher attaining pupils use their imagination well and frequently work independently. Pupils with more pronounced learning difficulties join in fully with discussions and generally record their work with adult support. They achieve well.

108. By Year 9, pupils become even clearer how people in different countries use their environment for agriculture and to create wealth for their countries through natural resources. They name a number of developed and less-developed countries and understand the relationship of various types of jobs to the level of development in the country. Between Years 7 and 9, pupils with more severe learning difficulties work separately. They build up a good knowledge of how activities at the coast can differ from those at school. They recognise and name features such as cliff, beach, waves, bucket and spade. Pupils even teach each other new words to sign such as 'crab'. Pupils achieve well.

109. During the inspection teaching and learning were good. In one lesson with the pupils in Year 2, they were excellent. Lessons were well planned to include a range of interesting activities, which helped pupils to concentrate. Pupils responded well to interesting lessons such as one where pupils were enthralled by Barnaby's holiday diary, which included photographs and maps of where he had been. A video of the holiday destination added even greater realism to the learning. One child was heard to ask 'Is Barnaby real?' This was dealt with by the teacher in a sensitive way. For older pupils, fieldwork both close to school or further away is used well. This is always accompanied by the taking of photographs to aid discussion on return. The quality of discussion, such as that carried out by Year 6 and 7 pupils during the inspection, was very good. Very good questioning by the teacher led pupils gently through their recollections of their fieldwork and helped pupils to draw conclusions about how people affect the environment and make use of a semi-rural location. Pupils receive good support from learning support assistants who in the best lessons, maintain a constant but quiet dialogue with those who need extra support, including the use of very good signing. This maintains their interest and concentration and ensures they learn equally as well as others.

110. Subject co-ordination is good and the co-ordinator has a clear overview of the subject across the centre. This includes how staff are using the new assessment procedures and that consistency in this has not yet been achieved. As such, progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding cannot be fully shown. The current scheme of work clearly shows how the planned curriculum for younger pupils relates to what they are to learn in the older classes of the school. Specific literacy, numeracy and ICT expectations are built into the curriculum, which is good. Senior staff carry out the monitoring of what is being taught and pupils' learning. Scheduled meetings between these staff and the co-ordinator gives a more complete picture of how the subject is progressing. Reports to parents are clear and contribute to their knowledge of what pupils have studied or learned. Improvements in pupils' achievement; in the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum planning, assessment approaches and co-ordination of the subject are such that the subject is much further on than at the time of the last inspection and improvement since then is very good.

## **HISTORY**

111. Achievement in history is good overall. Teaching and learning during the inspection were good with Years 3 to 9. In one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory. The subject is not taught beyond Year 9 except for pupils with more severe learning difficulties who achieve well. Teaching was not observed with pupils in Years 1 and 2 but the scrutiny of their work and discussion with some pupils points to good achievement.

112. By the end of Year 2, pupils know certain important characters and key events in their lives such as what happened to Guy Fawkes and why; what Samuel Pepys did during the



Fire of London and why Florence Nightingale became famous. Pupils are beginning to understand that events can cause lasting change to a country's history. By Year 6, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past, how that differed from country to country and how people of different nationalities set out to explore the world. By exploring their own room to find out unusual items, pupils became clearer about exploration and discovery. On one occasion, in a lesson about Ancient Egypt, the teacher was not fully aware of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding because assessment is not working in the subject. The work set included too much new information and, as a result, pupils were unclear of the main points of the lesson. Where teaching and learning are very good teachers have planned interesting and challenging activities for pupils. In one such lesson, pupils with more severe learning difficulties recollected events in the life of Henry VIII. They remembered how many wives he had, their names and how their lives developed or ended. The teacher changed the focus of the lesson regularly to maintain concentration. Very good use of coloured portraits of the characters built into a numbered display of wife one, wife two and so on. This gave pupils the opportunity to remind themselves of facts, count aloud when referring to particular wives and generally offered pupils every opportunity to think, remember, discuss and draw conclusions about why things 'were as they were' in the past. Pupils were keen to respond to questions that were fully signed by the teacher and learning support assistant for those who needed it. This ensured that even the more reluctant pupils joined in confidently with the discussion. Pupils behaved well because they were interested in the work.

113. By Year 9, pupils have studied a number of different eras in history and have knowledge of what it was like to be growing up, for example, in Victorian times or the Second World War. One highlight of this work was 'interviewing' a visitor to school about life as an evacuee in the war. During a good lesson which included a discussion on rationing, pupils became very clear on why the country was expected to 'dig for victory' during the Second World War. Their amazement 'as the penny dropped' was clear and sparked more questions about food that was and was not available in those times. Good management and clear knowledge by staff ensures that even the quietest of pupils are involved and learn well.

114. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been good. Detailed planning is now in place, which makes it clear how the staff ensure that pupils moving from the younger classes to the senior classes do not repeat work. Planning includes specific literacy, numeracy and ICT expectations. The recently appointed co-ordinator has an overview of how the subject is developing across the school. There is currently no system in place for recording what pupils know, understand and can do and consequently no information on which to base firmly, the planning of future work. This contributed to the one unsatisfactory lesson. Information to parents shows clearly what pupils have studied in history but is not yet able to contain firm examples of achievement. However, this point is already a target for development in the subject's action plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Across the school, pupils make good progress in information and communication technology. Their achievements are good in lessons. This is very good improvement since the last in inspection, when the overall progress was considered to be poor.

116. Pupils, including those with additional special needs, such as ASD make good progress. They make a good start in their early years in the school, especially in the key areas such as using a keyboard and a mouse. They identify icons, click on specific objects, and drag and drop these across the screen. As pupils move through Years 1 to 6, they understand which items will switch off and on, such as a listening centre, iron and vacuum cleaner and identify and use the off and on buttons. They improve their control on computers

using a mouse and direction arrows. They understand and use correct language well. By the end of Year 6, pupils log on, find last week's work, collect data, enter this onto a spreadsheet and display graphically. They show a good understanding of moving data from word processing to spreadsheets.

117. By the end of Year 9, pupils follow a sequence of instructions from the teacher, or read this from the board. They find correct programmes and folders. They use a drawing programme effectively to create pictures and draw using different tools of the toolbar. They create pictures with mathematical shapes and if they are not happy with their pictures they know how to use the computer 'dustbin'. By the end of Year 9, lower attaining pupils use a 'roamer' to illustrate control. They enter instructions into the robot and make it move to a set point. They use direction arrows to make the robot turn and advance. They send messages to each other by programming the robot to move across the room. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 create a report using word processing. Pupils use the Internet to research their projects. For extended work, pupils scan their work into the computer, and save the file. By the end of Year 11, pupils including two Post 16 students, work independently to create a set of labels for their enterprise project. They discuss maturely how to produce the labels, what size, colour and font they need to be. How can they make a template? How they are going to create them and print them efficiently?

118. As a result of effective teaching and very good relationships in class, the pupils respond positively by showing very good attitudes to ICT and behaving very well in lessons. Teaching and learning is consistently good, and often very good. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Lessons are now well prepared and organised. The specialist teacher knows the subject and the pupils very well and has developed a very positive rapport with pupils. Because he is so enthusiastic, pupils are keen and eager to learn. They enjoy lessons and learn very willingly. The co-ordinator has high expectations of pupils and expects them to try their best and to concentrate fully; in return giving them the best attention, guidance, encouragement, praise and support, frequently with the valuable aid of an effective support assistant.

119. Although pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school, the co-ordinator teaches pupils in nine different classrooms. He has to prepare each room in advance of each lesson. The number of computers varies in each room. In the best situations, each pupil will have an individual computer to work on. In the worst scenario as many as four pupils have to share a computer. The subject action plan recognises this problem and includes the development of a specific room for the teaching of ICT.

120. Information and communication technology is used effectively across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 11 use word processing in their course leading to 'Towards Independence'. In mathematics, pupils use the Internet to research information about a Safari Park, and a computer programme to reinforce their knowledge about shapes. In English, pupils make good use of the interactive white board using CD ROMs. Older pupils freely use the Internet to research projects. Younger pupils use the Internet to find out about Robert Louis Stevenson, his books and his poetry. Pupils use the 'computer' dictionary to find out the meanings of words such as musket, compass, cutlass, Jolly Roger. In French, pupils use the Internet to go shopping in a French catalogue shop. In art, pupils use the digital camera to create displays of their work. In geography, pupils use their digital camera to record their work when studying African dress and artefacts. In design and technology, pupils use a 'computer aided design/computer aided manufacture' sewing machine to enhance designs on their tie-dye pencil cases. In religious education, pupils research African culture. There is good evidence in displays around the school of effective use of information and communication technology in enhancing displays, by attractive labelling of pupil's work.

121. The subject is very well led and managed and the co-ordinator has provided new opportunities for staff by organising New Opportunities Fund Training for staff in September 2002. An action plan is in place to ensure that the subject continues to develop positively across the school. An electrical means of assessment and recording is being developed linked to pupil's achievement.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

122. French is taught to all pupils in the school apart from Class 1. The time available for the subject in the primary age classes, however, is very restricted. They receive only one fifteen-minute lesson per week in the subject and, as a result, what they can learn and the extent to which their learning can be consolidated are both very limited. They do enjoy their French lessons, however, and in the circumstances they make remarkably good progress in some aspects of the subject. Their vocabulary, for example, although of necessity very selective, has developed to include the names of a range of animals as well as single words and some simple phrases to describe and name a number of common objects. They like to repeat and imitate French sounds and as a result their pronunciation is often clear and confident. Teaching is very good and makes use of a range of resources to stimulate their interest and to encourage a spoken response. Simple questions and commands in French are also used well and the higher-attaining pupils are beginning to develop language-learning skills such as the use of context and similarities with English words to guess meanings.

123. With the exception of two classes, secondary age pupils receive more time for their French. Their achievements and teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, they know and reproduce, both orally and in writing, an appropriate range of single words and simple phrases in a variety of topics such as hobbies, parts of the body and telling the time. Most of their work, however, both in the classroom and in their folders, consists of simple tasks, which require the recognition or matching of single words. Teaching makes considerable use of games, which the pupils enjoy, but there is insufficient use of spoken French in the classroom to promote pupils' ability to listen and respond in the language. This was noticeable in a lesson for Year 11 pupils. The boys in the class were very inhibited when called upon to use French and were very unwilling to 'have a go'. Although the teacher maintained a lively pace throughout and made good use of a range of games and resources to reinforce the learning of new vocabulary, there was no evidence in this lesson of pupils understanding or using set phrases or simple sentences in order to communicate in the language. Two girls in this class talked to the inspector about their work in French and, in contrast to two boys who were also asked about their progress, they were very positive about the subject. They said they had particularly enjoyed the work they had done on French food and fashions. By the end of Year 11, pupils of all levels of attainment have made satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of topics but the higher-attaining pupils have failed to develop their ability to listen and respond in French to the level of which they are capable.

124. Improvements in the subject since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Achievement is now satisfactory and planning and assessment in the subject are now good. Several important issues remain to be addressed, however, especially if, as planned, Year 11 pupils are to be entered for external accreditation. The amount of teaching time, better use of information and communication technology and more emphasis on the ability of higher attaining pupils to listen and respond in French are all issues which have not been fully addressed.

## **MUSIC**

125. Music is timetabled for pupils in Years 1 to 9 only. The provision and teaching and learning are satisfactory. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are satisfactory over a curriculum that emphasises performing with untuned percussion and shaker instruments. Since the last inspection, the absence of a specialist teacher of music has resulted in lessons in music being taught by teachers without specialist knowledge or training. This has resulted in lower standards and reduced achievement by pupils. A specialist teacher, who will lead the subject, has been appointed to begin in September 2002.

126. By the end of Year 2, the highest attaining pupils enjoy being active, for example when they beat drums, shake cymbals, tambourines and other instruments. They start and stop on time, play fast and slow and loud and soft. They enjoy listening to different types of music, especially that which they find relaxing and soothing. They sing simple songs well, with good expression and enjoy making the associated movements, for example when they sing 'Row, row, row the boat'. They know which music they like listening to, but have little knowledge of even the simplest techniques of composing, such as repetition. Most of the lowest attaining pupils have still to learn how to clap their hands to rhythm or remember the correct movement. Even though they require considerable support from the teacher or LSA to maintain a rhythm, they gain equal enjoyment from clapping, beating and shaking their instruments.

127. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils are good at following the movements of a good number of songs. They know which they like best and, using appropriate vocabulary, such as fast, beat and rhythm give the reasons for their choice. Their singing has improved. They sing well, with gusto and accurate phrasing. They have learned to identify many instruments by their sound and know the roles of composer and conductor. When they perform as a group, they respond well to the conductor, beginning and stopping on command, even when as part of an ensemble they are maintaining different rhythms. They continue to have little experience of composing. Their knowledge of how standard and non-standard notation can reproduce music is limited. Their musical vocabulary has grown, but they continue to find difficulty in discussing the quality and characteristics of different types of music and when they explain why music from different cultures sounds different. By the end of Year 6, the lowest attaining pupils play untuned percussion instruments with decent rhythm and maintain their own rhythm when they are part of a group. Pupils from Year 7 onward have experienced making music using electronic keyboards to create tunes and to supply the rhythms, when they were taught by a supply teacher. However, their recent experience has been dictated by limitations in the knowledge and experience of music of those who have taught them.

128. Even so, pupils generally enjoy lessons in music. They make a good effort to beat and shake their instruments to time individually and when they perform as a group. Curriculum planning for the subject is good. However, these plans are best interpreted by teachers who are provided with guidance, advice and support from a knowledgeable co-ordinator, which has not been possible recently. Learning support assistants work hard in helping make lessons active and energetic. Assessment is in place and records the attainment of the younger pupils acceptably well for the 'controlling sounds' element of music. Whilst resources are satisfactory, the time-tabling lessons in music for two classes at the same time limits their use for supporting teaching and learning. The head teacher is acting as the temporary co-ordinator.

129. Especially for the younger pupils, music, in the form of simple rhymes and songs, is well used by teachers to promote learning in lessons in a broad range of subjects. This use of music is not planned into the schemes of work in other subjects. Consequently,

opportunities are missed to recognise the extent of learning in music that could take place in other subjects.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. Achievements in physical education are good. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to physical activities and try hard to improve their performance. There is a wide range of attainment in all year groups. A minority of pupils are performing at or approaching the average for their age in ball skills and in swimming. A significant number of others have difficulties in co-ordination, agility and stamina. However, they are taught together well and teaching successfully varies the tasks set and resources used to promote good levels of participation in activities by all abilities.

131. During the inspection week, almost all of the lessons observed were based on striking and fielding activities. This activity has only recently been introduced and all the classes observed were practising their basic skills in this activity. As a result, the differences in attainment and progress between different ages and abilities were less pronounced than they otherwise would have been. Pupils in Year 4 made good gains in their ability to catch a ball and throw more accurately. Pupils in Year 9 moved on to a small, competitive game in which the higher attaining pupils were clearly developing the more advanced skills of marking opponents and moving into space. In these, as in all the physical education lessons observed, a strength of teaching lay in its ability to get pupils to discuss what they were doing, to begin to evaluate their performance and to think of ways in which they could improve.

132. Pupils from Years 2 to 9 were observed in the swimming pool of a local sports centre. They clearly enjoy swimming. They listened carefully to instructions, tried hard to put their teachers' advice into effect and behaved well, both in and out of the water. Here again, a wide range of attainment was apparent but records show good progress by all abilities through the various award schemes, which they are following. Teaching benefits from good levels of knowledge and expertise in the coaching of skills at all levels and from very effective control and organisation.

133. Assessment records for other unseen activities, such as games and gymnastics, confirm the picture of generally good progress by pupils of all ages and abilities. The higher attaining pupils have few opportunities to compete with their peers in organised games because of the small class sizes, timetabling constraints and the lack of extra-curricular time. In activities such as gymnastics, there is also a lack of time for skills to be developed as far as they might be. This is partly a result of the disproportionate amount of time taken by swimming and partly a consequence of the school's effort to cover more areas of activity in the time available than are required by the National Curriculum's programmes of study. The subject's co-ordinator is fully aware of this situation and plans are in hand to address it for the coming academic year.

134. The standards in physical education noted in the last inspection have been maintained and, in some areas of activity, improved. In addition, good subject planning is now in place and a very good scheme of assessment has been introduced. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of the developments required both in the curriculum and resources. The subject is well placed to achieve better balance in the activities offered and more opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to further strengthen their performance in games and gymnastics.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135. The achievement of pupils in religious education is good. Most pupils enter the school attaining at Level 4 as judged against the National Scale for those achieving below National Curriculum levels. By the end of Year 2, many listen and respond to familiar religious stories and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals This is Level 6 attainment. By the end of Year 6, some pupils know and discuss simple facts about religion and begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts such as the five Ks of Sikhism, which is Level 8 attainment. Most reflect on what makes them happy or sad and to understand that other people are affected by their actions. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 identify the major world religions and know some facts about them such as features in a Mosque or the significance of Poppy Day. The lower attaining pupils listen to and retell stories and begin to discuss ideas such as “sacrifice”. Achievement of the higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 is limited by the small amount of time given to the subject within their curriculum.

136. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in improving planning of the subject to ensure a full programme of study is in place for each age group. These schemes are based upon the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education supplemented with national guidance materials. Provision in the subject is now good. Learning outcomes are being developed to accompany each module of work. These will allow teachers to build on previous learning more effectively as pupils move through the school. Over the last year the school has purchased a very good range of resources to support teaching in the major world religions.

137. All teaching and learning with Years 1 to 6 is good with some being very good. Teaching with Years 7 to 11 is always satisfactory with some good teaching observed. Lessons are well planned with a series of appropriate activities and very good resources help the pupils to make progress in learning about different religions. The use of real artefacts such as a Sikh doll, The Torah and a Buddha was particularly effective in maintaining interest and enthusiasm in the pupils. More difficult concepts are made relevant to the pupils by identifying people who are special to them before introducing the idea of “special people” in major religions. The supportive relationships and very good use of questioning promote good discussion and an opportunity for pupils to reflect. The best progress occurs in lessons where teachers make effective use of a plenary discussion to focus attention on the learning outcomes and assess the learning of each child over the lesson. In lessons judged to be satisfactory the pace was sometimes too slow or the planned activities too many to ensure that pupils’ learning was directed to the key points of the lesson. Most classes have religious education record books and are encouraged to reflect on their own learning at the end of each module of work. Teachers use these well to comment on the learning of pupils. Those few pupils who are over the age of 16 are taught the subject in a class with younger pupils. Throughout the school, pupils’ attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are confident to answer questions and offer ideas with enthusiasm.

138. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. The recently introduced planning system ensures that the curriculum is as would be expected and relevant to the needs and interest of the pupils. The youngest pupils learn about Christian festivals and aspects of Judaism such as Noah’s Ark. Older pupils are introduced to major world religions such as Hinduism and Sikhism and study signs and symbols in religion. Visits to churches are made and the festivals of Christmas and Easter revisited. Pupils study how beliefs influence actions. They learn about Muslim beliefs and practices, Remembrance Day, the work of Charities and prayer in different religions. Planning for the oldest pupils includes the study of Buddhist philosophy, Jewish beliefs and the idea of justice in Christianity.

139. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is well supported through the subject. Opportunities are provided to reflect and visits are made to places of worship. Throughout the school, pupils have the opportunity to revisit the concept of right and

wrong and examine the idea of codes of conduct. Work in all the major world religions promotes an interest and understanding of their own and other people's culture that pupils can often relate to their own experiences outside of school.

140. The co-ordinator has established appropriate development priorities with the focus of work over the past year being to put in place a comprehensive scheme for planning the study of religious education in order to ensure learning builds step by step as pupils get older. A very good range of resources has been purchased and organised effectively to support teaching. The further development of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in religious education has been identified as the next priority.