

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST DOMINIC'S SCHOOL**

Hambledon, Godalming

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125455

Principal: Mr G Chapman

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Potheary  
21765

Dates of inspection: 28 – 31 January 2002

Inspection number: 242721

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Non-maintained special  
Age range of pupils: 7 to 17 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mount Olivet  
Hambledon  
Godalming  
Surrey  
Postcode: GU8 4DX

Telephone number: 01428 684693

Fax number: 01428 685018

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr F Holford

Date of previous inspection: 25 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21765	Mrs P Potheary	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	Mr R Miller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27243	Mr I Tatchell	Team inspector	Art and design Music Special educational needs	
30142	Mr J T Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics History	
2512	Mr B Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
3055	Mr C Tombs	Team inspector	English Residential provision	
18850	Mr A Hodges	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	
22948	Ms M Vallis	Team inspector	Geography Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd  
National Westminster Bank Chambers  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset TA8 1AN

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Dominic's is a non-maintained Roman Catholic special school for 110 pupils. There are 89 pupils aged 7-17 on roll, 11 girls and 78 boys. Only three pupils come from a range of ethnic origins other than white UK heritage and all speak fluent English. Only one pupil is eligible for free school meals. There are 30 day pupils and 50 boys and 9 girls who are resident. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs, 34 with specific learning difficulty, 30 with severe communication difficulty, 14 with autism and 11 with asperger's syndrome. The pattern of admission is gradually changing to include pupils from a wider ability range. When pupils enter the school the majority are achieving below national expectations. Pupils come from 38 different local education authorities throughout the UK.

The school has been through a very difficult period lasting over 18 months, including the dismissal of the previous principal. This had an adverse effect on staff and slowed the developmental work of the school until the permanent appointment of the new principal in September 2001.

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

St Dominic's is a good school with many very good features and it is well placed to improve further. Teaching is good in all subjects and in all key stages, which means that pupils achieve well and make good progress. The leadership and management of the new principal and key staff are very good especially in supporting school development and improvement. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good overall in all subjects leading to good achievement and progress for pupils.
- The curriculum is very good providing a rich range of opportunities to help pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and special educational needs to develop fully.
- Pupils are well cared for and receive high standards of therapy and support for their special educational needs; this helps them to develop the confidence and strategies to learn well, despite their complex learning difficulties.
- Residential provision is very good adding significantly to pupils' personal development and well being.
- The quality of leadership and management are very good; the new principal and senior managers have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have overseen significant developments and improvements throughout the school since September 2001.

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

- Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of teaching for different groups of pupils, the work of subject departments, staff deployment and budget planning to steer and develop the work of the school more efficiently.
- Monitoring and analysis of pupil achievement at a whole school level to support governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators in understanding how well different groups of pupils are progressing, to monitor trends in achievement and in setting whole school targets.

*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 March 1996. Since then the school has been through a turbulent period which adversely effected morale and school development. There have been significant improvements since the appointment of the new principal in September 2001 and the previous high quality of education reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. The previous key issues have all been addressed, with the exception of the monitoring and analysis elements of

management. Subject co-ordinators and policies are in place, the school development plan is properly costed and financial control is now good.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school does not set whole school performance targets and progress against these cannot be judged. The school recognises that targets must be set in 2002 to help raise standards further. In all subjects and at all ages the majority of pupils achieve well by the end of their key stage. This is true for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as all other subjects. In personal, social and health education and in art and design achievement is very good. Pupils' workbooks demonstrate good progress in lessons over time. In science, a few most able pupils in Key Stage 4 do not reach the levels expected of them due mainly to a lack of suitable challenge in some lessons. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils make good progress in all key stages. However progress in using ICT to study other subjects of the curriculum is slower due to a lack of suitable programs and planning. The majority of pupils take examinations, usually GCSEs or the Certificate of Education, and results for individual pupils show that they achieve well, especially when their early school performance and learning difficulties are considered. There is no significant difference in the rate of suitable progress for pupils of different abilities, for those with significantly different special educational needs such as autism and attention deficit disorder, for those of different ethnic origins or for boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to work hard and do their best. They appreciate the help that they are given.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave well in class and when moving about the school and the school is an orderly community. Pupils are respectful and considerate. When occasionally pupils do become difficult they respond well to staff support and direction.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good and often very good. They relate very well to each other and to staff and are keen to take responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is just below that found in similar schools nationally, due to

	authorised absence. However there is little unauthorised absence and pupils attend school and lessons well unless they have a good reason.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good throughout the school in all subjects and in all key stages. In the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science and in personal and social education teaching is consistently good and very good in Key Stage 4 mathematics. Teaching is very good overall in art and design, music and design and technology.

Literacy skills are well taught in English lessons and in other subjects, pupils are helped to speak well and debate issues to a high standard. Teachers pay particular attention to good presentation of work. Basic numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics lessons, but are not well co-ordinated in other subjects, although teaching of numeracy where needed is never less than satisfactory.

The school meets the different needs of pupils well, providing suitable work for those of different abilities, backgrounds and additional special educational needs so that all pupils are fully included.

Teaching is usually well planned, lessons are frequently challenging and activities are varied so that pupils remain motivated and work hard. Learning support assistants are skilled and make a significant contribution, but their time is sometimes wasted where the teacher has not organised their work effectively. Behaviour is generally managed well and so pupils can learn without interruption. However, in a few lessons, teachers use too few strategies for helping pupils learn how to behave well. There is a high level of subject knowledge from specialist teachers, which leads to evident good progress in pupils' work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum, including the residential curriculum, is very good, providing a wide range of subjects, approaches and activities to enrich and extend the skills of all pupils. It fully meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for all elements of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are enabled and encouraged to respect, understand and value their own contribution and those of others and to appreciate the wonders around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for pupils ensuring that they are safe and making good individual progress. Assessment systems however lack consistency between subjects and between the younger and older pupils. Residential arrangements are very good.

The school works well in partnership with parents giving them a clear idea of how well their children are progressing and enabling them to support the work of the school at home.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Leadership and management by the principal and key staff are very good. There is a clear sense of purpose focused on high standards of education and significant recent improvements in several areas.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors have a good view of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they are very committed and are taking a stronger role in the educational work of the school. They fulfil their major statutory duties but do not report some details required in their annual report.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has begun to evaluate teaching, but formal monitoring and analysis of performance in key areas of the school is unsatisfactory. This is a major priority of the current development plan. Teachers' performance is now linked to appraisal and personal targets and the system is in the early stages of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school has sound management of the budget and resources. Although it seeks to apply the principles of best value, the school lacks the important monitoring information to make this fully effective. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally good.

## 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>• Pupils enjoy school and make good progress</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is high</li> <li>• Pupils work hard and become mature</li> <li>• The school keeps them well informed and is approachable</li> <li>• The quality of therapy provided</li> <li>• The residential provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency and quality of homework</li> <li>• The activities provided for day pupils outside of school</li> </ul>

The inspection team's findings are in line with the views of the majority of parents. Teaching is of a high quality, pupils report enjoying school and they generally make good progress. The school works well with parents and keeps them well informed. The quality of homework is usually good but for a few day pupils it is not always appropriate to their needs. Day pupils do not usually have equal opportunities to attend extra-curricular activities, mainly because they travel some distance by mini-bus and taxi at the end of the school day. The team has carefully investigated other concerns expressed by parents with regard to procedures when staff or pupils make a complaint. The school has recently reviewed and reorganised these procedures and the inspectors' judgement is that they are in line with best practice in all schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils generally achieve well in all subjects and in all key stages at St Dominic's School. They make satisfactory progress in geography by the end of Key Stage 2 and then progress well to have high achievement by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. In art and design, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and very good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 where achievement is very high with some exceptional examination results. In personal, social and health education pupils of all ages usually make very good progress. In all other subjects including English, mathematics and science, achievement and the progress pupils of all ages make is good overall.
2. Pupils' personal records show that the majority make good gains compared to their performance on entry to the school despite significant barriers to learning. Several pupils achieve above the national averages in some subjects, gaining 'A' 'B' and 'C' grades in GCSEs showing that those who are the highest attaining usually make progress suited to their abilities. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are also able to progress well. Several enter school working towards National Curriculum Level 1, but are able to achieve GCSEs, or Certificates of Educational Achievement by the time they leave. Most pupils move on successfully to further education and a few find employment, which is a very good indicator of how successful the school is in helping pupils achieve well and overcome their difficulties with learning.
3. Comparisons with similar schools are not reliable because the profile of the pupils' special educational needs is unique to the school. There are few schools nationally for pupils with specific learning difficulties and they all have varying criteria for admitting pupils. Comparisons of test results over time are also unreliable. This is partly because the nature of pupils' learning difficulties at St Dominic's School is gradually changing. In addition the range of pupil ability is widening each year as the school adapts to the needs of local authorities and the trend towards increasing inclusion in mainstream schools for pupils with special educational needs. Also, because year group numbers are so small, any percentage changes in test and examination results from year to year are usually due to the performance of one or two pupils and are not necessarily typical of a trend. For this reason judgements in this report are linked to individual pupil's work, their records and the achievements made and progress observed in lessons.
4. The school does not set whole school performance targets to support rising standards and so success with these cannot be measured. The new management team recognises this as a deficiency and is working towards setting whole school targets for the new academic year.
5. The school has made satisfactory progress in maintaining the high standards of pupils' achievements since the last inspection. During that inspection, achievements in all subjects were at least sound with elements of good and outstanding achievements. English and mathematics were mostly good in all key stages. Despite an unsettled period in the last two years and significant staff changes, pupils have continued to gain certificates in a range of courses, including GCSE, and have performed well in the Statutory Assessment Tests for 2001.
6. In almost all subjects and in all age groups, pupils of different abilities make the same good progress. However in science in Key Stage 4 the most able pupils do not achieve

above the expected levels for the majority. This is due to a lack of challenge in lessons and insufficient monitoring by management. There is no discernable difference between the performance of pupils with different learning needs, between girls and boys, or for the few from different ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils with significantly different needs such as attention deficit disorder or autistic spectrum disorders including those with aspergers syndrome progress well and generally achieve in line with expected progress in their individual education plans.

7. In literacy in all subjects pupils make good progress overall, but show sustained very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Numeracy skills are well developed through mathematic lessons but progress in these is not so evident in other subjects. The development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills although good in Key Stage 2 and in ICT lessons higher up the school, is slow in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils show good developing skills in wordprocessing and in some aspects of developing databases and producing graphs. They also know how to find information using the Internet. However, the limited range of programmes in many subjects means that computing skills are not developed fully in relation to specific subjects.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning and the school continue to be good as found in the last inspection. Behaviour in class and around the school also continues to be good. The rate of pupil exclusion has dropped significantly over the past year, with three boys being excluded for fixed periods in the current academic year. Pupils regularly show good initiative and take responsibility around the school. Attendance has declined since the previous inspection and is currently just below that of similar schools.
9. Pupils of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and additional needs have positive attitudes towards school. The opinions of 90 per cent of parents who answered the questionnaire, that their children enjoy coming to school, are confirmed by the inspection. Pupils are keen to learn, both in lessons and at extra activities at lunchtime or after school. This eagerness is demonstrated by the way in which they settle quickly to tasks in the classroom. In most lessons pupils have a strong desire to do their best. Their capacity to work hard to succeed has a positive impact upon the progress they make.
10. Most pupils work with sustained concentration, especially where the teaching is inspiring and expectations are high as in Year 11 physical education and mathematics lessons. Occasionally, pupils become inattentive during a lesson when they do not find the subject matter interesting or behaviour management is inconsistent. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders settle very well in most lessons and work hard to improve their performance.
11. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is usually good. Parents' perceptions that high standards of behaviour exist are accurate. In classrooms, teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and most deal with infringements appropriately. The overall absence of disruptive behaviour enables learning of good quality to occur. Most pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school and in the playground. Incidents of aggressive behaviour do occur from time to time, although pupils respond well to staff who intervene.
12. There are very good relationships between pupils and adults generally and these are excellent in the residential accommodation. Relationships between pupils themselves

are also very good. All pupils have friendly yet respectful relationships with teachers and other members of staff. When specifically asked to work in groups, pupils cooperate well as in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their ability to work in a truly collaborative way and to take responsibility and display initiative. They respond to these opportunities with enthusiasm. For example pupils contribute to assemblies, through drama, music or reading and they willingly organise playground equipment. In addition, pupils who sit on the school council are very responsible in the way they support pupil issues and speak their mind in a thoughtful effort to affect the way the school is run. For this reason pupils' views are now sought on a number of issues, such as playground equipment and other matters, in an effort to continually improve the school.

13. Attendance at the school is currently around 88 per cent, which is just below that of similar schools. The authorised rate of absence has risen since the last inspection and the school is working to reduce this. The unauthorised rate of absence, however, remains well below that nationally. Punctuality is good and most lessons start and finish on time.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good overall, throughout the school, in all key stages and for all subjects. Pupils also achieve well and the majority make good progress in most lessons. In 17 per cent of lessons teaching and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In 41 per cent of lessons they are good, in 35 per cent of lessons they are very good and in 7 per cent, excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. Pupils of differing abilities and those with additional special educational needs are taught equally well.
15. The school has maintained the high standards of teaching reported in the last inspection.
16. In the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and in information and communication technology teaching is good overall and very good for mathematics in Key Stage 4. Teaching is also good overall in history, geography, physical education, Spanish and personal, social and health education. Teaching is very good overall in art and design, music and design and food technology.
17. Literacy is taught well in most subjects and teachers take care to encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills through lively group discussions and well-directed questioning. They also pay good attention to pupils' written work and encourage a wide range of reading from seeking information and following instructions to searching a database. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy for younger pupils has contributed to a well-structured and successful approach to teaching basic skills. Good additional support for pupils who need individual tuition in reading and written work helps them to keep up well and show substantial progress. The National Numeracy Strategy has recently been introduced and pupils' basic mathematical skills are well supported in mathematics lessons. The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers do pay attention to the numeracy skills necessary for different subjects such as science and geography, but this is not planned and co-ordinated and therefore the approach to the numeracy needs of pupils in the subject areas lacks direction. The lack of programs and the variation in teachers' skills in ICT means that teaching of ICT in all subjects is less consistent and pupils' progress in the subject areas for ICT is only satisfactory.

18. Teachers usually make good provision for pupils of differing abilities, for those with additional special educational needs such as autism and attention deficit disorder, for girls and boys and for those whose cultural backgrounds and interests need taking into account. In a few lessons the work is too easy for the most able, most noticeably in science in Key Stage 4, and sometimes the reading material is too difficult for a few pupils. This is due to an occasional lack of co-ordinated information and is linked to the deficiencies in the assessment systems in the school. Management has already identified this as an area for improvement in the school development plan. In general, teachers are skilled in providing for different needs in most lessons and pupils are able to progress at a rate that helps them to reach their goals. The large number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are usually helped to work very well, especially because classes are so small and teachers are clear about how to help them. Individual education plans are clear and are used effectively to guide the learning of the pupils.
19. In the good and very good lessons, teachers plan very well. Introductions in many subjects are clear and pupils understand what they are expected to learn in the lesson. This means that they have a firm sense of direction and work with a purpose. For example, in some English lessons pupils are provided with a helpful planning sheet and so are able to develop the structure of their writing. Lessons usually build well on earlier learning. Very good subject knowledge in several subjects leads to engaging detailed lesson presentations, which capture pupils' imaginations so that they are keen to learn more. In science and design and technology lessons, for example, good questioning showed that pupils had a wide and accurate knowledge of previous work. In most lessons, and ICT is a good example, the work of learning support staff is skilled and well directed, so that pupils are helped to keep up and produce work of a good standard. Often learning support staff teach groups of pupils, engaging and encouraging them and adding considerably to the strength of the lesson. However in a few lessons, such as some mathematics and English lessons, the work of learning support staff is not well planned and they spend time waiting to find out what to do. Assessment in several subjects such as music and geography is not well developed, which hinders the ability of teachers to build systematically on the individual skills of some pupils.
20. In almost all lessons relaxed good humour and a good understanding of pupils' needs leads to work and organisation, which is usually well suited to pupils of differing abilities. Most teachers and learning support staff manage behaviour well, knowing when to intervene and how to keep pupils on task. In a few lessons, however, the strategies used are too few and some pupils are not helped sufficiently to learn the right way to behave. In most lessons difficult behaviour is followed up and discussed with the pupil afterwards, which contributes to the ongoing high quality of the atmosphere for learning.
21. In several lessons, work is interrupted because pupils have to leave for a variety of reasons, including reading support, speech therapy and physiotherapy, to receive medicines and for planned reviews. This means that some pupils miss important parts of several lessons during the week. The school is aware that this may limit as well as enhance pupils' opportunities and is planning to review practices and improve the balance of time for pupils between lessons and necessary support. Where therapy is integrated into lessons, it contributes substantially to the quality of teaching suited to different pupil needs. For example, some speech therapists work alongside pupils to support their language skills in different subjects.

22. The home school diary is used well and homework is regularly given, collected and marked to support pupils' learning in the evenings. Generally it is a strong feature of good practice in the school; however for a few day pupils it is either too difficult or too easy and this is a weakness.

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

23. The school provides a very good curriculum. It provides a rich range of opportunities and experiences and enables pupils to gain nationally accredited qualifications at Year 11. It fully meets statutory requirements.
24. Since the last inspection improvements have been good. The curriculum is now organised on a key stage basis and all subjects have co-ordinators in place and this has resulted in a more appropriate and subject focused approach more closely linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
25. All pupils at the school have a statement of special educational needs and the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully implemented. Individual education plans are in place and these ensure that the curriculum is planned or modified to suit each individual. Curricular provision made for these pupils is good overall. The very good provision includes small classes, specialist subject teaching and a focus on different learning needs including those with higher ability. This enables pupils, many of whom have additional and complex needs, to make good progress against individual targets and National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are in addition three specialist teachers of reading, one for each key stage, who give very good individual support and guidance to a significant number of pupils with a specific reading difficulty. This enables them to improve their reading skills and improve their access to all subjects.
26. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are well organised and effectively promote pupils' personal and social development. They incorporate good guidance on drugs misuse and sex education. The school has made a good start in introducing citizenship into the PSHE programme for all pupils.
27. Curriculum time fulfils statutory requirements; however the time set aside for pupils at the beginning and the end of the day is not used well in all classes. In the form tutor time some classes are well organised and pupils are able to discuss issues, resolve problems or develop their reading for example. In other groups the time is not well structured or used well to help pupils develop. At the end of the day the recreation time is not productive for the day pupils and its purpose is questioned by the pupils themselves. Science is allocated the required minimum amount of time, but this is not sufficient for developing pupils' investigative skills fully or for the older more able pupils to extend their skills and knowledge to a higher standard.
28. Extensive arrangements are in place for pupils to receive a wide range of therapies to meet their different needs. These include physiotherapy, speech, language and communication therapy, social skills training and counselling. For this reason pupils are enabled to overcome or cope with a variety of barriers to their learning and so begin to make better progress. Organisation of the time used for therapy presents a considerable challenge and for some pupils significant time within the curriculum is lost as a result. Where it is appropriate some therapy is effectively integrated into lessons.

The school recognises these problems and is to review the organisation of therapy sessions to minimise the loss of subject time for individual pupils.

29. Since the last inspection there has been more involvement of therapists working alongside teachers, which is helping teachers to integrate specialist techniques into subject delivery.
30. Curriculum planning for teaching literacy skills is very good in all subjects so that teachers rigorously support and reinforce the development of pupils' literacy. Curriculum planning for teaching numeracy is good in mathematics lessons but is not well co-ordinated in other subjects and so is satisfactory across the curriculum. Provision for careers education, including work experience, is very good.
31. Extra-curriculum provision is good and complements and enriches the taught curriculum. There is a wide range of activities available for pupils in residence both within school and within the community, for example a youth club and organisations such as scouts and guides. Day pupils have less opportunity after school due to travel arrangements and the need to leave promptly at the end of the school day. The school has not yet been able to resolve this issue.
32. The curriculum is socially and educationally inclusive. Different groups of pupils are well defined and their needs are met. The cultures of all ethnic groups in the school are recognised and acknowledged and the needs of the small number of girls in the school properly addressed. In the residential part of the school, for example, a girls only musical event was organised during the inspection.
33. The school has developed effective links with the local community and partner schools. Local elderly people, for example, are invited to school and pupils visit their homes. Links with business and commerce continue to be developed through Year 10 pupils' work experience. Teachers meet periodically with subject colleagues from the local secondary school and sixth form college, to improve the continuity of education for the pupils and introduce them to pupils from mainstream education. The school works very well to help pupils be included in mainstream education where possible. In Key Stage 4, pupils have good opportunities to be taught in local colleges and comprehensive schools where this is appropriate and it leads to increasing confidence and success.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34. The school makes very good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
35. The provision for spiritual and moral development is very good. Assemblies contribute very well to both, through reference to a supreme being, the use of stories and a sense of celebration created by the use of music. Staff create a calm atmosphere and this helps pupils to reflect on the point of a story. In some lessons pupils express their wonder at the mysteries of science, or respect for human endeavour or the complexity of geography or music. This is followed up by the teacher ensuring that the pupils have a little time to reflect on these moments. A good example was seen in a science lesson where pupils experienced the beauty as light was split into different colours using a prism.
36. There is very good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils are given very good support for understanding the differences between right and wrong. For example in one geography lesson pupils looked at an international agreement to limit the use of gases

which contribute to global warming and the consequent effects on poorer countries. A discussion about the greed of some countries took place, which led to the realisation of the need for compromise to get international agreement. Staff also give clear messages to pupils about the right way to conduct themselves and treat others. Discussions in form time are sometimes used to reinforce these messages.

37. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged in most subjects to work alongside each other and make progress together. Some assemblies celebrate particular events and achievements and these promote pupils' sense of belonging to a particular community. This is particularly noticeable within the residential provision where activities are sometimes organised on a unit basis. The school council meets regularly and representatives have genuine responsibility to put forward the views of a section of the school. At the end of one assembly a school council representative, supported by teachers, sought the views of Key Stage 3 pupils on playground equipment. At present there are no common-room facilities for older pupils that would help them develop further a sense of maturity and responsibility. However, the school does arrange many opportunities for pupils personal development from showing visitors round the school, helping on special days and coffee mornings as well as taking a full part in enterprises like horticulture.
38. Provision for cultural development is also very good. Through lessons in religious education, pupils learn about different faiths and practices, for example in one activity pupils were able to identify elements of Christianity and Islam, which were similar and which were different. Lessons in art and design, music, Spanish, physical education, dance, geography, religious education and history all contribute to pupils' cultural knowledge and understanding. Teachers use local facilities very well to promote this area of learning. Support from Godalming and Haslemere museums, in history, has enabled pupils to study Romans, Anglo-Saxons, ancient Egypt and the lives of the indigenous peoples of North America. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' multicultural development with visits to other places of worship, such as the Gurdwara in Hounslow, a Buddhist temple and a synagogue as well as studying special events like sharing a Seder meal.

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

39. The care of pupils is very good. Teachers and support staff quickly get to know the pupils well. A safe and caring environment is created successfully and independence is encouraged. Pupils are supervised effectively and staff know what to do when a pupil has an accident or is unwell. Nursing staff are on duty and in residence 24 hours each day, available for those pupils with additional medical problems. A well qualified counselling team provides valuable support to pupils who experience difficulties and is managed in conjunction with their families. Personal support and guidance for pupils is of a very high quality, particularly that provided by the residential care staff who give outstanding assistance towards the residential pupils.
40. There are very good procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and protection of the pupils. Nominated members of staff co-ordinate the necessary arrangements and there are very good links with outside agencies, including health and social services and the fire service. Formal written risk assessments of potential hazards in and around the school are undertaken, as well as those for school trips. Pupils have a clear understanding of what to do if they need to make a complaint and procedures are in line with requirements and best practice.



41. The school has effective procedures in place to promote good discipline and behaviour. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly, effectively and in line with best practice. The recently revised policy on behaviour and discipline is not always consistently applied by all staff but is nevertheless effective in helping to make the school an orderly community. Teachers are encouraged to respond to behaviour with the least intrusive intervention to begin with and do not interrupt their teaching unnecessarily. However they are trained to always follow through difficulties with the pupil concerned and the system is well suited to the special behavioural needs of the pupils. Desired behaviour is rewarded with positive attention. Unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour is usually managed well. Many classes have rules displayed in them and all pupils are keen to collect vouchers as part of the school's reward system. Through this, pupils gain a pride in their work and concentrate on behaving well. Adults employed in the school present very positive images to the pupils, by relating in a supportive and respectful manner.
42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. There is a 24-hour telephone service to enable parents of day pupils to report absences promptly and any unexplained ones are quickly followed up by staff on a daily basis. Each individual pupil's attendance is monitored closely and action taken as appropriate.
43. The provision for complying with statutory requirements such as annual reviews is good. Pupils and their parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in the annual review process. There are appropriate arrangements for transition reviews for pupils in Year 9 and external agencies such as the careers service together with health care professionals such as therapists are able to make a positive contribution.
44. The school's procedures for monitoring individual pupil's academic progress and personal development through regular reviews and reports are good. Individual education plans make it clear what the pupils will learn, and pupils' achievements are regularly assessed against targets set, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school also works well to involve pupils in their own learning in all subjects. This helps them to gain an understanding of their own performance and what they need to be working for next.
45. However, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects are not implemented consistently because the school has yet to agree a whole school assessment and marking policy. Teachers understand the progress of each pupil in their class, but the lack of consistency makes it difficult to gather information for an overview of how different groups of pupils are performing in each subject and in each year group. There are subjects with good practice, for example in English and art and design, and the present school development plan shows that the senior management is reviewing assessment and recording processes in order to standardise procedures across the school.
46. Collaboration between teachers, support staff, residential care staff and therapists is usually good in relation to planning and the management of pupils. The handover at the beginning and end of the day is very well organised. However not all subject teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4 are fully aware of current developments for individual pupils with regard to some aspects of their speech and language, literacy, social or physical therapy, due to a lack of co-ordination. This results in work, particularly homework, being too difficult or too easy in a few cases.
47. Since the last inspection the school has introduced statutory assessment for all pupils at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 and provides relevant opportunities for pupils to gain a

broad range of external accreditation including GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4. However, the analysis and use of pupil performance data by subject co-ordinators and senior management to improve standards of teaching and learning further and to help them set whole school and subject targets is inadequate.

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

48. Parents view the school as a very good school. The only significant issue of concern disclosed in the parent questionnaires was the amount of work given to pupils to do at home. The inspection findings are that homework is usually used very well to support learning and was given and collected regularly. In the residential part of school it is well managed and pupils are given good support. However for a few pupils, especially day pupils, the work is sometimes too difficult or too easy and is not always well adapted to their individual needs. Also there is no written homework policy. The school recognises the need to address these issues.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. There are letters sent home at regular intervals and these supplement telephone contact by members of staff including the pastoral co-ordinator. The school prospectus is good but is out of date and is currently being updated and revised. The annual report from governors to parents does not meet statutory requirements because details such as rates of absence, pupil performance and school security are missing. Regular circulars and letters keep parents well informed about the work of the school.
50. The school provides good opportunities for parents to discuss pupils' work. There are formal opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss end-of-year reports, individual education plans and annual reviews. Parents report that these are well organised and attendance at these meetings is high. The majority of parents find school reports useful, especially where targets are set. The school encourages parents to telephone the school whenever they wish to discuss their child's progress and opportunities to meet staff are encouraged when pupils are collected on Friday afternoons. Parents of Years 10 and 11 pupils receive written information about their progress each term to help them prepare their children for forthcoming examinations.
51. Seminars and workshops for parents held at the school are helping them to gain an insight into its work. Parents of pupils in Year 10 were able to attend a preparation for work experience afternoon. A presentation evening in November 2000 and 2001 received positive feedback from parents. Wednesdays is a permanent day for prospective parents to visit and this is well attended. Parents attend and support the school fete.
52. The effectiveness of these links with parents and their impact on the work of the school is good and 86 per cent of parents who answered the questionnaire consider that the school works closely with parents. The home-school link book is a well used document and helps to ensure regular dialogue between staff members and parents. The vast majority of parents contribute well to their children's learning at home. Some parents would like the opportunity to meet with other parents at more regular intervals and the school is currently looking at ways to facilitate this. When fundraising events are organised, these are well attended.

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

53. The school's leadership and management are very good. The principal has very good management skills, sets high standards and gives a very strong educational direction to the work of the school. An effective senior management team supports him. The governing body is fully committed to the school and understands its strengths and where improvements are needed well. The previous high standards from the last report have been maintained satisfactorily.
54. The principal was appointed in September 2001 and has a clear and accurate view of the areas, which need developing. These are set out in the school development plan and the work has begun. The impact on communication in the school and team work is evident although it is at an early stage. The school's aims and values are reflected well in the purposeful and supportive climate where staff and pupils work confidently together. Relationships between the senior management team, staff and governors are very good and there exists evidence at all levels of a very good, shared commitment to success.
55. The organisation of the senior management team is very effective. The principal has a very good working relationship with senior staff, including the vice principal who supports recent developments by taking responsibility for developing behaviour management and performance management systems. Staff report that they find both these initiatives helpful. The senior teacher has responsibility for curriculum leadership and, along with the support of the key stage and subject co-ordinators, has made a significant impact on the quality and organisation of the curriculum across the school. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and particularly since September 2001. The newly appointed head of care contributes substantially to the well being of the pupils and there are excellent procedures for communicating between the school and the residential units.
56. The governing body understands the main strengths and areas for development of the school well. They care deeply about the life of the school and where possible make formal and informal visits. They are very supportive of staff and know many of the pupils. The governors have recently recognised a need to widen their understanding of curriculum issues to help their role in shaping future developments. For this reason each governor has agreed to take responsibility for a subject area through discussion and visits. In addition teachers have been invited to make regular presentations to the whole governing body about their work. The governors fulfil all statutory requirements satisfactorily with the exception of the prospectus, which is out of date, and their annual report to parents, which lacks details such as SATs results, finance, and absence rates.
57. The systems for monitoring teaching and its development are new and are currently satisfactory. The school recently employed external consultants to observe the work of teachers and feedback their strengths and weaknesses. The high quality of teaching overall, despite several new or temporary teachers is partly as a result of this work. The school is rightly planning to develop further its own system of lesson observations to help it link the quality of teaching more closely with learning outcomes.
58. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory and teachers have agreed targets for the first performance management cycle. Formal arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, although identified by the last inspection report as part of the key issues, and recognised by the school as an area for development, are still generally unsatisfactory. This has resulted in weaknesses, for example in the uneven and inconsistent use of curriculum time, in the inefficient deployment of some staff and in the adverse impact for some pupils of

regular withdrawal from lessons. A major weakness is the lack of suitable analysis of the way different groups of pupils perform. For this reason the school is unable to set well targeted whole school pupil progress objectives. The principal and governors are not yet able to identify key areas for improvement in pupil attainment.

59. The principal, well supported by a talented staff, has achieved a great deal since September 2001 and fully understands the importance of evaluating the school's work as the next major priority for the future. All of the school's priorities for development are very good and the action taken to develop and improve the school has been exceptionally good this academic year. Following a period of turbulence the school is now very well placed to succeed in achieving its aims.
60. The school has a good number of teachers for the number of pupils on roll and the range and complexity of their learning needs. A significant proportion of teachers have suitable training specific to their subjects and pupils' special needs which has clear benefits for the pupils' learning. A suitable proportion of teachers have received training in the management of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, which they use to support the work of all staff and which accounts for the generally good progress of pupils with these conditions. There is, however, insufficient training for staff in using information and communication technology in the subject areas.
61. The large turnover in teaching staff over the last two years has left some subjects without a co-ordinator as, for example, in English. However the school has senior staff to oversee the organisation of these subjects and they are led and managed to at least a satisfactory standard, as in English, and a good standard for the rest. This situation is also being addressed as a matter of priority. The staff turnover has also resulted in no clear job descriptions for some staff. This is currently inefficient, as management seeks to ensure necessary tasks are completed. The senior management team is fully aware of this and will be addressing this deficiency as part of the prioritised development plan.
62. There are a good number of therapists and medical staff providing exceptionally good support for pupils with special educational needs from a team including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, supported by one full-time and two part-time nurses. In addition each key stage has a specialist teacher of reading to provide individual tuition and support to those who have a specific reading disability. This element of the school's provision is highly valued by parents, local authorities and the pupils themselves.
63. There are sufficient support staff, who are well qualified and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, a lack of planning for the use of support staff is inefficient in a few lessons and means that their time is sometimes wasted. In a few subjects such as Spanish the allocation of support assistants does not allow them to gain the subject knowledge necessary to give the support needed. The school has no technical support staff in science, design and technology or ICT, to maintain the increasing amount of equipment. This is also inefficient, as teachers spend time organising equipment and keeping it in good order and this has an adverse effect on the amount of time they are able to spend teaching.
64. New members of staff are well supported and receive some good information to help them in their work, however there is no planned programme of induction to ensure that all new staff have the information and support needed for their particular role. This is inefficient and slows development for some new staff. The new senior management team is preparing to improve induction procedures. Provision for staff development is

good, increasingly linked to performance management and providing staff with a range of new skills across the curriculum including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as well as guidance on child protection, behaviour management and specific conditions.

65. The school's strategic use of resources is satisfactory overall. The governors understand the school budget very well and have good appropriate financial controls in place. When spending decisions are taken the school also consults and receives competitive quotations. However they do not monitor and analyse the impact of spending decisions sufficiently well to respond flexibly to changes from year to year. This is recognised and they are considering a system to keep them better informed of the impact of their decisions, which will be linked to improved monitoring and analysis throughout the school. However the school development plan is now properly costed and governors' links to the subject areas gives them a clearer view of developing practice. Grants, which are allocated specifically for building work or new initiatives, are managed well.
66. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject areas, the management systems of the school, including the monitoring of pupil progress and improving communication is satisfactory. The principal and governing body are aware that the current system, although adequate, does not enable them to monitor and analyse pupil progress sufficiently. They are currently seeking to address this.
67. Accommodation is good and well maintained. There are sufficient specialist rooms for teaching science, physical education, design and technology and art and design. The outside areas including the grass playing field and residential accommodation are very good. Since the previous inspection, storage space has been improved, although it is still inadequate in the science area to store all equipment efficiently. The music area has been relocated and improved since the last inspection, but its present location remains unsatisfactory because it is too close to the gymnasium and the noise adversely affects some lessons. Other matters identified in the previous inspection, such as the need for a new staff room and an integral toilet area for Years 5 and 6, have still to be addressed by the school. The staff room particularly is far too small especially when staff are gathered for briefings and handovers from or to the residences. This has an adverse impact on the ability of staff to work, take suitable breaks and discuss issues at length.
68. The school has a good range of high quality resources, which support learning well. These have improved since the previous inspection where some inadequacies were noted. Textbooks, for example in English and geography, are up to date and stimulating. The library is well stocked with a good range of reference books and fiction to promote reading, although books reflecting life in a multicultural society are few. The wide variety of resources for art and design and music not only allow for full access to a broad and relevant curriculum but also contribute significantly to high achievement through experimentation and exploration. The good resources in physical education encourage pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting activities and are chosen carefully to meet the needs of pupils of all physical abilities. There are insufficient computer programs however in the subject areas, especially science, for developing pupils' information and communication technology skills in relation to different subjects.

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

69. To build on the current good practice and develop and improve on the performance of all pupils the principal and governors should:

- (1) Develop and improve systems for monitoring and evaluating key aspects of the school's work. In particular:
- the quality of teaching and its impact on learning, for different groups of pupils, to prepare for further school improvement;
  - the work of subject departments in developing consistent assessment procedures across the key stages so that the work is planned and delivered more systematically;
  - staff roles in relation to efficient deployment at all levels;
  - budget planning to support the work of the school more flexibly.

*(paragraphs: 47, 58, 61, 63, 65)*

- (2) Monitor and analyse pupil performance at a whole school level to support governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators more effectively in:
- understanding how well different groups of pupils are progressing;
  - monitoring trends in achievement;
  - setting appropriate subject and whole school targets.

*(paragraphs: 4, 45, 47, 58, 66)*

**In addition the governors and principal should consider reviewing and reorganising curriculum time so that:**

- there is a suitable balance of time between subjects in all key stages;
- pupils who are withdrawn from lessons are assured of an appropriate curriculum entitlement;
- the beginning and ending of each day has a clearly defined purpose, which is consistently implemented.

*(paragraphs: 21, 27, 28,*

## Residential provision

70. Residential provision is very good. It is inclusive in terms of its organisation, breadth and relevance and has a positive impact on the achievement and progress of the girls and boys who board from Sunday evening to Thursday. This is because the relationship between the school and residential provision ensures that pupils' development is supported throughout the 24-hour curriculum, but with distinctly different cultures. For example, there are clear policies and practices relating to behaviour and discipline, which are complementary and consistent to those that apply in school. In this way, pupils know what is expected of them and feel secure within these boundaries. This very good provision also develops the key areas of communication, personal, social and independent life skills.
71. Many aspects of the residential provision make a good contribution to pupils' learning and progress. There are opportunities for pupils to continue their studies in suitable conditions. A homework time is built into the school day and pupils have access to books and resources to extend and consolidate their learning. This is a well-established routine and pupils settle quickly and complete their tasks with care. Daily meetings, 'circle times', are opportunities to celebrate achievement, share forthcoming events, and remind pupils of their responsibilities. In these meetings pupils listen and speak with confidence, knowing their contribution and opinion will be valued. They pay close attention to what others say, ask questions to clarify issues and take account of other's ideas and points of view. As a result, their speaking and listening skills are enhanced.
72. Pupils make good progress in meeting the targets in their primary care programme, which are regularly recorded and assessed, because staff share them with pupils and regularly refer to them. Older pupils are taught to be responsible for their own washing and ironing and to learn to travel independently. Therapists too, have input into care programmes so that their advice and good practices are extended across the 24-hour curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal interests and hobbies in a balanced way and without undue interference. Good use is made of local community leisure facilities and clubs to develop pupils' recreational, personal and social skills. On the Wednesday evening 'Activity Night', for example, pupils choose from a range of activities, including dry slope skiing, climbing and karate. Staff provide the necessary support and encouragement to make these activities worthwhile and as a result pupils become competent performers and experience success. This raises their self-esteem. These outside activities add richness and relevance to the curriculum and contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
73. Appropriate policies and guidelines are in place for such aspects as equal opportunities, action against bullying, child protection and abuse procedures. All pupils have access to an independent listener. The head of care is one of the designated senior members of staff with detailed knowledge of child protection procedures. New staff are informed as to the possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and what to do, as part of their induction training. Regular fire practice drills are carried out by day and by night in each half term and duly recorded. There are good systems in place for communicating with social services department and other relevant outside agencies. Links with parents and carers are maintained and encouraged. The social services department recently inspected the school; the report is positive in terms of the care pupils receive and their recommendations are being acted upon. This report is available to parents.
74. The residential accommodation is pleasant, comfortable and brightly displayed. There is a separate unit for girls. Many pupils have personalised their living areas with posters

and photographs, which reflect a sense of ownership. The accommodation is clean, well lit and ventilated and has all the amenities and comfort you would expect of a home. The shower and toilet areas are clean and warm and offer privacy. In the living area there are adequate resources and space for pupils to pursue their own interests, while in the lounge there are comfortable chairs and settees for quieter activities. There are single bedrooms for older pupils and larger bedrooms for small groups and younger pupils. The furniture, carpets and fittings are generally of good quality.

75. The residential provision is well led by the newly promoted and qualified head of care. She is well supported in her work by the deputy head of care and adequate staff to ensure good supervision and pupils' safety at all times. For example, there are members of staff on sleeping-in duty in each of the units and a member of the senior management team on call, in an emergency. School nurses provide 24-hour medical cover. Comprehensive handover meetings before school and after school, attended by teachers, residential social workers and one of the school nurses, provide an effective system for ensuring that all staff are alerted to relevant information about the pupils' welfare. Relationships between pupils and care staff are very good and this results in a relaxed atmosphere. Residential staff provide very good role models in the patient, kind, humorous and consistent way they relate to pupils and to each other. The school is rightly developing an independent living area, in order to prepare senior pupils for the reality of life after school.
76. Over the week, inspectors talked to several pupils in a variety of settings and on a variety of topics. The pupils were polite and courteous, very proud of their various achievements and showed themselves to be happy and contented with their residential placements.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	107
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	90

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	37	43	18	0	0	0
Percentage	7	35	41	17	0	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	89
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	86
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	15	3
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: Y4 – Y12**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.1
Average class size	6

#### **Education support staff: Y4 – Y12**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	458

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	2,442,837
Total expenditure	2,551,870
Expenditure per pupil	26,582
Balance brought forward from previous year	177,436
Balance carried forward to next year	68,403

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4.4
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	89
Number of questionnaires returned	46

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	37	9	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	52	4	7	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	50	13	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	43	24	4	11
The teaching is good.	48	43	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	41	7	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	22	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	37	4	2	7
The school works closely with parents.	43	41	7	9	0
The school is well led and managed.	41	43	13	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	39	4	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	26	7	4	17

*NB 51% of parents replied. 4% represents two parent replies, which is 2% of the total parent population, 9% represents four parent replies which is 4.5% of the total parent population.*

### Other issues raised by parents

The majority of parents in letters and in conversation during the inspection are very satisfied with the school, the ease with which the school can be approached, the information they are given and the opportunities offered to the pupils. A few however have experienced difficulties in their links with the school in the past. The current systems for links with parents are in line with normal practice in all schools. Concerns were also raised regarding procedures, following complaints in the past. The inspection team closely examined current practices for issues and complaints raised with governors or members of staff. These are in order; they follow all legal requirements and are in line with guidelines on best practice. The school has recently reorganised many of their procedures to ensure that all concerns

are followed through in an exemplary fashion. In all other issues the inspection team findings largely reflect the views of parents in the table above.

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

### **ENGLISH**

77. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English throughout the school. They make very good progress in speaking and listening, and good progress in reading and writing. A scrutiny of pupils' work, their impressive writing displays in classrooms and their records confirm that pupils sustain this good progress over time. There is no significant difference in the progress or attitude of boys and girls, or of pupils of different ability. All have positive attitudes to the subject.
78. This maintains the high standards in English noted at the previous inspection and is a result of teaching that is good overall.
79. The achievement of pupils up to the age of eleven is good. They take it in turn to read, and in this way come to appreciate how language style and carefully chosen words create the mood for a poem. Most pupils understand terms like alliteration, and know that a limerick is a nonsense rhyme made up of five lines. There is a wide ability range in this group. Younger, lower attainers copy under model writing and use simple phrases to say what they mean. Higher attainers' writing is well organised and thoughtful. They work independently, for example when writing a synopsis of 'Treasure Island' and use a dictionary appropriately. Their handwriting is fluent, joined and legible and they use a range of punctuation accurately.
80. Pupils up to the age of fourteen build on this good progress. They take it in turns to read aloud and with fluency and skim and scan text for verbs to use in their own writing. By the age of fourteen, higher attaining pupils read and understand a range of texts and identify key features, themes and characters. Their writing is varied and interesting and they write in a range of forms to suit different readers. In speaking and listening, they take an active part in discussion, showing understanding of ideas and sensitivity to others. Lower attaining pupils read simple text with understanding and accuracy. Their writing begins to communicate meaning in both narrative and non-narrative forms. They talk and listen with increasing confidence and in a range of situations. In discussion, they understand and follow the main points. Drama is used well to improve pupils' communication skills, confidence, self-esteem and their ability to work in pairs or as part of a small group. Pupils are successful in understanding how shadow puppets work and developing ideas about the use and place of masks in drama because lessons are well planned and organised and the teacher challenges them with practical and relevant activities.
81. Pupils aged from fourteen to sixteen build on this good progress. They follow coursework leading to GCSE or the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA), and this external accreditation is a powerful motivator for pupils to work hard. In a Year 11 lesson, higher attaining boys also make very good progress in understanding the theme of love and relationships because the poem 'Cousin Kate' is an appropriately challenging text and the teacher has good subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm. Pupils are mature and articulate in contributing to the discussion and expressing opinions on such social and moral issues as the rights of a child born out of wedlock and the gap between rich and poor. They speak and listen with confidence and express ideas with clarity, for example, "I don't like this cottage maiden. She's become all bitter and twisted". Higher attaining pupils are likely to obtain GCSE grades B-C in the summer, while lower attaining pupils are likely to obtain grades E-G but also the

Certificate of Educational Achievement. Pupils' coursework is beautifully presented and enhanced by the use of computers, reflecting their positive attitudes and teachers' high expectation.

82. Characteristics of good and very good teaching that are common to all teachers of English include very good planning and preparation, clear introductions, interesting and challenging activities with a range of text, and the effective use of ICT to improve the presentation of pupils' work. The school also places great importance on developing and reinforcing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum and uses learning support teachers to further this aim. There have been improvements in planning and the use of assessment, in the introduction of the literacy hour and also in closer working with mainstream schools and their teachers of English. The school took part in Standard Assessment Tests for the first time last year and is using the data well to monitor progress and to inform teaching, planning and resources. The setting of pupils into ability groups is helping teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs.
83. Teaching for pupils up to Year 6 is often very good and closely follows the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. This is having a positive impact on standards. A good selection of sea poems, for example, 'Sea Shells' and 'A Sea Serpent Saw a Big Tanker', raises pupils' interest and curiosity. Lessons are briskly introduced with a recap of previous work to ensure pupils build on prior learning. Good questioning, for example, 'Which one did you like and why?' makes pupils think, reflect and express their preferences. Pupils are well behaved and co-operative and this contributes to their good learning and progress. They readily answer and volunteer opinions because relationships are good and they are at ease in the classroom situation.
84. Group work is well organised in Key Stage 3 and allows for more individual support and differentiated activities such as, writing, using the computer program 'Talking First Word' and role play. Teaching is good overall but ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the very good lessons the learning objectives and tasks are clearly explained so pupils know what to do. The teachers have high expectation as to their behaviour and work rate so that pupils attend and co-operate. They are confident and secure in their subject knowledge and are calm and measured in all their instructions. As a result pupils listen carefully. The tasks are interesting and pitched at a level that challenges pupils. Pupils are motivated and there is a real commitment to learning. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils studied the text, 'The Railway Children'. The teacher maintained the momentum with encouraging and positive remarks, for example, "Well done, you found that quickly Jamie". Other pupils took note and redoubled their efforts.
85. Teaching and learning are often good and occasionally very good in Key Stage 4. In one Year 10 class, for example, pupils made very good progress in understanding the difference between Ralph and Jack in 'Lord of the Flies'. The teacher was very positive in her approach, cheerful and good-humoured. The lesson was well planned and prepared so that learning was continuous. She had adapted the text to suit the level of the pupils and used very good models of the island, which pupils have constructed, along with clips of the video to reinforce their learning and help them relate the story to their own experiences. She engaged all pupils in a discussion because she is very receptive to their contributions and uses the plenary well to confirm learning and celebrate their achievements.
86. Where teaching is satisfactory there are weaknesses, often because strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are not effectively used and as a consequence it detracts from learning. Learning support assistants, although skilled and knowledgeable, make a varied contribution. Often their support is well planned and effective, for example

recording pupils' responses in the whole class activity and giving individual support. But on occasions their work is not planned in sufficient detail and time is wasted while they wait for instructions. The practice of withdrawing pupils for therapy, to attend reviews or for medical treatment happens too frequently in English lessons and has a negative impact on the learning and progress of the pupils concerned in those particular lessons. Where therapists work in the classroom the results are impressive. For example pupils' sitting posture, pen grip and handwriting skills improve as a result of the expertise and contribution of the occupational therapist. In another lesson, pupils' speaking, listening, language and thinking skills are improved as a result of the senior speech therapist leading the lesson. Joint teaching and the sharing of good practice and expertise in this manner had a positive impact on pupils' learning and developed the skills and knowledge of all the professionals involved.

87. There is currently no co-ordinator for this subject and all English teachers meet and plan together regularly to compensate for this. A lack of strong leadership means that it is not well monitored and practice is not evaluated which delays further development of the subject. There is no leadership to ensure consistency of teaching, planning and assessment and pupils' continued progress within and between key stages. There is a good scheme of work in place and this includes writing from other cultures and traditions, pre-twentieth century literature, modern poetry, drama and the study of non-fiction and media text. This is supported by effective and improving assessment procedures. However, information about pupils' reading and spelling ages is not sufficiently reflected in some of the worksheets presented to pupils in all the subjects. Resources are good and are well used to enhance learning and motivate pupils. The library is an attractive well-organised area. It doubles as a classroom, thereby restricting access for parts of the day. It contains a good range of library material to stimulate and challenge pupils, although books to inform pupils about other cultures are limited. However, currently no one has specific responsibility for the library. It is not timetabled and its use is not monitored. As such it is an underused resource. Computers and laptops are used very well to support pupils in drafting and presenting their work and contribute well to developing their overall skills in information and communication technology. The subject makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. Progress and achievement in mathematics is good for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3. By the end of Key Stage 4 progress and achievement is very good, with all pupils being entered for external accreditation. The quality of teaching is good overall and the subject is well managed.
89. Progress since the last report has been satisfactory. The current co-ordinator has improved the organisation of mathematics throughout the school and the previously high standards have been maintained.
90. There is good achievement in Key Stage 2. Many younger pupils on entry to the school have difficulty in transferring number skills to problem-solving situations. By the age of eleven, pupils are gaining success in the use of the four rules, number bonds to ten and twenty, shapes and sorting, telling the time, use of money and change from a £1, and measuring and practical activities. Pupils able to work at higher levels also show good progress by working on time zones, averages, area and perimeter, and using the computer for work on fractions, logo and spreadsheets.

91. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils working at lower levels are gaining in confidence to apply their number skills. There is evidence of work on dates, time, symmetry, fractions, percentages, odds and evens, measuring and cutting. At a higher level, pupils are working on angles, angles of a triangle, construction of a triangle and fractions. In one lesson with fourteen-year-olds, the teacher successfully encouraged pupils to draw inferences and develop skills of measuring distances. One pupil knew that a regular pentagon is a shape with all internal angles equal and all sides equal.
92. By the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils are working towards programmes of study linked to either the GCSE or the Certificate of Educational Achievement. There is clear evidence of very good progress and achievement. Nine pupils are studying for the GCSE full course in mathematics, and two fifteen-year-old pupils passed the examination with 'A' grades last year. One of these pupils now attends the local sixth form college for three sessions each week to study for the AS-level examination in mathematics. Pupils of all levels of ability are extremely pleased with their progress. One pupil stated, "I have improved so much with this teacher because in my old school I had a maths teacher who only gave me one chance before sending me out because of my behaviour. The teacher here listens to me and helps me, which is why I have improved. I am pleased with my improvement".
93. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall and it is very good in almost a third of lessons especially in Key Stage 4. A key feature of all lessons is the relaxed atmosphere and positive caring learning environment, which means that pupils feel confident to try. In the most successful lessons, teachers share lesson objectives with pupils which helps to keep them motivated. In addition, teachers take good care to develop pupils' knowledge of key words by use of the whiteboard or flash cards. This helps pupils to read their texts and grasp the main ideas quickly. There is effective use of starter activities, which develop pupils' mental and aural skills well. The good planning of the work of learning support assistants enables them to skilfully help pupils with the most difficulty. Work is well marked and this is linked to an ongoing system of helping pupils understand their own progress, and time is set aside at the end of the lesson to discuss and support learning which has taken place. In Key Stage 2, well-presented work is encouraged. One pupil stated that his presentation had improved since he had been at the school and he was proud to show the biro he had received from the teacher for his efforts. In one lesson with fifteen-year-olds, the teacher was enthusiastic and built on pupils' previous learning with well differentiated quick fire questions. Pupils knew that 50 per cent was a half and that 25 per cent was a quarter.
94. In a few lessons work is not always adapted suitably to meet the needs of all the pupils, leaving some pupils struggling to keep up or working too slowly. In others, lesson objectives and key words are sometimes not shared with learning support staff or pupils and pupils find it difficult to follow the lesson. In addition not all teachers use time at the end of a lesson to go over what has been learned, which means that some pupils do not get the consolidation of ideas that they need. However, the high standard of teaching overall means that pupils generally work well and make good progress in most lessons in all key stages.
95. The present co-ordinator, although not trained in mathematics, has taken on the role in an acting capacity since 1999. She is very enthusiastic and has introduced a number of successful strategies to promote the teaching of numeracy, and to develop baseline assessment to provide information from which progress can be judged. In addition, she has worked hard to promote teacher confidence and the sharing of skills in lesson planning and use of information and communication technology. However, due to her role as a senior manager, she is not given the time to oversee and consolidate many of



the numeracy and assessment projects. For instance, the school is aware that numeracy across the curriculum is not yet co-ordinated. The recent introduction of the use of learning support staff to monitor daily performance of pupils linked to weekly planning targets is helping to support better targeted lesson planning. However, there is a lack of consistency in assessment, for example assessment records are not being completed and in Key Stage 3 there are no key skills lists to promote target setting and short-term assessment. This means that the subject co-ordinator and senior management cannot easily track the progress of groups.

96. There is clear evidence of the benefits of some computer programs to support and develop the understanding of number concepts. In Key Stage 2 for example, work on the computer has enabled pupils with limited fine motor skills to access more of the curriculum. However, access to computers is limited, and not all the staff have received training to develop their use to enhance teaching and learning in mathematics. The senior teacher currently co-ordinating work in mathematics recognises the deficiencies as areas for future action.

## SCIENCE

97. Overall the quality of provision in science is good. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. The majority of pupils enter the school with standards well below that which could be expected nationally and by the end of Year 11 the most able pupils reach national average performance. Good progress is made overall in all lessons and over longer periods. The best levels of achievement are seen in Key Stage 4 where they are built upon the basic work undertaken lower down the school. However the progress made by more able pupils of this age is only satisfactory. This is the result of lower teacher expectations of these pupils, which leads to work not being adequately matched to their needs. The good progress made by the rest of the pupils was due in no small measure to the teachers' careful planning, very good preparation and use of resources.
98. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well, they are able to sort materials by their properties and suggest uses for them. They can describe physical and chemical changes in food materials when they are heated. They are starting to make predictions of what may happen based on previous knowledge rather than a guess. All are able to give an explanation of the differences between reversible and non-reversible changes.
99. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well. They know for example that the source of the Earth's energy is the sun and that energy can be transformed from one type to another without being lost. In one Year 8 lesson pupils could describe the energy changes involved in winding up a clockwork torch from the chemical energy within food via movement or Kinetic energy to electrical energy and finally to the heat and light energy that is produced. Pupils also show good, but guided practical skills. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were able to draw the path of a light ray through different Perspex shapes showing how light can be reflected and refracted. The results of this practical work are carefully recorded and explained by the pupils.
100. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have continued to achieve well although for a few of the more able pupils achievement is only satisfactory. Good progress was seen in a Year 10 lesson where pupils could explain how to test a food solution for starch and glucose and were able to carry this out carefully, taking into account the safety procedures. By the end of Year 11, pupils in one lesson could recall how to separate a

mixture of chalk, blue dye and water into separate components. They could give the correct scientific definitions for dissolving soluble and insoluble materials. They could also give an explanation of how a sieve works and use this to explain how a filter paper works. Almost all pupils achieve the Certificate of Educational Achievement at the end of Year 11 and a few achieve at GCSE.

101. Overall the quality of teaching was judged to be good. In Key Stages 2 and 3 a quarter of the lessons were satisfactory with the remainder being good or better. At Key Stage 4 teaching was either good or very good. The best teaching was seen in lessons that were very well planned and had clear, precise learning objectives which were shared with the pupils. This resulted in pupils having a clear understanding of the lesson and their own achievement. The quality of teaching is high because staff have very good subject knowledge, are skilled classroom managers and create good learning environments. This results in the very good overall quality of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which shows improvement as the pupils move through the school. However for a few of the most able pupils in Key Stage 4, expectations of what can be achieved are too low and so some pupils in this group progress at a slower speed than their peers, making only satisfactory progress. The engaging and skilled teaching makes sure that pupils maintain very good levels of concentration and enthusiasm. Good relationships are formed with teachers who use praise and encouragement very well to ensure that pupils always try their best.
102. Literacy skills are well supported on a daily basis, but the systematic development of numeracy skills and the strategic use of computers are less well developed.
103. The subject is led well by an experienced teacher who has clear ideas of how the subject should be developed. A learning support assistant who is clearly briefed and has an extremely positive effect on lessons ably supports her. Although the curriculum meets national requirements the time allocated is low, although it has improved recently. The quality of long- and medium-term planning is being reviewed because, although broadly satisfactory, it does not ensure that learning takes place smoothly between key stages. It also provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to pursue the scientific enquiry elements of the curriculum. There is now a weekly science meeting to help improve subject monitoring but the Key Stage 2 teachers are not able to attend this meeting. This makes it difficult for teachers to share good practice and develop consistent strategies to help pupils achieve to the best of their abilities. There are limited opportunities to enrich pupils' skills by using information and communication technology for study and making reports.
104. The development of assessment strategies is at an early stage. Results of regular testing and subject coverage are recorded, but do not yet link end-of-unit assessments to National Curriculum levels. As a result the system is not yet having a focused influence on lesson planning for pupils of different abilities, which has a particular impact on the rate of progress for the most able pupils. The marking system is inadequate, as it does not fully inform pupils of what they have to do to improve. Accommodation for teaching the subject is satisfactory but storage and preparation areas are extremely limited in scope which limits opportunities for certain practical investigations.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105. The school makes very good provision for art and design. This is because the quality of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. As a result most of the Year 11 pupils are successful in the GCSE examination, many reaching standards in line with

mainstream pupils. In turn this has a positive effect on standards in Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils, teachers and visitors benefit from the displays of artwork, which enhance the school environment, thus raising expectations. Pupils now have more opportunities and overall achieve higher standards than at the time of the previous inspection.

106. During Key Stage 2, pupils develop a range of skills such as drawing, painting and clay work and they learn to use a variety of tools and materials. A particular strength is the way in which pupils' art and design skills are developed through topics. For example, in one lesson, Year 6 pupils design a pirate ship as part of a literacy project. The teacher encourages them to look carefully at a variety of books and pictures in order to help them choose appropriate colours and materials for their collage. This enables pupils to achieve well and by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to mix and apply colour effectively. Pupils with additional special needs are also able to achieve well because of the good support they receive from teachers and support staff. Pupils are developing their appreciation for art from visiting local galleries and sculpture parks and looking at a range of art works by some of the great artists. The combined junior class look at the colourful work of Arcimboldo and produce pictures and ceramic faces in the style of the artist, drawing colourful flowers and fruit as a 'topping' to their faces.
107. During Key Stage 3, pupils follow a well-planned and structured programme of work, which allows them to build systematically on what they have already learnt. The curriculum is very rich, providing pupils with opportunities to respond to and create many forms of art. The art room is a stimulating working environment, which is used to full advantage. Pupils take part in class activities and also work on large-scale projects such as the construction of giant papier-mache objects such as a Mars bar and mug. Pupils are encouraged to be independent; they are shown how to perform skills such as the use of hot wax to create batik designs and then expected to work productively and complete assignments including those set as homework. Support staff play an important role in helping pupils with various complex special needs to make equally good progress, for example by reassuring an anxious pupil. Pupils record their ideas and experiments in extremely well kept sketchbooks. These clearly demonstrate how pupils' work has developed, for example designs for coiled pots and their decoration, which are used as a starting point for high quality, coiled pots, before being made, decorated and fired.
108. By the end of the Key Stage 4, these pupils have reached high standards because of the very good and sometimes excellent planning and teaching. Coursework undertaken by all pupils from Years 10 and 11 enables the teacher to evaluate and monitor pupils' work. Pupils maintain their sketchbooks and portfolios of artwork as part of careful preparation for the GCSE art and design examination. The teacher's specialist skills and knowledge enable her to give pupils very good technical advice, for example when selecting pictures to represent different centuries, as part of the unit of work on the history of art. Additionally, pupils' work is appraised very constructively so that they are left feeling encouraged but aware of what they need to do in order to succeed. Pupils' knowledge, confidence and expertise are evident in their work reflecting the teacher's close attention to detail. Lessons are conducted within an excellent working atmosphere, prompted by the very good relationships between the pupils and teacher and by her very high expectations. The GCSE courses have widened to include an expressive arts course, the results of which, over the last few years, are the culmination of the very good provision for the subject.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 where a specialist teaches it. The very good relationships between pupils and staff give pupils the confidence to tackle the often challenging projects

confidently. For example, a Year 8 class designing a new currency note needed support to ensure all the components came together successfully. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and plan activities to give a range of experiences to enhance pupils' sense of colour, form and texture, such as the well executed 'batik' images produced by Year 11 as part of their GCSE work. Staff use all opportunities in lessons to promote communication skills and to support the work done in other subjects.

110. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator who is aware of the need to extend the use of information and communication technology to enable pupils to make more use of the Internet for research and possible use of digital cameras to record and save pupils' work. Art and design makes a very strong contribution to pupils' cultural development by raising their awareness and encouraging their appreciation of art and artists.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

111. Pupils' achievement in design and technology is good in all key stages and for pupils of all abilities and for those with additional needs. The quality of teaching is very good and results in very good progress as pupils move through the school.
112. Although no lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 due to timetabling arrangements, scrutiny of teachers' planning, schemes of work and pupils' work show that by the time they are aged eleven, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of design and technology applications are good. Their work shows the beginning of an appreciation of design and the ability to make and evaluate the quality of their work, particularly with non-resistant materials. By the time they are aged fourteen, pupils have refined and improved their knowledge, understanding and skills to such an extent that they can complete a thorough design, make, evaluate cycle and produce a finished article of good quality. For example, a Year 9 class in a project using metal were making a figure using aluminium strips. These designs were creative and their use and choice of tasks and techniques enabled them to produce an attractive finished product. Pupils have a good understanding of the way in which design and technology is closely related to other subjects, for example a Year 8 class in a project on wheels and axles were designing and making a wheeled vehicle, which was required to move freely across the floor. The pupils had the technical knowledge and skills to design and construct the chassis and understood from their work in science issues of friction. They were able to drill holes in the chassis with sufficient clearance for the axle to be secure but move freely.
113. In food technology pupils have good practical skills and knowledge, for example when Year 8 pupils were making apple crumble they knew the rubbing-in technique in preparing pastry and why it is important. By the time they are aged sixteen, pupils demonstrate good levels of achievement with significant success in GCSE. Most pupils' work is entered at foundation level, although the higher attaining pupils are at intermediate level. Their practical work is of good quality and fit for purpose; pupils are designing and making, for example, a skate board, cabinets for CD storage and small pieces of furniture. The design process has been thoroughly addressed and their technique is sufficiently developed for them to produce finished work of good quality. They are able to work unsupervised and make choices about techniques. They understand workshop protocols concerning safety and behaviour, which is usually very good.

114. The quality of teaching in design and technology lessons is very good across the key stages and in both aspects of the subjects seen - work with resistant materials and in food technology. The two teachers observed are both subject specialists. They are very skilled both in the design and technical aspects of the subject and in managing pupils' behaviour. This, along with the very good relationships they enjoy with pupils, impacts very positively on pupils' learning. Pupils are confident and relaxed in lessons and show enjoyment. Lessons are very well planned and organised and pupils benefit from the rigour with which teachers present their lessons. Pupils' learning in the subject progresses very well through the school so that their achievements are good. A strong feature of the subject is the contribution made by learning support assistants who are very skilled technically and can demonstrate techniques appropriately.
115. The subject is very well led and managed by a subject co-ordinator. Very good schemes of work and assessment arrangements are in place, subject knowledge is very high and the subject has been successfully developed to include a wide range of work in different materials, which promotes high standards. Resources are very good and used effectively.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. Pupils' achievements, the progress that they make and the quality of teaching are all good in geography. Geography had many strengths at the time of the previous inspection. It is still a strong subject and the appointment of an effective co-ordinator and the purchase of sufficient, good quality resources mean that improvement in the subject has been good.
117. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6 and good throughout their other years at St Dominic's. The variation in achievement is explained by the benefits of specialist teaching for pupils in Years 7 to 11, by more regular teaching time and a longer established curriculum. The younger pupils use simple grid references, they match capital cities with European countries and consult data before compiling graphs. Research skills develop as they check their predictions for quiet and noisy areas in the school environment and feed back their findings to the class. As pupils move through Years 7, 8 and 9, their geographical understanding deepens and their subject vocabulary broadens. Very good language skills enable them to engage in good discussion, for example when considering if chemical, physical or biological weathering has taken place in areas of the grounds which they have surveyed. Independence and number skills are reinforced when pupils make daily observations at the weather station. Confidence in the use of information and communication technology is displayed in well-presented work especially when producing information graphically. Pupils of all abilities are able to achieve equally because teaching methods are well adapted to their different needs. However the withdrawal of some pupils for therapy during lessons poses some problems where pupils miss what has happened. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose geography as an option and are motivated to achieve well because of national accreditation through a short course GCSE. Some pupils achieve standards seen nationally with their presentations showing a high level of commitment, for example in studies of the River Wey. Pupils show understanding of environments at home and abroad, and have a growing awareness of conflicting interests. For example during a discussion on energy efficiency a pupil remarked "You need to compromise to get international agreement".
118. All teaching is at least good with several examples of very good teaching. Learning is satisfactory for pupils up to Year 6 because the very wide variety of additional special

needs, including short attention spans, means learning sometimes lags behind teaching. Teaching and learning are good for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Outstanding features of teaching are the methods employed to make teaching relevant and engage learners' interests and the very good relationships, which result in pupils wanting to do well. In one lesson, a practical demonstration of cloud formation within a bottle provoked excellent discussion resulting in very good learning. Using very skilful behaviour management with initially disruptive pupils the teacher quickly diverted their attention to newspaper reports of a violent storm and used their interest to good advantage. Expectations that work will be completed to a high standard are usually met, as could be seen in very good topic work in Year 7 involving planning a five-day tour of Britain. Assessment in the subject is developing well. There are good new baseline assessments in Key Stage 2, emerging portfolios of work and end-of-topic assessments which will give a good view of pupils' progress. Assessment for accredited courses is also thorough. However, teachers' comments on work are not always sufficiently evaluative to help pupils move on in their understanding. Homework is well used to reinforce learning.

119. The subject is well led by a strong co-ordinator who has been very effective in maintaining the subject's high profile. She ensures that geography contributes significantly to raising the standards of literacy, numeracy and communication throughout the school and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The use of information and communication technology is developing well to support written work and presentation of data, but there is no Internet access in the classroom, which is a disadvantage limiting access to information. Good use is made of the school and local area with the River Wey particularly well used by older pupils for field studies related to examination work. The curriculum is good although it is still evolving for the youngest pupils and continuity and progression between Key Stages 2 and 3 have yet to be fully established.

## **HISTORY**

120. Pupils' progress and achievements in history at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 are good. The progress made by pupils in terms of understanding historical events and relating issues to their lives is good. Improvements in the development of history since the last inspection are satisfactory. The previous report stated 'The role of the subject co-ordinator is a new one and there is, as yet, no policy document or consistent assessment and record keeping'. The co-ordinator has now assembled a good policy document detailing areas of study, cross-curricular work, community links, links to literacy, assessment procedures and the use of information and communication technology.
121. By the age of eleven, pupils with the help of the teacher and support staff, are developing knowledge and understanding through discussion, looking at pictures, books, and videos, sequencing and cutting out, and relating time lines to their own lives. At a higher level pupils are developing verbal communication, showing understanding of old and new, improving skills of sequencing, cutting out, and developing writing skills using key words. More advanced pupils are learning enquiry techniques using a large selection of books and videos. There is also evidence of partner and shared activities to develop social skills. Pupils use the computer for free writing activities and one pupil produced an excellent article on 'Spare the rod and spoil the child', linked to his study of Victorian times. Work up to the age of eleven is based on a four-year rolling programme including, the Romans, Anglo Saxons, Ancient Greece, Vikings, Tudors, and a local study of Godalming. Due to long-term staff absence all pupils between the ages of eight

and eleven are currently studying the Victorian period. The co-ordinator is aware that this grouping together of a wide range of learning needs and abilities, despite classroom support, is resulting in frustration for some pupils.

122. By the age of fourteen, there is evidence that pupils are gaining further in self-confidence and ability to develop their research skills, showing greater understanding of the time line and the concept of old and new. Work is based on a range of programmes including the indigenous people of North America, medieval realms 1066-1500, the making of the UK 1500-1750, Britain 1750-1900, and a World study post 1900. One group of eleven-year-olds, whilst studying the effect of the environment upon the lives of the indigenous population of North America, gained considerably from the discussion about totem poles, with the teacher actively encouraging them with the help of good illustrations to express their ideas and thoughts. The displays of writing, pictures and photographs following the Year 8 visit to Hampton Court indicate clearly the learning and enjoyment the pupils gained from the practical experience of having history brought to life. One pupil wrote, 'The bit I enjoyed most was going to the chapel and seeing the artistic ceiling'. One group of fourteen-year-olds are doing individual projects on a range of topics based on their studies of the Industrial Revolution, including steam power, canals, roads and cotton mills. All the pupils are actively engaged and, with support, are making good progress in knowledge and understanding. One pupil said, "I enjoy getting the information and reading about steam trains. I get information from the Internet when I go home. I do work at home on the project because I am really interested. My work has improved in the school because the classes are small and I get a lot of help".
123. There is only one group of students in the fourteen to sixteen age range studying history. The present group in their final year are studying for the GCSE short course in history. Pupils study medicine through time and a modern world study. There is a good range of work and a clear indication that pupils are developing skills of using sources and thinking about evidence. At a higher level, pupils are beginning to develop the skill of opinion forming and a greater understanding of the effect of the past on the present. For example, one student is writing a project on 'How accurate is it to say that the present tensions in Northern Ireland date back only to 1968?'. Work is well presented and word processed. There is clear evidence that the caring learning environment brings history alive and enables the pupils to gain in confidence and self-esteem.
124. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is never less than satisfactory. Over 80 per cent of the lessons seen were considered to be good or better. Features of the more successful teaching are: the very good questioning of pupils to build on previous learning and understanding; lesson objectives that are shared with pupils; work that is well marked with guidance for development; social skills that are developed by peer marking; pupils who are encouraged to read from overheads or printed texts; and learning support assistants who are actively involved in the learning process. In some satisfactory lessons, however, there are weaknesses, for example work lacked regular marking so pupils are not always clear how well they are doing. In other lessons key vocabulary is not taught slowing pupils' understanding. In addition some groups of pupils are not sufficiently helped to develop necessary research skills and this is hindered further by the lack of Internet access.
125. The new co-ordinator has a clear view of how to develop the subject. The emphasis is on bringing history alive in an effort to encourage pupils to understand how events in the past contribute to life at present. Very good use of outside resources supports this aim. Visits to Hampton Court, the Imperial War Museum, the Science Museum, the Wealdon Downland Museum, together with visits by theatre groups to the school, wattle and daub wall making within the grounds and the use of artefacts, videos and books all

contribute to improving teaching and learning. Staff are aware that the current system of monitoring pupils' work is not consistent and does not provide a good overview of how the different groups or classes of pupils compare. Links between the key stages however are improving. They have helped to provide a more systematic approach to pupils work from one key stage to another as well as allowing teachers of all key stages to share resources and strategies.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. The overall quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, good planning for developing skills in most subjects means that pupils make good progress. In Key Stages 3 and 4, separate lessons mean that pupils make good progress in developing essential skills. The use of ICT to help enhance pupils' learning in all their subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 is not well developed however and lacks planning and resources.
127. Good achievements and progress is seen in Key Stage 2 as pupils learn to write poems on computers in English for example or find maps on the Internet in geography and produce graphs and charts in mathematics and science. Pupils in all key stages are able to work with a reasonable degree of independence after a short while. However in all age groups there is still insufficient work in planning, testing and changing instructions to make things move or work using computers. As they move through the school pupils are able to build upon their previous knowledge and skills to improve the quality of their work. In Key Stage 3, pupils show very good progress in learning how to organise information on a database, classifying things in different ways and finding information that is stored easily. By the time pupils reach Key Stage 4 they are able to write and change text expertly and enhance its appearance with artwork. By the age of sixteen, six of seventeen pupils achieved Certificates of Educational Achievement and two of these gained a short GCSE qualification in 2001. This small number of pupils reflects the early stage of development of the subject. The new subject specialist is preparing pupils to take a fuller range of certification in the future.
128. Teaching of ICT is never less than satisfactory and is good or better in over three-quarters of lessons seen. The good and very good teaching helps the pupils to be highly motivated to learn well. After a short, teacher-directed demonstration of a procedure, pupils usually have sufficient confidence to start to work independently. The teacher and learning support assistant give well-judged help to those who struggle with the initial task. Lessons provide good challenges that lead the pupils to a greater understanding of the power of the technologies they are using. For example in a Year 11 lesson using a database, pupils were able to use filter features of the software to answer questions.
129. Lessons are well planned and use a variety of programmes so that pupils can use their skills in other subjects. Very good subject knowledge enables the teacher to adapt lessons to pupils' individual needs, so that they all progress at a level to suit them. The teacher and learning support assistant also react quickly to the pupils when they are struggling with the task, which means that pupils do not lose confidence but continue to achieve success. Pupils' interest is engaged because they enjoy the success they achieve whilst using ICT. The teacher's use of praise and encouragement makes a large contribution to the good levels of behaviour and concentration in lessons. The teaching of ICT has a positive impact on the development of pupils' literacy skills, as it



requires them to use a range of written sources as well as websites as sources for research.

130. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own capabilities. Although the teacher gives very good verbal feedback to pupils, which helps them to improve their work, the marking of work, which is beginning to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve, lacks consistency. Good efforts with work are rewarded through the schools voucher system, which encourages pupils to work hard.
131. There is no ICT co-ordinator at present but the ICT teacher is taking a leading role in developing the subject. He has clear ideas, which are firmly rooted in ensuring that pupils increase their range of ICT skills. The syllabus for ICT meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum but planned opportunities for using computers in other subjects are insufficient to develop all skills adequately. The school is aware of this and is undertaking a mapping exercise to ensure that all subjects plan to develop pupils' skills.
132. The assessment of pupils is at an early stage of development. The progress of pupils is starting to be judged against National Curriculum levels and results give a sound view of the developing skills of each pupil for specialist information and communication technology lessons. However the results are not yet analysed sufficiently to produce the information required by subject departments and therefore are not yet adequate to help teachers in other subjects plan lessons and future work linked to information and communication technology. The senior management are aware of this and are currently planning to ensure that the whole school has sufficient information of the pupils' levels of achievement in ICT so that pupils' individual skills can be developed appropriately.
133. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils receive separate ICT lessons from a subject specialist. In Key Stage 2, ICT skills are taught through all the subjects. The system for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements are only just being developed and are inconsistent between Key Stage 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4. This means that there is as yet no overall view by management of how well groups of pupils are progressing, especially when they move into the senior school. In addition the specialist teacher is involved in routine maintenance of machines and programmes because there is no ICT technician supporting the subject. This limits the time available for essential development of the use of ICT in other subjects and its links to the overall development of pupils' skills.
134. Resources and accommodation are good for separate ICT lessons. However recent changes of computers have meant that computer programs for some subjects can no longer be used. This means that although there are sufficient machines, programs in some subjects are only just satisfactory. In addition, many staff lack confidence in their use of the full range of strategies for using ICT in their subjects. Good use is made of a part-time teacher who works with identified more able pupils and encourages these pupils to develop expertise in programming.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **Spanish**

135. Spanish was only introduced into the school in September 2001 and is taught to all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and to Year 6 pupils in Key Stage 2. For this reason

almost all pupils are learning at the same standard which is a beginners level. Spanish is well taught to all pupils and all pupils are learning well and making good progress. The subject is very well managed and resources are of good quality.

136. Pupils in all key stages are at an early stage of learning to speak and understand Spanish. After one term they already show evidence of good and very good progress. The majority of pupils understand and can answer simple phrases such as 'what is your name', 'where do you live', 'what is this' etc. Pupils can all read, write and repeat numbers, some up to a hundred. Pupils are learning how to say the letters of the alphabet and can spell their own names in Spanish. Even the youngest pupils are beginning to grasp how nouns are masculine and feminine, how to make a word plural and the names of various objects around the classroom, such as book, ruler and pencil. The majority of pupils in all classes are confident to use the language and pick up the information quickly. One or two pupils show a particular gift for speaking Spanish and they are able to hold a simple conversation and are learning at a very fast rate, making very good and excellent progress. The current Year 9 pupils and some older pupils will be ready to take the Certificate of Educational Achievement after only one or two years of learning the language.
137. The quality of teaching is at least good in all lessons with a high proportion of very good teaching. The teacher has very clear planning, which enables her to provide pupils with a good sense of purpose in lessons. Pupils respond by wanting to do well. The activities and resources are well prepared and the lessons follow a brisk pace, which keeps even the most restless pupil interested. A good mixture of games, conversation, written tasks and assessment activities, keeps pupils engaged and progressing. The subject is taught mainly in Spanish, which accounts for the very good accents and good understanding of a wide range of phrases by the pupils. Careful assessment enables the teacher to plan for pupils' different learning needs and to ensure that they progress systematically through the programme. For example despite the fact that pupils of all ages are learning at the same level the oldest pupils have work which is better suited to college and the world of work than the classroom-based vocabulary of the younger ones. Very good behaviour management is based upon a good humoured and calm approach and even the most difficult pupils respond by doing their work.
138. The subject is very well managed by the specialist teacher who is seeking to improve her own skills in teaching, assessing and developing the subject in St Dominic's School. Assessment systems are at an early stage of development but are now linked well to the National Curriculum. The teacher has a sound range of approaches for making the subject interesting over time, but is seeking to extend and develop a wider number of activities and games for the future. Planned visits to see other language teachers in special schools have not taken place due to the recent staffing problems, which has slowed this well intended development. There is no single learning support assistant who works consistently in the Spanish department and is therefore able to learn some of the language. This is a disadvantage because subject support for pupils is of an inconsistent quality. Resources are good and include four computers for running the special programs.

## **MUSIC**

139. The high standards in music identified at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make very good progress because of the very good teaching and use of other specialist music teachers.

140. In Key Stage 2, pupils study music through a number of themes such as 'Atmosphere' and 'Bangs and Crashes'. Through these they begin to explore sounds, linking instruments to particular moods, to produce a group performance. Stimulating activities that are very well suited to the pupils' needs provide many opportunities for them to improve their knowledge of composing music linked to moods. These carefully chosen activities also begin to give pupils an understanding of the significance of signs and symbols as a means of giving instructions. For example, Year 6 pupils rehearse and perform a piece of their own 'Atmosphere' composition using a graphic score and a range of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments, conducted in turn by members of the class. Good teaching means that all pupils are fully involved and included as they become more confident of how music can be performed and recorded using a range of symbols linked to instruments. In addition they understand how music can create dramatic effects through the teacher's explanation and choice of music such as the Sorcerer's Apprentice.
141. During Key Stage 3, pupils increase their understanding and explore the range of sounds available on a keyboard; improving their skills in performing, composing and reviewing their work. Pupils were able to demonstrate all of these developing skills in a lesson designed to plan and draw up a storyboard with sound effects for performing to the class. Very good teaching techniques encourage Year 7 pupils to select the most appropriate sound effects available on the keyboards before choosing the best in order to enhance the story. By the age of fourteen, the most able pupils are becoming more familiar with how to form chords and use them to harmonise a melody. By this time they have also experienced listening to a variety of musical pieces including jazz, gospel spirituals and blues music.
142. In Key Stage 4 the separate activities of music, drama and art and design are skilfully combined into an expressive arts course for all pupils including, for example, drumming and tribal music making. The course is very well managed to ensure that all pupils have a broad and balanced experience in all areas. The most able pupils are entered for the GCSE expressive arts course, whilst other pupils work on projects aimed at extending their music experience. A number of higher ability pupils follow a GCSE music course and reach standards in line with mainstream pupils, because the quality of teaching is very good. These pupils understand the concept of rondo form and can identify examples which they use as basic structures for their own compositions. During the period of the inspection this Year 11 group composed rondo pieces on the keyboard with the excellent support of the teacher before performing to the group. Through these exercises they improve their own learning and performance through appraisal and self-assessment of compositions and performances.
143. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall because most pupils are taught by a very well qualified musician who co-ordinates the music throughout the school. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good because the class teacher is well supported by the qualified specialist and in Key Stages 3 and 4 it is very good. Pupils receive annual reports on their achievements in music. However, the systems for ongoing assessment are inadequate and do not help teachers in planning the work of individual pupils sufficiently. Pupils' responses in music are very good overall and on the occasions when pupils are disruptive, teachers and support staff manage the behaviour well so that teaching and learning continue.
144. There is good leadership and management of music. In addition to music lessons, the subject offers a great deal more to pupils, providing lunchtime activities such as the music theory group and a wide range of instrumental opportunities including violin and recorder. The music department provides music at the regular chapel services, making

a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The accommodation for music is not satisfactory due to the noisy interruptions from the adjacent sports hall. Resources, on the other hand, are very good and include a good range of recorded music and the equipment to provide very good quality sound.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

145. Physical education makes a very positive impact, not only on health and fitness, but also on the raising of pupils' self-esteem and trust. Teaching is a strength and leadership of the subject is good resulting in good improvement since the last inspection.
146. All pupils of all physical abilities achieve well and benefit from the rich and varied curriculum. The younger pupils up to Year 6 catch and throw balls of different sizes improving their hand and eye co-ordination. They practise travelling at varying speeds and combine their skills to work together in pairs or small groups taking it in turns to attack or defend. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to well-planned dance sessions, enjoying the music and stretching and relaxing their limbs as they simulate waking from deep sleep. Achievement continues to be good in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils respond very positively to the high level of individual challenge. Physically able pupils show confidence when exploring points of balance on large apparatus. They identify stable and unstable positions and perform head and shoulder stands. The achievement of pupils with additional special needs is sometimes outstanding. Teaching staff have instilled such confidence in them that they are prepared to overcome initial fears and follow instructions closely. This was well illustrated during trampolining when a group of vulnerable pupils practised a series of jumps and turns including a full twist and ending in a sequence of movements. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well across a wide area of physical activity. They have opportunities for choice, for example to use the multigym to improve fitness or play basketball or football in small team situations. Girls and boys represent the school in a wide range of sports including cricket, basketball and touch rugby. Although no swimming was observed, discussion with pupils and staff leads to the judgement that achievement is equally good in this area of the curriculum.
147. All teaching and learning are at least good and on occasions are very good or outstanding. The teacher has a high degree of expertise, which he communicates well. He is ably supported by other well-qualified teaching and learning support staff. Good links with the physiotherapy department enable some individual programmes to be incorporated into lessons so that pupils' flexibility, strength and fitness improve. Where teaching is outstanding, the teacher shows a pleasing sensitivity to pupils with additional emotional or physical needs. He instils in pupils his own calmness and belief in their own ability so that they display a high degree of trust, as was seen when a pupil achieved a shoulder stand for the first time. Lessons are well prepared and purposeful with a high regard paid to safety. Good use is made of the extensive outdoor accommodation and the adequate gymnasium so that pupils make good progress across all areas of the subject curriculum. Teachers use the good resources well and have selected them carefully to take account of individual physical needs, for example for field athletic events. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed during the lessons but an area for development is the use of peers to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance.
148. The subject is well led and managed. Areas for development are clearly identified, realistic and costed. These include making use of facilities for squash at a local mainstream school and the development of badminton. The present Year 11 pupils

have the opportunity to enter for the Certificate of Educational Achievement for the first time. Very good links with other schools and the use of coaches, for example from Surrey Cricket Club, broaden the curriculum and contribute to pupils' social and moral development. Good links with staff in the residential units provide pupils with the opportunity to take part in extra evening activities such as swimming, archery and mini-Olympics.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

149. Religious education is to be the subject of a Section 23 inspection and was not included in the subjects inspected during this inspection. The contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was assessed and is reported under that section.