

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GARRATT PARK SCHOOL**

Earlsfield

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 101103

Headteacher: Mrs J Price

Lead inspector: Mrs. Kathryn Burdis

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 September 2003

Inspection number: 258902

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	130
School address:	Waldron Road Earlsfield London
Postcode:	SW18 4TB
Telephone number:	020 8946 5769
Fax number:	020 8947 5605
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Thoms
Date of previous inspection:	9 March 1988

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Garratt Park School is a maintained special school for students aged 11-19. The 130 students who attend the school have a wide range of special educational needs. These include moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism. A small number of students are hearing or visually impaired. Attainment on entry is very wide, but all students have a statement of special educational need that identifies that their attainment is below that of all students nationally. The provision for students with autism is based in a separate unit on the school site. These students are included into the main school activities when appropriate.

The school caters for students from a wide range of economic and social backgrounds. There is an imbalance of boys and girls, with twice as many boys than girls. The school caters for a multi cultural population with just under half of the students coming from minority ethnic groups. This is well above the majority of special schools. Eleven students are identified as having English as an additional language but they speak English well. Almost half of the students are entitled to free school meals which is above the national average.

The school is very active in becoming involved in national and local initiatives. Additional funding has been obtained through initiatives such as Excellence in Cities, Inclusion Projects, The Children's Fund and New Opportunities Funding to extend the opportunities available to students. It has achieved external evaluation through Investors in People and achieved the Wandsworth Charter Award in 2003. In 2002 the school was accredited by Wandsworth LEA for its approaches to school review and evaluation. This demonstrates the Leadership Group's commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement of the school.

The school has set itself appropriate targets. These targets include raising students' achievements, promoting independence and preparation for the world of work.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14809	Kathryn Burdis	Lead inspector	History, religious education and special educational needs.
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector	
10153	Graham Soar	Team inspector	Science, information technology and geography
2652	Robin Lomas	Team inspector	Art and music
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	English, citizenship and design and technology
15303	Mike Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

**Nature of the School:** Garratt Park School is a maintained special school for students aged 11-19. It is situated in the London Borough of Wandsworth. It was last inspected in 1998. The |Lead inspector for this inspection was Mrs Kathryn Burdis.

### Overall evaluation

**This is a good school.** The school is very well led by the headteacher. Teaching is good and students make good progress in their learning. The school makes good use of its resources and provides **good value for money**. The school thinks carefully about how the personal and academic needs of individual students can be met. Occasionally, work is either too easy or too hard for some students in each class.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Leadership of the headteacher and the Leadership Group
- Good and trusting relationships between adults and students
- The standards achieved in English and mathematics
- Success in examinations and work placements by students in Year 11 to 13
- Provision for Information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education
  
- The school is good at identifying what students know and can do but sometimes this information is not used to plan what will be taught next
- Teachers do not always mark students' work in a way that shows them what they have to do next to improve their work
- Not all staff know the best ways to work with students with autism and those students with more challenging behaviour

The school has made good progress in many areas of its work since the last inspection. Opportunities for students to use their numeracy skills in other subjects are now planned. The provision for design and technology and science has improved. The school continues to evaluate and develop its approaches to ensure improved student behaviour and the policy and practice is satisfactory. The school now admits more students with complex needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties, and has a separate resource base for students with autism and is developing provision to meet their needs. There continues to be too few planned opportunities for students to use and develop their communication and literacy skills in other subjects.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Students' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good
Year 13	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

**Achievement is good.** Most students make good progress in many of their lessons and meet targets set for them in individual education plans (IEPs). By Year 11 students achieve well for their abilities in externally tested courses and the school's results are better than those achieved in similar special schools. Students in Years 11 and 12 do very well on their work experience placements and most continue with further education or training when they leave school. However, some students in each class do not make sufficient progress, as the work is not always planned to build on what they already know. Sometimes lower ability students find the work too hard. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress in achieving personal and social targets and they learn more as a result. Students demonstrate **good social, moral, spiritual and cultural**

**development.** Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and most students have positive attitudes to their work and are motivated to learn.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good.** Teachers plan to teach a broad range of topics and cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. They have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and are often able to find interesting ways of explaining things to the students. This motivates them and they learn something new in each lesson. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to students' learning. Teachers' planning is thorough but it does not show clearly enough what students of different abilities are to learn or the variety of approaches and resources that could be used to help students learn. This sometimes stops all students learning as much as they could. The curriculum provision for students with additional special educational needs such as autism or emotional and behaviour is satisfactory.

Learning opportunities are good. Planned theme weeks, where students learn about the traditions and cultures of other countries or religions, enrich the experience students receive. The personal, health and social education programme promotes students' personal development well. Students are prepared effectively for the next stage of their learning. There are good links with the local community and the partnership with parents has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, parents said that they would like more information about what their children are learning each term and the progress they have made.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management is good.** The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. Members of the Leadership Group provide very good management support and the deputy headteacher is very good at managing training programmes for teachers. The governors have a good understanding of the work of the school and are well informed on its strengths and weaknesses. They are not sufficiently involved in working with the Leadership Group in shaping the vision and direction of the school. The middle management team have clearly identified responsibilities and are developing their roles. Governors and those with management responsibilities are not evaluating sufficiently the quality of the provision in the school. The school is very good at encouraging and training teaching assistants into new roles such as instructors or trained teachers. However, not all staff have had sufficient training to meet the complex needs of students now attending the school. Training staff in safe ways of dealing with students with the most challenging behaviour is urgently required.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The small number of parents who expressed a view are satisfied with the quality of provision and some identified the good progress their child had made and the very good support they had received. Some identified concerns about the behaviour in the school and felt that homework that was set was not always appropriate. Homework during the inspection was set regularly with appropriate content. Although there are incidences of inappropriate behaviour, inspectors confirm the students' views that such events are dealt with swiftly and well. Students are very positive about their school and are very clear about its strengths and weaknesses. They particularly appreciate the quality of support they receive from their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school's improvement plan appropriately identifies key areas for action. This plan should form the basis of the post OFSTED action plan and should be revised to include:

- A review of the approaches to curriculum delivery so individual lesson plans identify what students are to learn as well as what they are going to do

- Approaches to marking so that teachers write on students' work what they have shown they can do and what they have to do next to improve their learning
- Training for all teaching and non teaching staff to increase their skill and confidence in responding to the increasing range of needs of students admitted to the school
- A review and extension of the range of teaching approaches and resources used in lessons to ensure students with more complex needs experience a range of resources and approaches to remove any barriers to their learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Students attending the school have all been identified as having special educational needs. It is inappropriate to compare their attainment with students of a similar age in mainstream schools. However, overall, students achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

##### **Students achieve well in:**

- English
- Mathematics
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Physical education (PE)
- Religious education, citizenship, design and technology
- Personal and social development
- Externally accredited courses including Entry Level Certificates, GCSE courses and ASDAN Youth Award Scheme

##### **Areas for further development:**

- The rate of progress for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Inclusion of students with autistic spectrum disorder
- The rate of progress of lower attaining students

1. Students in Years 7 to 13 achieve well. They make good progress in most areas of the curriculum and regularly succeed in meeting targets relevant to their particular special educational need. By Year 11 most students achieve passes in externally accredited courses. Higher achieving students achieve pass grades in the GCSE examinations. Other students achieve pass grades in entry level courses designed for students working below GCSE level and ASDAN vocational courses. By the end of Year 12 students are confident to move on to the world of work or to attend courses at local colleges. A few students choose to return to school for Post 16 courses of study.

2. Achievement in relation to students' capabilities in English, mathematics and ICT is good across the school and is satisfactory in science. It is very good in physical education. Although there are twice as many boys than girls in the school this does not affect the achievement of girls and they make good progress in relation to their needs. All students make good progress in their personal and social development.

3. Students in Years 10 - 13 make better progress overall than those in Years 7 to 9. The older students follow examination courses selected to reflect their abilities and make good progress towards success criteria identified in the course programme.

4. In lessons in Years 7 to 9 students always learn something new. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve however, not all students make good progress in lessons as occasionally work is not always well matched to the needs and abilities of the wide range of learning needs. This was particularly the case in a Year 7 class where, so early in the new term, the class teacher was still establishing the different needs of individuals in the group. As a result, some higher attaining students were not provided with work that was hard enough and their attitude to learning deteriorated. Some lower attaining students were not able to build on or consolidate what they had learnt in previous lessons.

5. The teaching groups and approaches for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those with autism do not always ensure that students always make good progress in each lesson. They make satisfactory progress overall. The school makes good use of performance data to monitor the individual progress of all students and to identify how students should be grouped. Students in the Year 7 nurture group make good progress. Whilst the school has a very positive ethos to meeting the needs of students with increasingly complex needs it is not totally successful in ensuring the curriculum is delivered to reflect the learning needs of all. Communication systems such as signing are not being used consistently, limiting the progress students make.

6. The trend in achievement is good and reflects the changing profile of the student population. Since the last inspection the range of special educational needs that the school caters for has extended. The school has continued to extend the range of externally accredited courses it offers. This supports and promotes the good achievement made by the time students leave school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Students' achievement in social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good policies and practice to promote improved attendance
- Students demonstrate positive attitudes to work
- There are excellent relationships between staff and students
- There are planned and effective opportunities to consider the values and traditions of others
  
- A small minority of students do not behave appropriately when they are not interested or motivated by the work set
- The school does not use available exclusion data as effectively as possible to identify targets for school improvement

7. The great majority of students demonstrate a positive attitude to their work and enjoy attending their lessons and are fully involved in the activities offered. Generally, students are co-operative and are gradually learning to be independent. Relationships between students appear to be good. Behaviour around the school is good and students are polite and helpful to visitors. When occasionally problems of behaviour do occur they are quickly resolved. The excellent relationships and trust between the students and adults are the cornerstone of effective behaviour management. Students report that any incidents of bullying in the school are also quickly reported and resolved. The number of fixed term exclusions, whilst still high has been decreasing over time and exclusion rates relate to just a small number of students. The school does not use the analyses of the reasons for these exclusions to plan individual and whole-school targets for improvement.

8. Students, particularly those in Years 10 to 13, are increasingly accepting responsibility for their own actions and have a good awareness of others. They can distinguish right from wrong and understand the need for rules. They are developing an increasing understanding of themselves and have a growing awareness of other people's feelings. They appreciate the cultural diversity within the school and challenge racism and value race equality. Both the school's ethos and the planned curriculum promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

9. The school is successful in promoting students' personal, social and emotional development and they clearly understand its importance to achievement in other areas of learning. Relationships are excellent and mutual respect and trust form the foundation of a positive learning environment that allows students to make progress in all areas of their personal development. Adults consistently show patience when confronted with a variety of student anxiety and challenging behaviour and genuinely try to resolve matters leaving the students self-esteem and confidence in

tact. Students feel secure to openly display their anxieties as they trust the environment and support that the adults have created in the school.

10. Attendance is satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It is due to the very effective implementation of good policies, particularly by the student services officer and educational welfare officer, and the very good liaison between them. The school does all it can to promote good attendance by students, but is hampered by the unsupportive attitude to school of a small number of families. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	10.4
National data	9.01

Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.2
National data	2.3

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Exclusions**

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background

No of pupils on roll
67
5
1
8
2
3
16
19
8

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
39	0
4	0
0	0
1	0
0	0
1	0
6	0
1	0
9	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good and students make good progress in their learning. The school provides interesting and challenging learning opportunities and makes good use of its resources. The school thinks carefully about how the personal and academic needs of individual students can be met. Occasionally, work is either too easy or too hard for some students in each class.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is good. As a result of carefully planned learning opportunities and a range of experiences most students make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is more consistently good in Years 10 to 13 than in Years 7 to 9.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve
- There are excellent relationships between adults and students
- Teaching assistants often make a positive contribution to students' learning
- Assessment is used well to monitor how well students are doing
  
- Teachers plan well for what students are to do, but not what they are to learn
- Occasionally, planned tasks are too difficult for lower attaining students
- Too much time is spent on managing students' behaviour in a few classes

11. Teachers' planning covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and they incorporate an interesting range of supportive topics. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their excellent relationships with students enable them to provide motivation and interest in each lesson, so that students always learn something new. Teachers expect students to work hard and usually set realistic levels of challenge. Teachers' planning is thorough, although it does not show clearly enough what students of different abilities are to learn, or the variety of resources and delivery methods that could be used to help them understand and achieve.

12. The provision for students with additional special educational needs such as autism or emotional and behavioural difficulties is currently satisfactory, but the planning for the delivery of the curriculum does not entirely ensure that they are fully included in the work of the school.

13. There is a significant minority of students with challenging behaviour who continue to disrupt their own learning and that of others. Teachers manage these situations well, but are having to spend a disproportionate amount of their teaching time managing this behaviour. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to students' learning and are generally deployed appropriately, although there is occasionally inconsistency in the way adults manage the behaviour of a small number of students.

14. Teachers talk to students about their work throughout each lesson. These conversations ensure students are clear about the progress they are making. Most teachers use careful questioning and prompting to check students' understanding and knowledge. The marking of work ensures students know how well they are doing, although it is not always clear what exactly they have to do to improve. There is a common approach to student assessment, but the link between assessment and planning is still not secure, particularly for those with additional special needs.

15. Individual Educational Plans have a high profile in lessons and all adults help students to achieve their targets. Their progress is effectively reviewed regularly. The use of homework is generally appropriate and supports and extends the work undertaken in lessons.

16. Assessment is used well to track the achievement of all students, particularly in the core subjects and their priority targets. It is particularly effective in Years 10 and 11. It is sufficient in other areas to broadly indicate what students have achieved.

17. All adults know the students well and consistently demonstrate an empathy and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their learning, their behaviour and their social and emotional development. Weaker teaching in Year 7 is largely explained by the fact that so early in the academic year strong relationships have not been established and the learning needs of the students are not been fully catered for.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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[0](0%)	3 (10%)	13 (42%)	12 (39%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

## Post 16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	0(0%)	9(82%)	2(18%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

## The curriculum

**The school provides good learning opportunities for students of all ages.** This is an improvement since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Theme weeks provide good opportunities to enrich students' experiences about other countries and cultures
- The personal, social and health education programme promotes good progress in students'
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or for entering the world of work
- Links with local schools and the community are good and enrich students' learning
- There is a good number of support staff and teachers
- Subject plans are not sufficiently well adapted by teachers to ensure that all students are fully included in learning and are able to make the best progress.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for students to practise and improve their literacy skills in all subjects.

18. For students in years 7 to 9 the school provides a good range of learning opportunities, which includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Subject plans provide teachers with good guidance about the knowledge and skills students need to learn throughout their time in the school. They have been developed to reflect current requirements and have been adapted appropriately to reflect the needs of the majority of students. Plans for design and technology, which were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, are now good. The school has recently begun to improve the plans for science and is amalgamating the plans for religious education, history and geography so that they are taught as humanities. These are appropriate developments and are already having a positive impact on students' learning.

19. The learning opportunities provided for students in Years 10 to 13 are good. The curriculum is relevant to students' needs and interests and provides good opportunities for them to study vocational subjects and to have their learning accredited. Plans for learning are well linked to course requirements and this ensures that students build on previous learning and make good progress. There are good opportunities for students to participate in work-related learning and there are effective links with local colleges which prepare students well for the next stage of their learning or for entering the workplace.

20. Across the school when teachers plan lessons they do not use the information they have about students' abilities to help them adapt the learning outlined in subject plans to reflect individual needs. They do not consider sufficiently well what individual students need to learn during a lesson, based on what they have achieved in the past, or what teaching methods and resources will help them participate in activities or make the best progress. This means that aspects of the curriculum

are not being taught in a way which ensures that all students are included equally in the activities and experiences provided or that they all make the best progress. This is reflected in the good rather than very good progress students make.

21. Across the curriculum students have suitable opportunities to use their literacy skills when they read about the subject and record their work. These opportunities are not identified in subject plans to ensure that literacy skills are promoted consistently and that all subjects are used as a vehicle to support the improvement of students' skills. Sometimes the reading material is too hard for the students.

22. The school recognises and addresses students' special needs well. There is a good programme of learning for personal, social and health education. It includes suitable modules about citizenship and includes good careers education and guidance for students.

23. Learning is further enriched by well-planned, whole-school activities such as theme weeks when students learn about the people, beliefs, art and foods of different countries. There are very good opportunities for students to participate in sporting activities as part of the learning opportunities provided in physical education.

24. The school provides a good range of activities for students at lunchtime which reflects their interests. This helps to reinforce the learning they have done in the classroom. Visits into the local and wider community to support class-based learning and visitors to the school all contribute effectively to students' learning and particularly to their personal development. There are effective links with local schools and community-based services, such as youth groups, which widen the range of opportunities students have to learn.

25. There are good resources to support students' learning in information and communication technology but the quantity and quality of resources overall is satisfactory. The accommodation is suitable to support the teaching of almost all subjects and it is good for food technology and information and communication technology but the organisation of the classroom for design and technology, resistant materials, is not appropriate for all students, particularly those with behaviour problems. This limits their opportunities to work in a specialist environment.

26. The number of teachers and support staff is good; teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. They have good understanding of students' special needs but need further training to help them plan and teach their subjects in an inclusive way. The school has a good number of experienced support staff who make an effective contribution to students' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school's procedures to ensure the students' care, welfare and health and safety are good. The relationships that exist between students and adults are a strength and are underpinned by formal monitoring of individual progress. Students have a voice in the running of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Each child is well known as an individual by many adults and relationships are very positive
- The advice given to students, particularly that to prepare them for further study or the world of work, is of a high standard
- The school council allows students to consider how they would like the school to develop
- Not all staff are fully trained in the current behaviour management and restraint techniques necessary to cope with the changing student profile of the school

27. A health and safety policy is in place with risk assessments dutifully undertaken. Action is taken promptly to address any issues. Child Protection procedures are clear and staff are aware of

them. There is very good coverage for First Aid and detailed records are kept of any accidents. Incidents involving restraint are logged carefully. Many staff have received up to date training. As the school admits more students with challenging behaviour or emotional difficulties there is a need for all staff to be confident and competent in ensuring that situations that potentially might pose a risk to the health and safety of students or staff are averted.

28. Detailed files are kept on all students and they are monitored on an individual basis. The school community is very supportive and there is a high degree of respect between the students and all who work there. Arrangements for the induction of students are efficient and they quickly settle into their new environment.

29. Students are encouraged well in their learning and in their personal development and are given good information about the opportunities available to them for further study or work, for example, students attended the Job Scene Exhibition at Olympia. Careers guidance is a strength evidenced by the number of students who leave for employment or for further study. Students are prepared well for work experience and all but a few attend every day of the fortnight with their local employer.

30. The school council plays an integral role in the development of the school. Students' ideas are respected and acted upon, for example, improved access to drinking water during lessons and opportunities for football training. School initiatives, such as the Breakfast Club, further improve students' attendance and provide good opportunities for social interaction.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The relationship the school has developed with parents is effective and the good links forged with the community, local colleges and other schools are enabling students to develop well both academically and on a personal basis.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The links with local schools and colleges and the community enhance the curriculum well and raise the self-esteem of students
- The increased attendance at annual reviews and parents' positive response to them
- The relationship with parents has improved in most areas but parents are given limited information about the taught curriculum

31. The school has worked hard to improve the partnership with parents since the last inspection. Most parents now feel more involved in the education of their children. In addition to termly parent-teacher evenings, the annual reviews involving parents are well organised and allow a good dialogue to take place about the students' academic and personal progress. Parents' responses during annual reviews reflect their satisfaction with the provision for their child. The prospectus is up to date and informative but parents receive little information about the curriculum taught. Annual reports meet legal requirements but explain little about the level that students are working at. This is reflected in a small number of parents' views that they are not sure how well their child is doing at school.

32. Parents are supportive of the work of the school as evidenced by the increase level of attendance and the completion of homework. The homework diary is a useful daily tool for communication between home and school and is used regularly by many parents. Tutors frequently ring parents with news of students' good effort or progress. The school is keen to develop links further and has begun to invite parents in to see aspects of its work. During the inspection parents attended a session aimed at developing their own IT skills.

33. The school has useful links with a local college with specialist sports status to enrich the PE curriculum and provides opportunities for work placements at both establishments. Year 7

students enjoyed visiting another school for a pottery session and a teacher from a third school ran a successful poetry workshop. There are opportunities for older students to attend a local college on a part-time basis with courses such as computer graphics, PC building or motor vehicle maintenance on offer. Students are prepared well beforehand to ensure they make the most of these opportunities. Links with the community also benefit the school, for example, work has been undertaken at the local City Learning Centre on website design.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. Leadership of the head teacher is **very good** and the leadership of other key staff is **good**. The management of the school is **good** and the governance is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose and high aspirations, which are clearly transmitted to staff and are reflected in the school's practices
- The Leadership Group provides a very secure nucleus for leading and managing the school
- There is a very detailed school improvement plan that embraces the key priorities for school development
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development
- Middle managers and subject co-ordinators are insufficiently involved enough in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.
- Governors and those with management responsibilities are not fully involved in the evaluation of the impact of developments on students' learning.
- The rates of progress and achievements of individual pupils as well as different groups of pupils are not analysed closely enough.

## **Leadership**

34. The headteacher is dedicated to ensuring that all pupils achieve to the best of their abilities. She inspires, motivates and influences all those she works with. Her influence extends beyond the school where the work and knowledge she and her staff have of pupils with special educational needs is clearly recognised and respected within the community. As a result, the school has become a focus for supporting mainstream schools particularly in training teachers to deal with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. The recently expanded Leadership Group led by example. Their approach results in effective teams that have clear responsibilities that focus on pupils' achievements, learning and good behaviour. The aims and vision statement for the school are appropriate and shared with parents. The school works hard to achieve these aims.

35. Weaknesses in middle management identified in the last inspection have been addressed, most notably in the improvements in the quality of design and technology and science provision, even though the school has had to rely on temporary appointments to provide the current good level of cover in science.

36. A very detailed school improvement plan embraces the key priorities for school development. The plan is complex and developments are not prioritised well enough to ensure that agreed improvements are achievable, realistic and fully costed.

## **Management**

37. The school is organised well and efficiently run. Day to day organisation and management are smooth. There are clear procedures, and documentation provided for staff is very good in focusing on what the school is about and how it operates. Outcomes of performance management

focus on individual need, school and pupil-centred issues and these effectively inform the professional development programme.

38. Monitoring systems by the Leadership Group are secure and a great deal of information has been obtained. Reports are presented regularly to staff and governors. As yet, the evaluation of the impact of developments on provision and pupil achievements is not reported.

39. Middle managers and subject co-ordinators are insufficiently involved in the monitoring and evaluation process, particularly in identifying the relative rates of progress and achievements of individuals as well as different groups of students. Evidence of a mismatch between teacher assessments and test scores suggests that more work is needed in moderating teachers' judgements. Similarly, although the school has achieved the LEA approved self-evaluation award, there is limited evidence of ongoing external validation to ensure that school-based judgements are realistic. It is therefore important that comparison with similar schools is sought more often in order to moderate school-based evaluations.

40. Management of resources, including staffing and learning resources, is good. The school has taken a proactive stance in providing training for new teachers and as a result a number of staff have been trained within the school. There are clear policies to guide the work of the school. These are implemented well ensuring that the school's practices focus on students' learning and achievement.

## **Governance**

41. Significant improvements have been made in the development of school governance since the last inspection. Practically all members of the governing body have changed. The present governing body, working with the Leadership Group, has ensured good progress in addressing key issues raised in the last inspection report.

42. Governors are willing and supportive of the school and relationships between them and the school are very good. An induction programme for new governors with support from the LEA enables governors to be clear about their roles in relation to the specific issues raised by working with a special school.

43. Governors are gaining in confidence when questioning and challenging the school using information they get from regular visits and through monitoring reports. They are less involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school and rely on the headteacher for guidance and information. They have not develop a way of evaluating the impact of their decisions and school developments.

44. The governing body is effectively organised through its committee structure and it ensures that performance management works effectively. Policies are regularly reviewed and governors have a clear corporate view of the direction in which the school is developing.

45. The school is committed to ensuring that all students are fully included and the needs of each are met. School policies promote this; but governors are not sufficiently involved in ensuring that these policies are consistently implemented in order to ensure that curriculum planning, teaching approaches and pupil groupings fully support the highest achievement of all students. This is not always the case when students are in groups with different special needs and varying abilities working on common tasks.

46. Best value principles are adopted in much of the school's work, most notably in the development of ICT and 'SuccessMaker'. Planned reviews, consultation and trials enabled senior staff to evaluate the potential benefits of changes, presenting their finding to governors before the final decision was taken.

## Financial information for the year April 2002 to April 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1 220 697	Balance from previous year	111 737
Total expenditure	1 108 960	Balance carried forward to the next year	13 000
Expenditure per pupil	8875		

47. Financial management is prudent and well informed. The large balance from the previous year was planned in order for the school to respond to changes that were identified in the LEA special educational needs review. However, these changes did not take place, so now the surplus has been used to finance among other areas, a learning mentor to support pupils' achievement and to carry out planned developments with ICT. This prudent approach to financial management has enabled the school to achieve its educational priorities and meet some of the needs of the current range of pupils at the school.

### The effect of any particular aids or barriers to raising achievement either in the school or externally

Key factors that have aided development in the school are linked to national initiatives and external funding that has provided additional resources to support pupil needs.

- Key Stage 3 Strategy has had a positive impact on teaching and learning with a clear structure to the three-part lesson which is evident in most lessons.
- Good links with mainstream schools and colleges ensure that staff and pupils are supported with subject resources as well as providing opportunities to share good practice beyond the school and to extend provision for older students.
- Relationships with the community and work placements are very good and enable a wide range of different work placements to be organised for students.
- The flexibility offered by the 14 to 19 curriculum has resulted in an increased range of options for students in the school.
- Increased availability of ICT facilities has enabled students to access a wider range of ICT applications and to enable staff to use assessment information more effectively. Despite the fact there is still more to do with the increased development on modern technologies, ICT has enabled faster progress and higher achievements.

The most significant barriers to raising achievement have been linked to staffing and recruitment.

- The school has experienced difficulty in widening the inclusion debate with local secondary schools, as a result, there are limited opportunities for pupils to transfer from the special school into mainstream school despite the support offered.
- Strategic planning has clearly been hindered by the lack of clarity in the LEAs own strategic plan for special schools. As a result there have been fluctuations in the school budget with the planned large balance from the previous year to meet contingencies that in the end were not needed.
- Recruitment of both staff and governors affects provision and the school has had to work hard and creatively to remain viable and fully staffed. There are still shortages in the number of governors coming forward to work with the school.
- The increasing complexity and range of students with special educational needs has brought considerable pressure on teaching and non teaching staff and the need for more training and external support, some of which is not always readily available.
- The house used as the Autistic Resource Base is cramped. Despite the careful management of the building, the accommodation is not totally suitable to meet the needs of students with autism.

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

## **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

### **ENGLISH**

Learning opportunities in English are good for students of all ages. The National Strategies for Literacy have been adapted and incorporated effectively into subject plans which are of good quality and promote good teaching and learning. The quality of subject plans has been maintained since the last inspection but students' achievement, judged to be satisfactory at that time, is now good. Students make good progress in all areas of the English curriculum and by the time they leave school the majority of students have achieved accreditation for their learning.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide good opportunities for students to develop their handwriting and to learn how to present their work neatly
- Students make good progress in their reading
- Students become confident communicators
- Subject plans are good and well linked to the National Literacy Strategies
  
- Teachers do not consider sufficiently well how they can promote students' literacy skills in other subjects
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent and does not always help students to see what they have to do to improve their work

48. The majority of students develop good speaking and listening skills because teachers provide good opportunities for them to answer questions and take part in discussions. Adults have high expectations of students and by their questions they prompt students to provide more information. Throughout the day adults constantly engage students in conversation, which provides further opportunities for them to develop their skills. Teachers and support staff are particularly supportive and patient with students who find difficulty in expressing themselves and this helps students develop confidence. In lessons and at other times of the day students are able to explain their thinking and express their ideas well.

49. There is good support from the speech and language therapists and the speech and language therapy assistant for those students who have specific problems or additional learning difficulties and this contributes effectively to the good progress they make. Currently communication systems such as signing, which are needed to reinforce communication for a small number of autistic students, are not being used consistently. At times this limits the amount of progress students can make, however, the teacher is aware of this and has arranged appropriate training for new staff.

50. Students enter school with low levels of ability in reading but the outcomes of annual reading tests indicate that the majority begin to make rapid progress which is maintained so that by the time they leave school a significant number of students are competent and independent readers. Students' progress is good because when they enter school teachers place a suitable emphasis on developing their phonic skills, teaching them how to tackle unfamiliar words and providing them with good opportunities to read during lessons. Teachers provide consistent and well planned opportunities for students to practise their handwriting and spelling and this enables them to make good progress. The majority of students produce work that is exceptionally neat and tidy and they are confident to spell simple words independently. There is a good emphasis on teaching punctuation and students' work indicates good progress in the consistent use of simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Students capable of higher attainment go on to use speech

marks, commas and question marks correctly. Teachers provide good opportunities for them to undertake lengthy pieces of written work in which they demonstrate their ability to think and write creatively.

51. Teaching is good and lessons are well planned and interesting so that students are keen to participate. They generally settle quickly to their work and concentrate well. The three part lesson, recommended by the National Literacy Strategy, has been implemented effectively but teachers do not always remember to share the learning objectives for the lesson with students or remember to identify and share key vocabulary with them. This means that opportunities to reinforce learning are sometimes missed.

52. Teachers have a significant amount of information about students' achievements but they do not use this as effectively as they could to plan lesson that take better account of students' individual needs. This results in work that does not sufficiently challenge the most able students and is too hard for others; this is reflected in the good rather than very good progress that students make. Although teachers mark students work consistently they do not always provide comments for students to help them improve or provide information for other adults about how much help has been given. This limits the usefulness of marking as a tool for monitoring students' progress.

53. Both leadership and management of the subject are good. Subject plans, which are of good quality, have recently been reviewed and are being improved further. They are well linked to both the primary and the secondary National Literacy Strategies which ensures that they reflect students' abilities well.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

54. The school provides satisfactory opportunities to promote students' literacy skills through other subjects of the curriculum. Although students are asked to read about the subjects they study and to record their work, teachers give insufficient thought as to how these activities can be used to promote students' literacy skills. In subjects such as history, geography and religious education, writing is frequently limited to one word answers or single sentences on a worksheet and the text of worksheets is frequently too difficult for students to read independently. There are not enough planned opportunities within subjects for students to practice their literacy skills so that achievement can be improved.

### **FRENCH**

The provision for French across Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory. Student's progress and achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory, supported by excellent subject knowledge. French is no longer a requirement for all students in Years 10 and 11, where additional opportunities for learning basic skills have replaced French lessons for some students.

55. All students in Years 7 - 9 are fully included in lessons and there is no difference in progress between boys or girls.

56. Teaching is delivered with enthusiasm and brisk pace with appropriate emphasis on the target language. Opportunities are given for paired, group work and independent learning and a good range of activities ensures that the majority of students retain their interest. Relationships are good, although on occasions the inappropriate behaviour in lessons by a small minority of students does distract from learning and students are not always best managed.

57. Teaching assistants generally support students' access to this subject,. Occasionally they appear unclear of what is expected of them at different times during the lesson and require more guidance on how best to help students with their work.

58. Planning is good and teaching methods make good use of audio visual resources such as the white board, tape recording and the overhead projector. Computerised programmes also

support student learning. Ongoing questioning and prompting effectively monitors students' understanding. There is still a need for more effective student and lesson assessment, evaluation and planning to ensure the learning environment is the most productive for all student needs. Planning takes account of students' individual education plans and specifically identified targets are addressed within lessons.

59. The subject is well managed and opportunities to further broaden the delivery of the subject are being considered. There are already productive Year 10 and 11 links with a French secondary school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics across the school is good. Students achieve well and make good individual progress. The statutory provision for the subject is secure. The great majority of students entered for GCSE examinations obtain pass grades. Similarly, students achieve a range of creditable passes in the Entry Level Certificate.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good particularly with the older students and is directly responsible for the good quality of learning
- Teachers' planning is good
- Teaching assistants are well deployed
- Very good relationships between staff and students
- GCSE examination course offered to older students provides an additional challenge and motivation
- Students make increasing progress as they get older and they are clearly well prepared for the course work requirements of Entry Level Certificate and GCSE
  
- Poor behaviour of a small minority occasionally detracts from learning
- The level of challenge does not always meet the range of needs and abilities of all students in a group

60. All students are fully included in lessons and there is no difference in progress between boys or girls or students from different ethnic groups.

61. Good subject knowledge supports the teaching, which is delivered with conviction. Relationships are very good and form the foundation of a positive learning ethos that encourages students to achieve. Occasionally, due to a level of inappropriate behaviour in lessons by a small minority of students, behaviour management can take a disproportionate amount of time and detract from the learning process. Teachers are not consistent in the way they manage this behaviour.

62. Planning is good and teaching methods are well selected and time is given for independent and collaborative work. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the students, although the level of challenge does not always match student needs. Planning does note student IEPs and specifically identified targets are addressed within lessons. Student participation with SuccessMaker programs positively contributes to their progress and achievement in mathematics and reports and targets make a valuable contribution to the assessment and moderation of their levels of attainment. Teaching assistants are well deployed in the main and positively contribute to student progress and achievement.

63. The subject is well co-ordinated and monitoring and evaluation strategies are in place that include teachers observing each other's lessons and the sharing of good practice.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

64. There has been an appropriate emphasis since the previous inspection on investigational work and number across the subjects of the curriculum and this is evident in planning and in lessons, consequently students are benefiting from this reinforcement in terms of their achievement.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall. Older students make good progress. The overall management of science is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Significant improvement since the last inspection in a very short time
- Well organised and managed specialist facilities with mains supplies and flexible work - stations enables a range of experimental work to take place
- Good focus on safe working during practical sessions
- Access to stand-alone computers with science soft-ware that supports students' learning
- Good links with the local secondary school and LEA consultants to ensure shared equipment and experiences
- Effective team teaching
  
- Insufficient teaching of investigative skills through experiments
- There is no clear strategy to map the scientific experiences, achievements and progress of different groups of students.
- The range of teaching approaches is insufficient to meet the specific learning needs of some students.

65. The achievement and progress students make is satisfactory in Year 7, 8 and 9. The achievement and progress of students in Years 10 and 11 is good. This difference is largely due to the clarity of planning and focus for subject development. A new scheme for the younger students has only just been implemented and there is not yet a consistent understanding of the quality and range of work needed to meet each National Curriculum level. For the older students working towards accredited examinations, teachers understanding and expectations are clearer. As a result, older students achieve the criteria in the courses they follow, with some notable successes. In 2002, 9 students took GCSE single science, all but one of them gained a grade and 18 students achieved passes in entry level certificate courses, 15 of them at Level 2. Having Year 12 students working alongside students in Year 11 provides added maturity for the older age groups but even so a number of older students still lack the confidence to share or explain their ideas and scientific understanding.

66. Teaching in science is mostly satisfactory but with some good elements, most notably in the application of the three-part lesson. Starter activities enable students to recall and consolidate previous work, or they are used for self-assessment purposes to show the areas they need to improve. Teachers know their students well and seek to make the work interesting and relevant. The quality of questioning is generally good but often teachers and support staff do not always follow up questions and probe students' understanding to enable them to give extended answers or talk in depth about science.

67. Relationships between adults and students are good and the support and intervention provided by teachers and their assistants is very good. As a result the students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons is mostly good. This is particularly so when students are engrossed in their work and when they are clear of what to do and what is expected of them. These factors contribute to the good achievement and progress students make over time. A notable strength in the teaching is the clear focus on specific students' individual education plans. Students and staff support

individuals to meet agreed targets. Insufficient emphasis is given to ensuring that subject specific targets are met.

68. During practical sessions students follow instructions well and work safely, but several have underdeveloped manipulative skills. This is largely due to the lack of focus on practical and experimental work in the past. Students are observant and enjoy experimental work, they are also quietly compliant when copying notes from the board or filling in worksheets. The range of strategies used by staff to meet the wide range of individual needs in the classes is limited and is largely based on intervention and support within a common context for learning for all students in the group.

69. Homework is used effectively in most science lessons, building on the lesson and often asking students to carry out independent research. In many cases this involves access to the Internet, where most students are gaining in confidence in downloading information or pictures to support classroom activities.

70. The science co-ordinator has only been in post for five months and in that time significant improvements have been made to the overall science provision. Subject leadership is satisfactory and overall management of science is good. There has been a clear programme for development and support to improve provision since the last inspection. However, evaluation of the impact of the changes has not been undertaken and assessment processes are not yet having an impact on planning for pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Achievement and progress in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection where they were both unsatisfactory. Provision in information and communication technology is now **good**. Students' achievement and progress are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective use of resources and networking facilities
- Good leadership and management of the subject making use of good subject knowledge
- Plenty of opportunities for students to interact with a range of programmes during ICT lessons and in lunchtime clubs
- SuccessMaker is very well managed
- ICT across the curriculum is rightly highlighted as an identified area for development within the school improvement plan
- The school does not monitor closely enough the range of cross-curricular experiences to ensure a balance of ICT provision
- The achievements and progress of students in both lessons and in cross-curricular ICT work are not tracked closely enough to identify how different groups of students as well as individuals are progressing

71. Achievement of students in ICT is good throughout the school. Students are gaining in confidence with the technology and using it effectively, most notably in their access to the Internet for retrieving information. As a result their competence in ICT is good in relation to their capabilities. The school piloted a GNVQ Part One ICT course for 12 students with some successes in individual ICT units but no overall success in the final certification. In foundation skill development assessments, the school achieved eight passes at GCSE.

72. Achievement and progress in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection where they were both unsatisfactory. Now students' attitudes have improved and they show enjoyment and engagement in their work. The improved provision and outcomes are having a

positive impact on students' behaviour and particularly on their willingness to support each other when they are in difficulties.

73. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is mostly good, this is particularly so with specialist ICT teaching and in the 'SuccessMaker' sessions. Students use ICT SuccessMaker as an instructional and assessment programme to support both literacy and numeracy development as well as building confidence in the use of ICT skills. The organisation and management of these sessions is very good and the information obtained provides tutors and subject specialists with very good diagnostic information on each student that can be used to moderate other forms of assessment information available to teachers.

74. In ICT lessons the teachers make good use of different subject contexts as a basis for developing ICT skills and knowledge but there is often a danger in overlooking the ICT learning objectives and concentrating the focus on the subject context. Key strengths in teaching are the effective intervention and support provided by the teacher, ICT technician and other teaching assistants as well as the well-planned programme of activities to engage students in all strands of the ICT programme of study. Resources are used well and there is appropriate challenge effectively matched to students' abilities.

75. Overall leadership and management of ICT in the school are good and this has had a positive impact on students' achievement and the popularity of the subject in the school. Technical support for staff and students is organised well. Areas for development are mostly linked to monitoring and evaluating provision and student achievements in ICT through other curriculum areas.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

76. Overall, the application and use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Whilst there is clear evidence around the school in displays that different aspects of ICT are used in other curriculum areas to support learning, the range of applications is limited. ICT is used very effectively to record events and photograph the outcomes of various projects, but evidence of using ICT in students' work in different subjects is limited. Work is largely linked to word processing, information gathering, cutting and pasting or using ICT programmes as learning tools or to modelling applications. The most notable use of computers is access and use of the Internet by students both in lessons and clubs.

77. There are very effective uses made of ICT to support management in terms of gathering information about students, writing IEPs and in providing staff with pen portraits of students. Parents too are invited to take part in taught ICT sessions.

78. The overall provision and achievement in ICT across the school represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

## **HUMANITIES**

Provision for the humanities is satisfactory overall. An integrated humanities course is being developed and evaluated to increase the relevance of some aspects of the course for all students. Inspection evidence suggests that this approach is having a positive impact on students' understanding of the world in which they live.

### **History, Geography and Religious Education**

Provision in history and geography is **satisfactory**. Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in humanities teaching**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make the subjects interesting to the students
  - Good links are made in geography and religious education with students' cultural traditions, particularly through the theme weeks
  - Teaching approaches promote students' cultural and social development well
  - Opportunities are provided for students to apply their numeracy and literacy skills in different contexts, in geography for example, in the analysis of physical data on climate, rivers and populations.
  - Teachers skillfully refer to the different cultural backgrounds and faiths of students in each group, extending students' knowledge, understanding and tolerance of different faiths
  - Humanities teaching makes a positive contribution to students' social, moral, and cultural development
  - Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to students' understanding
  - All staff encourage students and ensure that they enjoy their lessons
- Teachers plan to teach a range of tasks to cover the historical or geographic topic, but pay insufficient attention to what students of different abilities are to learn and/or how they are to learn it
  - The content of some lessons is too difficult for lower attaining students
  - Teaching of religious education for students with autistic spectrum disorder
  - The range of activities planned for each lesson does not always match the individual needs of students in a group
  - Teachers' marking does not help students to understand what they have to do next to improve their learning

79. Achievement in the humanities subjects is satisfactory. In religious education it is good for all students and in geography it is good for students in Years 10 - 13. Students demonstrate a good understanding of similarities and differences between Britain and the other countries they are studying and are able to identify these with reference to their own experiences. Higher achieving students are often able to demonstrate their understanding and use their discussion skills in class discussion, however, occasionally, especially in history, lower achieving students are unable to read written material. More able students sometimes dominate class discussion resulting in limited progress for the lower achievers.

80. All students experience taught humanities lessons throughout the week. In Years 10 to 13 religious education and geography are taught through the PHSE programme and the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. Other courses such as Leisure and Tourism provide a focus for external validation and the course covers a range of skills and sampling techniques. During the inspections these older students were investigating the leisure activities available in the locality. This approach is most motivating and relevant to the achievements and interests of the students. No history is taught to Years 10 -13 unless it occurs incidentally within the ASDAN Youth Award activities.

81. Regular theme weeks and educational journeys throughout the year enhance the taught curriculum, extending students' knowledge or understanding. Students of all ages are very proud of the work they have produced following these visits and confidently describe their experiences and are able to recall the focus of the visit or what they have learnt. Photographs of these experiences provide a useful record of work covered and a prompt to students to recall what they have learnt in the past. Students' previous work shows that they regularly use ICT, including the Internet, to gain additional information about people or places.

82. The quality of the relationships between adults and students ensures students become involved with the tasks set for them. Teachers demonstrate their good knowledge of these subjects and introduce interesting and motivating pieces of information to ensure students' interest and engagement with the planned activity. Teaching assistants are good at helping lower attaining students to understand the content of reading material or to carry out the teachers' instructions in completing tasks set. However, a weakness in the teachers' planning is that it does not identify what it is students of differing ability are to learn during the lesson. In Year 7 and the autism resource

base this lack of appropriate challenge results in inappropriate behaviour and students become unsettled and are not positive about their learning opportunities.

83. The quality of provision overall has been maintained since the last inspection, with improvements to the provision for religious education and geography. Many opportunities to extend students' understanding of other faiths and traditions occur across the curriculum. However, the main focus, particularly in geography, is on gaining knowledge in different aspects of the subject and there is insufficient focus on subject specific skill development to enable students to gradually improve.

84. The role of the subject leader has developed satisfactorily and each subject leader has a clear overview of humanities subjects. Improved external assessment has developed for older students. Changes to the teaching of the three subjects into an integrated humanities programme for students in Years 7 to 9 have been introduced as a result of school self-evaluation. The integrated humanities programme was not fully developed at the time of this inspection but subject leaders have a good overview of how the initiative is to be evaluated and the ways in which outcomes will be acted upon.

85. Where the provision is not as good as that seen at the last inspection, for example the fact that less good and very good teaching was observed, this can be explained by the newness of the integrated humanities approach and an increasing range of needs of the students in the school. Currently the approaches teachers use do not always meet the diverse and more complex range of needs of students. There is also a need to ensure that the full range of subject specific skills are taught building on students' previous experiences.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **ART**

It is inappropriate to judge the quality of the provision for art as insufficient evidence was available at the time of the inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses (from available evidence)**

- Good range of art activities
- Good success rate at GCSE
- Students interested and engaged with their learning
  
- Insufficient use of art to enhance the learning environment

86. Only one lesson was observed, and at the early stage of the term there was little evidence of wall displays celebrating students' achievements or art work being used to improve the learning environment. However, from work available from previous years it is clear that students experience a good range of art activity and achieve well in GCSE examinations. All Year 11 students entered for the exam in 2002 achieved a pass grade at GCSE. Too few examples of art work were available to judge achievement in other areas of the school's work.

87. The one lesson observed was very well planned and made reference to promoting students' individual targets through the art activity. There were high expectations of student involvement and the teacher's very good subject knowledge was used to extend and challenge students' knowledge and understanding of Van Gogh and paint and colour mixing. The teacher's good prompting and assessment of students' responses extended their knowledge of the effect of shades of colour and development in their paint brush skills. There are planned opportunities for students to use and apply their ICT skills in art.

88. Subject management has improved since the last inspection. The art co-ordinator has introduced assessment procedures and these are now consistent for all students with progress being assessed weekly. There is a subject policy and detailed scheme of work reflecting the whole school format for such documents and underpinning the balanced art curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Learning opportunities in design and technology are good.** This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were considered to be unsatisfactory.

### **Main Strengths and weaknesses:**

- Leadership and management of the subject has been effective in improving the learning opportunities offered
- Subject plans are good and ensure that students build on past learning
- Accommodation and resources for food technology are good
- Accommodation for working with resistant materials is not suitable for all students

89. Early in the school term there was insufficient evidence to judge student's achievements or the quality of teaching. However, subject plans, students' work and teachers' records indicate that the majority of students make good progress. A good number of students are successful in gaining accreditation for their work. Leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has improved the subject plans so that the school now provides a good curriculum, which includes appropriate opportunities for students' learning to be accredited. Subject plans ensure that students build on past learning, they are reviewed regularly and adapted to reflect students' abilities. This ensures that students have suitable opportunities to make progress.

90. The accommodation for working with resistant materials is not suitable for students who have behaviour problems and they are currently restricted to learning in their class-base. This means that the type of activity that can be offered to students is limited. This has an impact on the opportunities provided for them to achieve and results in satisfactory rather than good progress.

91. The co-ordinator is developing new modules of work to ensure that all students have appropriate opportunities to learn and he is aware that the design and technology room will need to be developed to provide a more suitable learning environment in the future. The learning resources and accommodation for food technology and the effective support of an experienced food technician ensure that students of all ages make good progress.

## **MUSIC**

The provision of music in the school has been through a period of uncertainty. There is a new co-ordinator, and the school now makes satisfactory provision for music in Years 7 to 9. However, music is not taught in Years 10 and 11.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and students behave well
- Students respond well to the lively teaching
- The music scheme of work forms a solid basis for the development of the subject
  
- Music is not taught in Years 10 and 11
- Assessment is under-developed
- There are no opportunities for the music co-ordinator to monitor the teaching of the subject
- There is no specialist room for the storage of musical instruments

92. Students in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in lessons and over time, and thus achieve well. After only a few lessons they have successfully learned about basic elements of music such as rhythm, harmony and notation. A few higher attaining students attain levels that are as good as their peers in mainstream schools in their performance.

93. Students learn well in music lessons because of the good teaching they receive. Lessons are well planned, and students know what is expected of them. They respond well to the musical skill and enthusiasm shown in the teaching and to the good model of study provided. They are very enthusiastic when given opportunities to compose their own rhythmic sequences, including syncopated beats, in response to recorded music, classical, folk and pop. They successfully use percussion instruments to achieve their musical aims. A Year 8 class had learned to play together as a small orchestra. The students listened carefully to each other, and succeeded in producing a co-operative group performance for assembly the following day.

94. The students are respectful of each other's efforts, and concentrate hard throughout. They behave well in music lessons because of the consistency of approach provided by the teaching. Some students with a short attention span begin to develop greater self control because of the positive learning experience they receive in the practical parts of the lessons.

95. The music co-ordinator is on the graduate teacher training programme. She has made a significant contribution to developing the subject in the school, with a well thought out scheme of work. Assessment of students' progress in music has begun, but is not yet fully developed. No opportunities have been provided for the co-ordinator to monitor the delivery of the subject by colleagues.

96. The lack of specialist accommodation makes it hard to prepare for music lessons when they follow immediately after other subject lessons, and to store valuable instruments.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND CAREERS EDUCATION**

**Learning opportunities in personal, social and health education, citizenship and careers education are good.** The quality and range of learning opportunities have been maintained since the last inspection and have been enhanced with the introduction of modules of work relating to citizenship.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- These areas of learning are managed well
- Subject plans are good and ensure that students are well prepared for the next stage of education or work
- Learning opportunities make a significant contribution to students' personal development
- There are good links with the careers advisory service and community-based youth groups which enhance students' learning

97. Subject plans, students' work and teachers' records indicate that the majority of students make good progress in all subject areas and a good number are successful in gaining accreditation for their learning.

98. Leadership and management of all subject areas are good. The co-ordinator has established good subject plans that ensure that students have opportunities to build on past learning and include appropriate opportunities for their achievement to be accredited. The topics covered within each subject area contribute significantly to students' personal and social development, their growing awareness of their place in the local and wider community and in preparing them for the next stage of education or for entering the world of work.

99. The school makes good use of the local community where a significant amount of learning takes place and there are good links with services and organisations such as the local college, work placements and community-based groups who also provide valuable learning opportunities for students.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The provision for physical education is **very good**. Students achieve well and make good individual progress in the variety of activities covered.

### **Strengths and weaknesses:**

- Very good teaching
- Very good subject knowledge and leadership by the co-ordinator
- Good standards achieved
- Very positive relationships between all staff and students

100. Teaching is very good and is directly responsible for the very good quality of student learning. The GCSE examination course offered to older students, provides an additional challenge and motivation. The great majority of students obtain pass grades. Similarly, students achieve a range of creditable passes in the Entry Level Certificate.

101. All students are fully included in lessons and there is no difference in progress between boys or girls or different ethnic groups. Students from the autism resource base are included in the school's football team.

102. Very good subject knowledge supports the teaching, which is delivered with enthusiasm. Relationships are excellent and form the foundation of a positive learning ethos that encourages students to achieve. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performances in a sensible way and they enjoy each other's progress. Students show enthusiasm in their lessons and they have fun.

103. Planning is good and teaching methods are well selected with time being used well and productively for independent and collaborative work. The subject is well led and makes an important contribution to the whole-school ethos and to students' overall personal development, particularly to their moral and social development. Health and safety factors are carefully considered and trips to community venues such as swimming pools are efficiently and safely organised so as to maximise student learning time.

104. Very good use is made of community resources and local leisure facilities such as swimming pools, parks, colleges and athletic tracks. A range of extra-curricular activities are on offer before school and during the school lunch and break times.

105. Physical education plays an important part in the life of the school and it successfully demonstrates all that is good in terms of teaching, learning, achievement and overall student personal development and maturity.

### **Relationships in physical education**

106. The working relationship between the teacher and students is outstanding and undoubtedly contributes to their progress and achievement in this subject. Mutual respect and understanding is clearly evident, enabling the teacher to motivate and challenge all individuals to achieve their best.

107. Students are eager and enthusiastic to learn and they implicitly trust their teacher, his subject knowledge and his passion to share in the learning process.

108. The positive learning environment is fused with good humour, an enthusiasm to learn and with a clear expectation that knowledge and understanding will be acquired, new skills learned and overall good progress will be made.

**Inspection judgement****Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*