

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST HILL SCHOOL

Kingston Road, Leatherhead

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125463

Headteacher: Mrs. Mary Goldie

Reporting inspector: Janet Bond
2642

Dates of inspection: 13 – 17 March 2000

Inspection number: 194563

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kingston Road Leatherhead Surrey
Postcode:	KT22 7PW
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Blow
Date of previous inspection:	23 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Janet Bond	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
		Physical Education	Teaching and learning
Joanna Illingworth	Lay inspector		Attendance/Extra curricula activities
			Partnership with parents
			Care for pupils
John Pearson	Team inspector	English	Leadership and management
		Music	
Liz Mildner	Team inspector	Art	Work related education
		History	Community links
		Geography	
Graham Todd	Team inspector	Information technology	Curriculum and assessment
		Design and technology	
Lily Evans	Team inspector	Religious Education	Attitudes, values and personal development
		Modern foreign language	Staffing, accommodation and resources
		Equal opportunities	
Laurie Thomas	Team inspector	Personal, health and social education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Science	
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Hill is a mixed junior and secondary local authority school situated in the Mole valley. It provides education for up to 140 pupils with learning difficulties, aged from 7 to 16. There are currently 133 pupils on roll. Recent admissions to the school have included an increasing proportion of pupils with more significant learning difficulties; additional behavioural difficulties or who are on the autistic spectrum. Junior pupils at Key Stage 2 are taught by their class teacher. Secondary aged pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 have a class tutor and move to subject specialists for their lessons. Many of the pupils come from outside the town, some of whom travel considerable distances in transport provided by the local authority. 21 per cent of pupils receive free school meals. There are few pupils from ethnic minorities with one pupil whose second language is English. On entry to the school all pupils have attainments which are below national expectations. All pupils have statements of special educational need. It is inappropriate to judge pupils' achievements against age related national expectations or averages. The report gives examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to achievement take account of information contained in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need, their annual reports and their individual education plans (IEPs)

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

West Hill is a good school, with many good features. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because the quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors use the available resources efficiently, and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils are keen to come to school and feel valued and supported by a committed staff.
- Pupils make good progress in their social and personal development through effective provision that raises their self esteem
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 2 and 4 because of good teaching and effective use of assessment
- The quality of teaching is good, it is very good in a significant number of lessons
- Pupils are well prepared for leaving school by an effective and appropriate curriculum
- Pupils value and benefit from the very rich and wide range of sporting, additional and extra curricula activities the school provides
- Pupils are well cared for, they receive good guidance and support

What could be improved

- Achievement at Key Stage 3 in many subjects, particularly English and mathematics, by improving the use of assessment to inform planning for individual needs
- The quality of teaching of staff where it is not of a high quality, by identifying effective teaching strategies used by good teachers and sharing the information with them
- Resources and staff training for information technology to enable it to be used to support pupils learning in all subjects of the curriculum
- The scheme of work and its implementation for information and communication technology
- The use of more appropriate approaches to support the learning of the small number of pupils with very special needs

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 September 1996. Since then it has made good progress. There has been an improvement in pupils' achievements and progress at all key stages, particularly in English at Key Stage 4. This is due to the greatly improved quality of teaching; there is now little unsatisfactory teaching and a greater proportion of high quality teaching. Teachers' lesson planning has improved and is now based on secure schemes of work in most subjects. Assessment now

informs teachers planning and in most subjects effectively ensures pupils receive appropriate work. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place although observations of teaching needs extending. The management of pupils' behaviour has improved and is far more consistent. Accommodation has significantly improved. While there has been some improvement in teaching mathematics at Key Stage 3 and in the teaching of information technology throughout the school further work is still required.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key	
speaking and listening	N/A	B	B	N/A	very good	A
reading	N/A	B	B	N/A	good	B
writing	N/A	B	B	N/A	satisfactory	C
mathematics	N/A	B	B	N/A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	N/A	B	B	N/A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	N/A	B	B	N/A		

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

The targets set at annual reviews are becoming more challenging but are realistic. Progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and personal, social and health education is good at Key Stage 2 and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Progress in science is good at all key stages. In most subjects pupils make good progress and achieve well at all key stages. Pupils' good progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2 are enhanced by the school's use of the national strategies and at other key stages by the many opportunities that are provided for them to practise and use their skills in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils want to come to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Management is more consistent and the award system is highly regarded by the pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils establish effective relationships with staff and other pupils. The wider curriculum for older pupils contributes significantly to their personal development.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Because pupils are keen to learn and behaviour has improved lessons are rarely disrupted which allows all to concentrate on their work. Older pupils gain in maturity as they experience life in the community through work related education, and are well prepared for leaving school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	N/A	Good	Good	N/A

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.

The high quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Three quarters of teaching observed was good or better and a third was very good or better. At Key Stages 2 and 4 teaching is good or better in English and mathematics. In science it is good or better across all key stages. Teaching is at its weakest in many Key Stage 3 English and mathematics lessons. A particular strength of the good teaching is the teachers' good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the pupils' learning needs. English and mathematics are effectively used and reinforced in a number of subjects. Lessons are planned to allow all pupils to participate at an appropriate level. The effective partnership and team work between teachers and support assistants mean that pupils receive appropriate and effective support. Good relationships and mutual respect supports pupils in being confident, interested and active learners.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and particularly relevant to pupils at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development well. Pupils have good opportunities to use their skills in the good quality work related programme provided as they get older.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for caring for the pupils' well being.

The school encourages, recognises and celebrates pupils' successes' by using effective procedures that encourage pupils to behave well. The school provides well for pupils' moral development. There is extensive and effective provision for raising pupils' confidence and self esteem. Effective links with the community and the world of work and the very wide range of extra curricula activities provide good opportunities for pupils to develop and use their social and personal skills although there are limited academic and social links with other schools. While the curriculum provided is broad and balanced, information and communication technology and design and technology do not cover all aspects required. The school has good links with parents who value the information in the home/school diaries.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Strong leadership, supported by contributions from staff, provides a clear vision for improving pupils' outcomes. All staff have clear and appropriate responsibilities that are formally monitored in an effective way.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its role and responsibilities well. Governors are active in the life of the school and take a strong lead in setting the budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Achievements of targets in the school development plan are carefully evaluated. There is an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the work of the staff although little direct observation of teaching takes place. Appropriate individual pupil and school targets have been set for the year to evaluate pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans well to use its limited funding to promote higher standards, for example through widening the range of accreditation for higher attaining pupils.

The headteacher, staff and governors share a commitment to pupils improving their self-confidence and self-esteem and achieving well in their academic work. There are an appropriate number of staff to support the curriculum and the majority of pupils' learning needs. While there has been a significant improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection, the design and technology room limits the delivery of some aspects of the subject and the food technology room requires refurbishing. Resources are only adequate and in a few subjects are unsatisfactory. The school is very keen to seek best value in terms of purchasing and is developing, through its evaluation of performance, the wider view of best value in terms of pupil achievements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Children work hard and show an increasing maturity • Teaching is good • The school provides an interesting range of extra curricular activities • The school is well led and managed • Parents feel able to approach school with issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of homework • Consistency of home/school communication

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views about the school. While the home school diaries are very effective in communicating with parents there is some inconsistency in their use amongst teachers. During the inspection homework was set consistently for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters makes it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and any references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans (IEPs). There have been notable improvements since the last inspection in pupils' achievements by the end of all key stages. These improvements have been most clear in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 4, and in art, food technology and physical education across key stages. During the last academic year Key Stage 4 pupils achieved well in a good range of appropriate accredited courses. This year higher attaining pupils are studying for the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics. The provision of the range of accredited course opportunities has extended to allow the full ability range to participate at an appropriate level.

2. The achievement of the majority of pupils is good in most subjects at Key Stage 2 and 4. While it is good in many subjects at Key Stage 3, in English and mathematics it is satisfactory. Where pupils achieve well they make good progress in their learning. The school has set appropriate individual pupil and whole school targets. Progress against targets in pupils' individual education plans is good except at Key Stage 3 where it is good in many subjects and satisfactory in English and mathematics.

3. In English, pupils' achievements are consistently good at Key Stage 2 and 4 across the three areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing. At Key Stage 3 they are satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 pupils' achievements and progress are particularly strong in their literature work. Since the previous inspection there has been an improvement in pupils' achievements and progress at all key stages. This improvement in English has been as the result of much better teaching based on a good subject knowledge, detailed planning using improved assessment information and at Key Stage 2 the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. In mathematics pupils achieve well and make good progress across all areas at Key Stage 2 and 4. They make satisfactory progress and their achievements are satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The improvement at Key Stage 2 is a result of improved teaching and of the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and at Key Stage 4 the impact of improved teaching and a wider range of accredited courses. While there has been an improvement at Key Stage 3, assessment information is not used sufficiently to ensure individual pupils have appropriate work and build on earlier learning. In science pupils' achievements and progress are good across all key stages. Detailed monitoring and assessment in science, the setting of targets for improvement and the high level of subject expertise of the co-ordinator and the support assistants has resulted in a significant improvement at Key Stage 3 and 4. Pupils achieve well and make good progress across key stages in art, physical education and food technology. In the key stages where they are taught, pupils make good progress in history and geography. In other subjects, except information and communication technology (ICT), pupils always make at least satisfactory progress and achievement and in some key stages they achieve well and make good progress. ICT is a developing subject and while pupils make good progress and achieve well on the aspects taught, the current scheme of work does not yet incorporate all necessary aspects of the subject.

4. There is no significant variation in the achievements of boys and girls, but a small number of pupils with more severe and complex difficulties are sometimes not actively engaged fully in their lessons

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They arrive at school with enthusiasm, clearly looking forward to the day and to starting work promptly. In stimulating lessons, they work purposefully and concentrate on their work knowing that their personal achievement in the lesson will be valued. They maintain good concentration to the best of their ability and put effort into their learning. Those pupils who find sustaining concentration difficult respond well to the patient and encouraging support offered by staff. Pupils are interested and involved in their lessons and want to learn. They are actively involved in an exceptionally wide range of lunchtime clubs and sporting activities, which they thoroughly enjoy. Pupils value the opportunities provided for everyone to represent the school in games with other schools. Pupils gain in self-confidence through participating in a wide range of activities where they achieve success.

6. Pupils behave well around school and are courteous, polite and helpful to visitors. Parents feel that their children are happy to come to school and their behaviour outside school and on visits is very good. Pupils respond very well to the effective and positive school system of awards for good behaviour and hard work. They know the school and classroom rules and the school code of conduct and try hard to follow them. Pupils who arrive at school with very challenging behaviour gradually build good relationships within school. They understand the behaviour assessments and plans developed to meet their needs and nearly all are successful in modifying their behaviour. Pupils are clear about how to behave and what is expected of them and are keen to accumulate points towards merit certificates, which are awarded in whole school assemblies. Coinciding with the implementation of this system, the incidence of fixed term exclusions has decreased markedly. Pupils' good behaviour is not assured in the small proportion of lessons where this system is inconsistently applied. Attendance is satisfactory.

7. In most lessons relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils benefit from the good role models staff provide. As pupils develop their social skills, they form friendship groups at lunch, cooperate and plan together in lessons such as design and technology and food technology, and help each other in class. In the SULP (Social use of Language Programme) groups, pupils learn about appropriate communication both verbal and non-verbal in a structured way, which helps them to develop an awareness of others, be considerate of them and to recognise and accept their differences. Pupils are effectively encouraged to reflect on their actions and the impact on others feelings in personal and social education and religious education. Pupils at Key Stage 4 enjoy the age appropriate opportunities provided in religious education to compare contrast and reflect on, the values and beliefs of others.

8. While pupils acknowledge there are infrequent incidents of bullying behaviour in school they are comfortable that these incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There are no recent exclusions for bullying and no examples of racism or sexism were observed during the inspection.

9. As pupils progress through the school they take increasing community responsibility, through School Council, the prefect system, and team captain role. They become more personally responsible and independent through involvement in working towards their

personal development targets. Social education placements, work experience, attending college link courses, and social and educational visits provide good opportunities for pupils to use their developing social and personal skills.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching is good and a strength of the school. It is good or better in three-quarters of lessons and very good or excellent in a third of lessons seen. In only a few lessons is teaching less than satisfactory. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is mostly good. Teaching is very good or better at Key Stage 4 in English and food technology and in the discrete teaching of information technology. Teaching at Key Stage 3 and 4 is consistently good in Science, art, food technology and physical education. In the key stages where geography and history are taught teaching is good. Where teaching is good pupils respond enthusiastically to interesting activities and respect the teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils benefit considerably from the well-focused support they receive from support staff who work very effectively in partnership with teachers. The good relationships established between teachers and pupils encourage and support the majority of pupils well in actively participating in their learning. As they get older pupils show a developing maturity and increase their independent working. Teachers' secure knowledge, not only of their subject but also of the learning needs of the majority of pupils, informs the effective approaches used by staff. Setting by ability at Key Stage 3 and 4 supports teachers in planning appropriate activities and setting an appropriate pace for each lesson, which supports pupils in maintaining their interest and achieving well. In a very few instances teachers do not have the specialist skills and strategies to ensure the very special needs of some pupils are fully met. For example, there is insufficient use of symbols and information technology to support pupils with significant communication needs.

11. The majority of lessons are well planned as part of a sequence of work and teachers are clear about what pupils will learn. Good planning, informed by assessment of individual needs, ensures pupils build on earlier learning and have opportunities to practice and use their acquired skills. For example, in a Key Stage 3 science lesson looking at humans as organisms pupils began the lesson by recalling their work in their previous lesson. They effectively used class graphs and the results of the previous work to analyse and consolidate their learning. Clear introductions to lessons, explanations and demonstrations support pupils acquiring new skills and making progress. For example, in a physical education lesson with low attaining Key Stage 4 pupils the teacher very effectively demonstrated how to move with the ball, stop and turn when playing netball. Interesting activities encourage all pupils to participate and apply effort in their work as in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson where a range of "games" were well used to encourage pupils to match equivalent quantities and count and determine how many more would be needed. The range of activities allowed all pupils to participate at a level that was appropriate to them. While information technology is used effectively in mathematics it is insufficiently used across most subjects to support pupils learning as effectively as it could. In a few lessons where teaching was less than satisfactory assessment was not used to inform planning. For example, in a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson the workbooks and sheets were not supported by practical activities and the tasks were too hard for the pupils.

12. Individual education plans containing pupils' targets in English, mathematics and personal, health and social education (PHSE) are known and understood by pupils. The majority of teachers use these effectively to inform their lesson planning and pupils are reminded of their targets frequently. Merit marks are used and pupils' effort and behaviour at the end of each lesson are discussed, marked and recorded to ensure pupils are clear

about expectations and the positive consequences of their efforts. Although parents had some concerns about the amount and consistency of homework set, in English, mathematics and science homework is set on a regular basis and written into the home school diaries. Where homework is used consistently it effectively supports pupils' learning, for example for the mathematics GCSE pupils.

13. In the majority of lessons effective pupil management allowed time to be used efficiently and pupils to be confident in participating. Teachers have high expectations and share these with the pupils so that they know what is expected from them. Questioning and appropriate activities challenge pupils to apply mental, creative or physical effort. For example, in a Key Stage 3 art lesson where pupils were learning about the work of Giuseppe Arcimboldo the teachers' questioning, prompting and critical appraisal of their work, coupled with his expectation of them, supported pupils in drawing and reinterpreting their work to achieve a high standard. Teachers are good at using and developing basic skills across all subjects, for example mathematics is used well in science, design and technology and food technology. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

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

14. The quality and breadth of the curriculum have improved since the last inspection and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced and are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Information and communication technology still remains a weakness but some recent good progress has been made following an influx of funding from the National Grid for Learning. There are appropriate schemes of work in all subjects, except information technology, showing what will be covered in each year but the curriculum for design and technology is too narrow; for example, there is no course in textiles and a narrow range of materials is used. The school has been developing appropriate accreditation systems and is intending to extend this range to include GCSE science and art to provide additional challenge for higher attaining pupils, thus reflecting rising standards of achievement. The curriculum documentation is mostly good but contains some factual inaccuracies about the National Curriculum.

15. The curriculum contains all the statutory subjects as well as religious education, although time allocated to religious education is below the recommended minimum. There is a well-planned personal, health and social education programme that effectively covers drugs and sex education. Early morning registration sessions are well used by some teachers to address issues of immediate importance to pupils, but in a few there are no purposeful activities. A Social Use of Language Programme has been introduced throughout the school and where teaching is good is proving to be effective in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and in helping them to gain confidence when talking to an audience. This initiative is well supported by speech and language therapists. At Key Stage 2, pupils follow a junior school curriculum with most of the lessons being taught by their class teacher which helps them to settle into school quickly, develop good work habits and build stable relationships. Pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 follow a secondary curriculum and benefit significantly from specialist teaching in all subjects except English and mathematics at Key Stage 3. This ensures that most lessons are taught from a good base of subject knowledge. The school is using setting at Key Stages 3 and 4 to take account of the wide range of ability. This has the advantage of helping teachers to prepare lessons for different ability groups; for example, higher attaining pupils can work towards accreditation through GCSE whilst lower-attaining pupils can be given additional help in developing basic

skills and working towards more appropriate accreditation courses. This would be more difficult if both groups were taught together. This arrangement is enabling pupils to make good progress in most lessons. Years 10 and 11 are organised into four ability groups which allows the school to plan a wider and more effective and appropriate programme that includes work experience, social education placements, accredited courses and college links.

16. The school has a good policy and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity. Care is taken to ensure that pupils do not miss work when withdrawn for individual therapy sessions. On a few occasions girls can be marginalised in groups where there are dominant boys in the class. Sports teams are mixed sex and everyone has an opportunity to represent the school in sport. Teachers and support assistants effectively support the majority of pupils with additional special needs in class. To support an increasing number of pupils with needs within the autistic spectrum, staff are undertaking specialist training and appropriate links have been built with two local special schools for autistic children. The school receives specialist county support on a half term basis for the few pupils with sensory difficulties. A speech and language team offer guidance to teachers and has been effectively involved in the development and delivery of Sulp. The school currently has no alternative communication system to augment communications for the very small number of pupils with severe communication difficulties.

17. The quality of the careers education and the support for pupils as they make decisions about their future after school are good. From year 9 onwards pupils are encouraged through specific careers lessons and discussion with the careers consultant to consider their interests and strengths. The mini enterprise which pupils carry out in year 10 effectively introduces them to the realities of work through taking particular responsibilities within the production team. This experience is further widened through a weekly college link course through the end of year 10 and into year 11. During year 11 all pupils have three periods of work experience in a good range of workplaces so that by the end of year 11 pupils are sufficiently confident to select a career path which for the majority is further education and for, a significant number, employment. The school has developed close and productive liaison with both the careers service and local colleges of further education as well as employers. All work related experiences are carefully monitored and evaluated with certificates of attendance and employers and college reports forming an important part of each pupil's National Record of Achievement. Pupils are provided with good opportunities for developing a greater degree of independence before they leave school and are well equipped for post school life.

18. The school has developed good links to support pupils' learning. The school has many sporting links with other schools and uses local sports facilities to enhance the pupils' sporting opportunities. The school runs a good quantity and variety of lunchtime clubs, and organises a weekly after school session for older pupils at a local youth club. It also stages many trips and residential visits, which enrich pupils' experience and widen their horizons. The quality and relevance of the school's extra curricular provision is very good. Pupils and parents are enthusiastic and the level of participation is high. The programme raises pupils' self esteem and consequently makes a major contribution to their academic progress and their personal and social development. Opportunities for pupils from West Hill to integrate into other mainstream schools are at present underdeveloped and not a school priority.

19. The school works hard to promote pupils personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has a very positive ethos, reflecting the principles and values agreed by the governors, head teacher and staff. All pupils are encouraged, supported and valued as learners and are proud to be members of

and to contribute to their school community. The collective act of worship for all pupils is given priority in the life of the school and plays an important part in uniting the school community with a shared sense of vision and purpose. These occasions are used well to celebrate and share pupils' achievements. Music is carefully chosen to create an appropriate atmosphere and the assemblies are enriched by pupil and staff participation.

20. The school has an appropriate moral code of conduct that is understood by both pupils and staff. Teachers and other adults provide good role models for the pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and are based upon understanding and mutual respect, which helps promote pupils' self esteem and confidence. Pupils are developing a clear understanding about the importance of accepting responsibility for their own actions and behaviour, and making choices between right and wrong. Pupils behave well and show care for others in the school community and in the wider environment. Religious education lessons contribute to pupils' understanding in helping them to develop a personal code of belief and conduct.

21. Pupils' good social development reflects the school's strong commitment to the development of social skills and the development of assertiveness to reduce vulnerability. Older pupils take responsibility as school prefects, team captains and participate through the school council. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities provided in lessons, in residential experiences and in extra curricula activities to work collaboratively, in pairs or small groups which effectively reinforce their social development. Pupils participate successfully in competitive sport, in large school productions and in preparing and hosting lunches and teas for local Senior Citizens and tea parties for invited guests. The effective work related education and links further enhance opportunities for personal development.

22. Pupils' cultural awareness is satisfactory. Literature, music and art contribute significantly to pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions through visits to galleries, theatres and museums and through visiting artists into the school. An understanding of other cultures is taught mainly through geographical, historical and religious studies. Pupils do not, however, have a regular programme of visits or visitors to help them understand and appreciate the wealth and diversity of other cultures and so fully equip pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

23. The school makes good provision for the care, safety and well being of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection meet all legal requirements. There is a good formal policy with which members of staff are familiar through its inclusion in the School Handbook. The school's curriculum effectively teaches pupils to look after themselves. For example, social education and work experience placements help them to cope with life outside school, and lessons in personal and social education provide appropriate guidance on safety and healthy living. The school also takes effective action to promote the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the site. First aid arrangements are good, all equipment is regularly tested in accordance with legal requirements, and there are termly checks of the premises for hazards. The school's provision for risk assessment is incomplete, although some work has been carried out, such as assessment of fire risk.

24. There are good procedures for recording, monitoring and encouraging attendance and punctuality. Teachers call and complete registers in accordance with legal requirements. The school uses its computerised registration system effectively to identify pupils with poor records of attendance. Unexplained and prolonged absences are properly

followed up, if necessary with the aid of the education welfare officer. The school has recently introduced extended work experience for a few disaffected older pupils, and this is proving effective in keeping them in education and attending school for part of the week.

25. Measures to establish an orderly community and maintain good discipline are effective, as standards of behaviour across the school show. There are good arrangements for monitoring pupils' conduct and setting targets for improvement. The latter are included in pupils' individual education plans, and are also written in their diaries. As a result pupils know what is expected of them. They are also well briefed on their performance in relation to their targets. Their behaviour is graded in every lesson, and teachers explain to them why the grades have been awarded and how well they are doing. Good conduct is appropriately rewarded by the school's merit system and pupils' successes are celebrated in assemblies. The school's curriculum and extra curricular programme also play a major part in achieving good standards. They successfully promote positive attitudes and behaviour by giving pupils the chance to take part in a wide range of activities, and by raising their confidence and self-esteem.

26. Assessment was identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection. The school has gone some way to addressing the issues but a weakness still remains at Key Stage 3. Most teachers' planning now contains precise learning objectives. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance and personal development are now good at Key Stage 2. Baseline assessment has been successfully introduced and staff have worked hard to pilot and develop a Record of Achievement that closely monitors pupils' progress as they move through the key stage and records any small gains in knowledge and skills. The assessments in literacy, numeracy and personal development are good and form the basis for pupils' individual education plans. The assessments are not as good at Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics and are not always used effectively to inform the next stage of learning. The understanding about the purpose of assessment and how it should be used to raise pupils' attainment is not clearly understood by all staff working with pupils in this key stage. At Key Stage 4, assessment is good and is firmly based on the requirements of accredited courses with assessments taking place at the end of each module of work. Assessment is good across all key stages in science, art, food technology and physical education. Individual target setting procedures in the core subjects of English and mathematics are sound, with individual targets being recorded in pupils' diaries and teachers' registers.

27. Pupils receive good academic and personal guidance, which is soundly based on information obtained from formal assessment and monitoring of their achievements. The system of individual education plans for example, reviews pupils' progress and supports their academic and personal development through target setting. There is a proper pastoral structure of class teachers and form tutors who have responsibility for overseeing pupils' general welfare and academic achievements. At the same time, all members of staff are expected to be, and in practice are, involved in pastoral care. The commitment which teachers and classroom assistants show to pupils' welfare is a major strength of provision for support and guidance. They know pupils well as individuals, have their trust, and find time to talk to them. They are therefore well placed to give them effective help. Both pupils and parents value the support they receive from members of staff. The schools own provision is enhanced by the use of outside experts. There is good use of visiting specialists, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists, to meet the needs of pupils with particular problems. The school also gives good general guidance to all its pupils on careers and the world of work. At the end of their time in school pupils are well

prepared for the next stage of education and for employment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. Overall, parents are happy with what the school provides and the standards that children achieve. The inspection's survey of parental views, and the parents' meeting with the registered inspector, showed a high level of satisfaction, particularly with regard to the school's expectations of pupils, the quality of teaching and the approachability of staff. On the other hand, there was a significant amount of dissatisfaction with homework, particularly the lack of consistency and lack of written information for parents of pupils with communication difficulties. A minority of parents also thought that children were not making enough progress, and that behaviour in school was not good. A few parents had concerns over the adequacy of information provided on pupils' progress.

29. The quality of information provided for parents is good and has improved since the previous inspection, when the school was criticised for providing insufficient feedback on pupils' education and welfare. The school has responded by introducing the use of diaries in all year groups. Besides recording pupils' homework and merits, the diaries include the targets from pupils' individual education plans and twice-yearly reviews. They also provide space for teachers' and parents' comments, and therefore can serve as a vehicle for an on-going dialogue between home and school. The diaries' effectiveness for this purpose is uneven across the school, varying according to the class teacher. Most use the diaries well, but parents complain with some justification that some teachers rarely write any comments. Nevertheless, the diaries are greatly valued, with some parents saying that, when properly used, they are the best source of day-to-day information on pupils' progress.

30. Parents appreciate the accessibility and approachability of members of staff. They have no difficulty in seeing teachers for informal discussions, should they have any concerns about their child's work or well-being. They also receive adequate notice of events in school through regular newsletters from the Headteacher and the parent/teacher association. The school uses information effectively to encourage parents to understand and become involved with pupils' learning. For example, it provides useful written guidance on how to help children with their work and sends home "curriculum outlines" for all year groups. The school has consulted pupils' families over the form of the recently introduced home/school contract and thus secured their co-operation. All parents or guardians have signed the contracts.

31. There are minor omissions from the school prospectus, and the annual report of the governing body is very brief and lacks a statement on special educational needs, but in general the school meets its statutory obligations regarding information for parents. There are good arrangements for consultation evenings and for involving parents in reviews of their child's individual education plans. The quality of written reporting is good. The plans, together with pupils' Records of Achievement and annual reports on progress, provide parents with a summary of what their children have learned and achieved, and what they need to do to improve.

32. There are effective home/school links which have a positive impact on pupil's learning and progress. Most parents give good support regarding matters of attendance and discipline, and take an interest in their children's education. For example, their attendance at consultation evenings and reviews of pupils' individual education plans are good. Parents are very keen that their children should be given adequate homework. They hear pupils read at home, and check and sign their diaries. Parents also make a significant

contribution to the success of the school's extra curricular provision. They attend plays in large numbers and support activities financially, as when they make contributions towards the costs of day trips and residential visits. Although the school is active in encouraging parents a very small minority of parents rarely come in to school to discuss their child's progress with teachers. This has an adverse impact on learning, particularly where the children are conscious of the lack of support.

33. Parental involvement with pupils' learning is mainly directed to help with pupils' work at home. Parents say that the school does not seek to recruit them as volunteer helpers in lessons. They claim that it is left to the individual to offer his or her services and expertise. Nevertheless, a number of parents are involved directly in the life of the school, to the benefit of pupils' learning. A few help in the classroom, and with school trips and outdoor sports. For example, during the inspection a parent was observed refereeing a game of football. There is an active parent teacher association, known as "The Friends of West Hill School". "The Friends'" committee organises a programme of regular fund raising and social events, which are well supported by pupils' families.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. The school has a strong senior management team whose good efforts to monitor, evaluate and develop the work of the school have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The senior managers have clear views about the standard of education and personal development they want pupils to achieve by the time they leave school, which are appropriate for the majority of pupils. The school aims reflect these views and are reflected in the life of the school. The appropriate emphasis for links and inclusion, which reflects the aims, is for pupils at Key Stage 4 to ensure they are well prepared for life after school. There has been limited consideration of the opportunities that could be made available for the pupils through being more closely involved with local mainstream schools.

35. The school is strengthened by the clarity with which it delegates responsibilities to all staff through written job descriptions and by the detailed way that senior managers are tasked specifically to check regularly that these are being carried out. This process enables the senior management team to monitor and evaluate the work of the school very effectively by looking at and discussing teachers' lesson plans and examining pupils' work. There is currently no formal evaluation of teaching quality by direct observation, despite senior staff receiving training in these skills. However, lesson observation by outside consultants has been used very successfully to inform specific developments, such as the whole-school programme for developing the social use of language, and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The school uses and evaluates the data from a satisfactory range of assessment procedures to help it identify strengths and weaknesses in pupil achievements and identify areas for improvement.

36. The school ensures, through its good systems of communication which involve staff in a range of meetings, that its priorities for development are decided following full consultation with all staff and governors. This encourages a high level of commitment to development projects and increases the likelihood of their success. Priorities in the school development plan appropriately reflect the needs of the school and their achievement is effectively monitored and evaluated.

37. The school's governing body makes a good contribution to the work of the school.

Members carry out their statutory responsibilities well and add to the information they receive at meetings through a range of frequent visits to the school, especially in relation to specific areas of responsibility, such as literacy, numeracy and financial management. The governing body has a good range of experience and expertise, for example in educational, financial and personnel management, which is used to good purpose by the school. The governing body takes an active part in deciding the school's priorities for development and governors keep themselves well informed about progress towards achieving them. Members therefore have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as identified by its internal processes.

38. The school receives a delegated budget that is very low in comparison with other similar schools and which does not reflect specifically the additional resource needs of its changing intake of pupils. Some development priorities, therefore, are delayed until adequate resources become available. The school makes a good attempt to support its improvement plans by seeking charitable funds and through the work of its "Friends" association. The school's delegated budget is managed very efficiently and financial transactions are controlled and safeguarded by very good procedures, confirmed by local auditors. The use of information and communications technology for school administration and the creation of learning materials are well developed and improving while its use in the classroom is developing. The school rigorously seeks to obtain the best value from the goods and services it purchases. Appropriately the school's senior managers and governors are currently working with other special schools in the authority to consider ways of comparing its performance with other similar schools.

39. The school is appropriately staffed with teachers and learning support assistants who form effective teams to meet the demands of the curriculum and the numbers and needs of the majority of pupils. Training needs are identified, met and reviewed regularly in the school development plan. Training of staff to meet some of the complex needs of pupils has been undertaken, as has training in the use of information technology. Staff new to the school receive appropriate support.

40. Accommodation is sufficiently satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The extensive well maintained grounds are both attractive and functional. They are used extensively for sporting activities such as netball, football and cross-country through the woodland area, making up for the less than ideal hall facility. The local sports centre is regularly used for swimming and other sporting activities. The school interior is bright, and well-cared for, with stimulating and instructive wall displays. There is a good medical room. However, the design and technology room is in need of refurbishment in order to extend the range of materials that can be worked. The food technology room also is in need of updating, in order to provide adequate electricity sockets. The new Key Stage 4 accommodation is an appropriate size for the numbers in groups, although there is no common room facility which would be appropriate for pupils of this age.

41. Overall resources are unsatisfactory. Learning resources are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science and the foundation subjects but inadequate in information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, food technology and modern foreign languages. There are insufficient computers for hands on work in discrete teaching of the subject, when 3 or 4 pupils share one computer.

42. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements to the monitoring and evaluation practice. The behaviour management policy is much more consistently applied. The school development plan has priorities and is costed. Governors are far more active in using information when assessing value for money. Staff subject

expertise and experience now contribute well to improved pupil achievements. Accommodation has been improved considerably and security systems are in place. While there has been some improvement in resources they are still not satisfactory in religious education and French

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Further raise achievements and progress at Key Stage 3, particularly in English and mathematics, by improving the use of assessment to inform appropriate planning for individual pupil needs

- (2) Use the good systems of monitoring to identify the most effective teaching strategies to share with staff and further improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3
- (3) Improve resources and staff training for information technology to enable it to be used effectively to support learning across the curriculum
- (4) Complete and implement the scheme of work for information technology
- (5) Further develop appropriate approaches to support learning for pupils with more complex learning needs

44. In addition to the key areas above, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Widen the scheme of work for design and technology. (paragraph 14)
- Improve assessment procedures in music and design and technology (paragraph 87,70)
- Improve resources for religious education, design and technology and modern foreign language (paragraph 40)
- Improve accommodation for design and technology and food technology (paragraph 71)
- Correct factual inaccuracies in curriculum documentation (paragraph 14)
- Better equip pupils for life in a multi-cultural society (paragraph 22)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	93
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	30	42	20	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	131
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	31

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.91

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.72

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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	127
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y2– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10
Average class size	13

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	305

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	15	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	651246
Total expenditure	658450
Expenditure per pupil	4637
Balance brought forward from previous year	3316
Balance carried forward to next year	-3888

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	131
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	28	4	2	4
My child is making good progress in school.	39	47	11	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	31	15	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	53	20	2	2
The teaching is good.	59	36	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	46	2	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	43	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	24	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	34	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	25	6	2	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The majority of parents, both at the meeting and from the responses, believe their child likes school. Pupils work hard and show an increasing maturity. Teaching is good. The school provides an interesting range of extra curricula activities. The school is well led and managed and parents are comfortable about approaching the school.

Not all parents think the amount of homework is appropriate. Sometimes it is not clear to parents what pupils must do for their homework.

Other issues raised by parents

Children are encouraged to achieve and their social skills and self confidence improve. "School is secure, there is a "buzz" about the place". The school supports children and parents well and most children are helpful and supportive of each other. While parents are comfortable to approach the school the regular level of home school communication and homework is inconsistent.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF

THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

45. Pupils at Key Stage 2 and 4 achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English. This is because the teaching is good and at Key Stage 4 often very good and excellent. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress and their achievements are satisfactory. There has been an improvement in achievement and progress at Key Stages 2 and 4 since the previous inspection.

46. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are using their speaking and listening skills well, as when they tell each other about their weekends, listen carefully to each other's accounts and ask questions to gain greater understanding. They are confident to talk because teachers value their contributions, for example two pupils who wore glasses talked about their own experiences at the opticians after watching and listening well to a television programme. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can use more complex sentences, make good eye contact and ask probing questions, though lower attaining pupils speak in more simple phrases. In a lesson reading and talking about gerbils and pets most pupils listened well to others and all could discuss their own pets. Where teaching is uninspiring or not directly matched to pupils needs some pupils become more easily distracted from listening. By Key Stage 4 most pupils are confident and articulate because they are supported by good and age appropriate relationships with the teacher. They contribute well to class discussions, offer opinions and ideas and work well with others. In a literature lesson considering how authors make up words to describe things one pupil rose to the challenge and suggested "tapering rain". Speaking and listening skills are used and reinforced well in most Sulp sessions and across all subjects. Pupils learn to use a wider vocabulary because in many lessons key words for the subject are introduced effectively and used in the lesson. In a food technology lesson the teacher ensured all pupils understood words such as "knead" and checked by asking a higher attaining pupil to define the word. In the many interviews inspectors had with pupils all found the majority of pupils articulate and confident to talk about their experiences and able to respond to questions in an age appropriate manner.

47. Pupils make good progress in reading at Key Stage 2 and 4 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. Where progress and achievements are good teaching is skilled and assessment information is used well to inform planning. At Key Stage 2 teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy that effectively helps pupils make good progress. Pupils enjoy their shared book that is used as part of the literacy hour, make predictions about what might happen and offer suggestions about the characters, for example "a bit creepy". A number of pupils enjoy the opportunity to read aloud the summary of the story. Pupils are interested in reading and enjoy taking their reading book home to read to their parents. Lower attaining pupils are able to talk about the pictures in their book and follow the story, while higher attaining pupils read books at level 3 fluently and talk about and predict the outcome of the story. All are acquiring phonic skills and many use these to help read unknown words. At Key Stage 3, reading ability is more variable, reflecting inconsistencies of teaching methods and approaches. Where assessment is used to inform teaching and effective teaching methods are used pupils' progress is good. However, of 7 pupils in a sample of readers in one Key Stage 3 group, 5 read from books that were inappropriate to their level of ability. They did not have the necessary skills to word build or decode the text. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in reading, with higher attaining pupils reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books fluently, while lower attaining pupils use a range of contextual and phonic clues to tackle new words. In their literature lessons, through excellent teaching and very high

teacher expectations, pupils rise to the intellectual challenge and are motivated by their interest in the texts to extend their reading beyond their own expectations. They read and enjoy extracts from Shakespeare and show an understanding of the plot and the characters. In their work in the community, on work experience and at college, pupils use their reading skills to support their work well. For example, one group doing mathematics worked on prices at the local supermarket using their reading skills to work out bargain packs. The standard of pupils reading at Key Stage 4 has improved since the previous inspection.

48. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in writing. Lower attaining pupils develop their ability to form letters and copy simple words and sentences, while higher attaining pupils rewrite stories they have read, attempting cursive writing. All take a pride in their work and try to present their work well. By Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils write, in sentences, answers to questions about the texts they have studied and lower attaining pupils do this with support. All practice spellings to help them with their work, for example the *e* and *double e* rules. Key Stage 4 pupils prepare written projects as part of their course work for their accredited courses. Motivated by the texts they read pupils produce a good range of creative writing, for example a passage to create an appropriate atmosphere, prompted by a passage from Dickens. Pupils also use their writing skills to support their work preparing to leave school, for example in completing a variety of application forms. The standard of pupils' writing at Key Stage 4 has improved since the previous inspection. At all key stages pupils regularly practise spelling and where the work is appropriate to the pupils' level of working good progress is made. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught handwriting in a structured way that ensures they practise and build on earlier learning. In Key Stage 3 the teaching and reinforcement of handwriting styles are less consistent, but at Key Stage 4 pupils' work is very carefully drafted and re-drafted to obtain accurate and pleasing presentation.

49. The quality of teaching of English is good at Key Stage 2, satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and very good and often excellent at Key Stage 4. The teaching within special groups for the social use of language varies in quality from unsatisfactory to very good. Where teaching is good or better thorough planning ensures purposeful activities that challenge the pupils at all levels. For example pupils used pitch, volume and speed of language to achieve appropriate social interaction and effectively interpreted body language in role-play situations. Lessons are clearly introduced so pupils know the purpose of the lesson and what they are learning. Teachers use questioning very effectively to check understanding, encourage participation and stimulate thinking. Pupils respond to the appropriate use of praise by teachers and classroom assistants and want to achieve well. Overall, there has been an improvement in teachers' subject knowledge, and a general improvement in teaching at Key Stage 4 since the last inspection. In some English lessons there is a weakness in providing appropriate teaching methods for pupils with more complex special educational needs.

50. The English curriculum has benefited greatly from the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 2 and the further development of accredited courses at Key Stage 4, but is weakened by the lack of a similar focus upon development at Key Stage 3. The curriculum is enhanced by additional events such as the visit of a theatre workshop group to work on "Romeo and Juliet" with year 9 pupils who contributed effectively to their experience of Shakespeare. The school library is well used. There has been an investment in new resources for teaching English which are now satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

51. Across all areas of mathematics pupils at Key Stage 2 and 4 make good progress and achieve well and at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress and achievements. Pupils use and consolidate their learning well across other subjects, for example in science, food technology and design and technology. Information technology is used well in a number of classrooms to support pupils' learning.

52. At Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well planned to allow pupils to build on earlier learning. Pupils enjoy the daily counting sessions and actively participate in sequencing and counting forwards and backwards. Activities are interesting for the pupils and appropriate for the full ability range so that all can succeed. For example, in measurement when looking at heavier and lighter, one group worked well with the support assistant estimating with parcels while the teacher worked between two groups on estimating, weighing and recording their findings. All opportunities are taken in the classroom at all times of day to reinforce and consolidate mathematical learning, for example when lining up to leave the room and when looking at materials used in other lessons. Good relationships support pupils in being confident to try and in wanting to please. Lessons go at a good pace that ensures all pupils are actively involved and no time is wasted.

53. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils are working with the four rules of number work and recording their findings using commercial work books. Lower attaining pupils are corresponding objects to objects for example coats to coat hangers. However, as this was done with work sheets rather than objects, pupils were finding the work difficult. Pupils complete surveys, for example of traffic, and record their results using pie charts and block graphs. Pupils enjoy the practical work and are clear about what they are doing. However, in the majority of mathematics work at this stage assessment information is insufficiently used to inform planning. While there is some difference of work and expectations, either through questioning, activities and targeted support by the support assistant, work is not always accurately matched to pupils needs. In a number of lessons, although pupils progressed through the work set, the activities were not supporting pupils in building well on their previous learning nor were they sufficiently stimulating to ensure pupils skills, knowledge and understanding was fully developed. In other lessons where the activities were interesting, the inappropriate management of the pupils and insufficient differences in tasks for all abilities resulted in the full learning potential of the activity not being fully exploited.

54. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are working well on their accredited course work. Pupils use their skills and extend their knowledge and understanding, for example a high attaining group of pupils carried out an investigation on possible routes on a polyhedra. Pupils applied themselves well to this activity, some working independently and others co-operating and sharing their ideas. Another group worked well on recognising and naming shapes, recognising parallel sides and matching shapes and angles. Although pupils found this work intellectually challenging they concentrated well and worked at a good pace. Pupils extend their learning through age appropriate activities, for example one group measured the play area to work out how much fencing would be needed to fence it. Pupils think about their work; in one lesson where teacher and pupils had very good relationships and mutual respect a pupil was confident enough to suggest a theory that was then investigated.

55. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2, satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key

Stage 4. Where teaching is good teachers have a good subject knowledge and a good understanding of the pupils' needs. Assessment is well used to plan appropriate activities so that pupils are challenged, interested and build on their learning. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson one group worked with large floor dominoes matching and counting the spots, another group rolled dice, counted the spots and found the equivalent number of counters and a higher attaining group worked independently on the computer on addition to 10. The targets in pupils' IEPs are effectively used to inform teachers' planning. The pace of lessons is good and a range of appropriate activities holds the pupils' attention and concentration. Support assistants are well briefed and support individual pupils or small groups very effectively. Well-structured lessons challenge the pupils intellectually but appropriately as when younger pupils were doubling quantities and counting on. Where teaching is satisfactory or occasionally unsatisfactory individual needs are not always well targeted with work being too easy or too hard. This sometimes results in pupils being frustrated and not behaving well.

56. An appropriate scheme of work is in place and long, medium and short term planning is good. Planning is monitored to ensure pupils build on their learning as they move through the school and that all aspects of mathematics are covered. Individual targets have been set in mathematics for the year with predicted outcomes and this information will help identify where the strengths are and where any weaknesses occur. The co-ordinator works with staff and where appropriate supports lesson planning. A good range of accreditation, sufficiently challenging and appropriate for all abilities, is available. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support pupils' work in mathematics. Other resources are satisfactory. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in pupils' progress and attainment as a result of the improved quality of teaching at all key stages. Assessment is now in place and on the whole used well to inform planning and IEP targets are reflected in planned work. This allows appropriate work and questioning to be used and supports the improved progress of pupils.

SCIENCE

57. Across all key stages pupils achieve well in science. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good enabling pupils to make good progress. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when progress was variable. Good progress is made because lesson planning is good and work is made appropriate for lower and higher attaining pupils. The good quality of teaching and rate of progress are maintained throughout Key Stage 3 and 4. As they move through the key stages pupils build successfully on previous learning, for example in year 5 pupils learn important facts about humans as organisms, that they have five senses and what they are. By year 9 pupils are studying the functioning of the body, and the importance of a healthy life style. By Key Stage 4 pupils have broadened their understanding to a study of pollution and how man can affect people's lives and hinder their attempts to lead healthy life styles. Currently in Key Stage 4 pupils are on target to achieve certification in their accredited course work. This course recognises pupils' attainment at National Curriculum levels 1-3. With the improvements in achievement attention is now being given to identifying accreditation suitable for recognition of higher levels of pupil attainment.

58. At Key Stage 2 science is taught as a discrete subject by class teachers. Pupils enjoy conducting carefully prepared simple experiments to further develop their knowledge, for example about placing items into groups according to similar properties. They understand that by using our senses food can be classified and identified by smell, taste

and colour. Clear instructions and good relationships with the teacher supported pupils being confident and enthusiastic in an experiment to record the taste and smell of a range of potato crisps. Having recorded their findings pupils develop their investigative skills, identifying and analysing similarities and differences.

59. At Key Stage 3 and beyond a subject specialist teaches science. Well planned lessons and the teachers' good subject knowledge supports pupils' learning well. Assessment information is used well so that pupils of different ability are given appropriate levels of work, for example different groups of materials and tasks. Key words are discussed at the beginning of lessons so that pupils are confident to use the appropriate technical vocabulary. The support assistant is well deployed to support individuals and small groups for example as they carefully examine and discuss the size, colour, structure and weight of each material. Results are carefully recorded with the teacher reinforcing pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Skilled teaching ensures pupils are confident to carry out in depth studies, for example of the human organ system. This module of work is carefully planned to lead on to the study of the human reproductive system.

60. At Key Stage 4 pupils follow modules that are part of nationally accredited science courses. Through skilful questioning and practical work pupils demonstrate an increasing knowledge of broader scientific issues and the application of science. For example, pupils study pollution and the dangers presented by the burning of fossil fuels. Pupils rise to the intellectual challenges as they remember and use terms such as impurity, recycle and fossil fuel. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately provided with extension materials to study the many effects on their community of the everyday use of fossil fuels. Lower attaining pupils follow appropriate modules that are part of an alternative accredited course. Studying is made fun and meaningful, for example when studying healthy living and the factors that constitute a healthy life style pupils enjoyed singing "food glorious food" as the introduction to the lesson. In the study of healthy eating everyday foods were available to support pupils in discussing what was good and bad for their bodies.

61. Good progress has been made in science since the last inspection. Standards are now consistently good; pupils achieve well and make good progress due to the improved quality of teaching. A detailed scheme of work has been carefully constructed enabling pupils to build upon their learning as they move through the school. Pupils now make continued good progress through all key stages towards certification at the end of Key Stage 4. There is an on going drive to raise standards. All work is marked and although while constructive comment is given verbally, it is not always recorded. IEP targets are now rigorous, present in pupil diaries and used to inform planning. Pupils enjoy science, there are many occasions when pupils work co-operatively with one another, sharing their ideas and helping one another. Older pupils in particular, show independence in their approach to work when opportunities arise.

62. The quality of teaching in science is good overall and at times very good. Pupils benefit from good teaching at all key stages and are generally well behaved and motivated. In the best lessons teachers quickly gain pupil attention, recall previous learning and provide a clear and stimulating introduction to the lesson. Lesson planning is good with learning objectives stated and clear instructions and expectations given. For example, when studying fossil fuel the learning objectives were clearly displayed and the teacher outlined clearly every part of the lesson, introducing resources that would be used and activities and tasks for different pupils. Lesson organisation and planning allows all pupils to participate and be active learners, which improves their motivation and keenness to

learn. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed well through carefully prepared tasks appropriate to the range of abilities and through the effective deployment of the support assistant and teacher. Prompts and questioning are always of a high order to ensure pupils' understanding at each step of the way. Display is relevant, supports the pupils' recall and augments the taught curriculum. Careful use of plenary sessions ensures that in all science lessons key teaching points are revisited and individual learning is assessed. The progress pupils make is carefully assessed at all key stages. As a result most pupils have a clear idea of what they have learnt and how they need to improve. Parents are informed of the topics and modules to be covered and school helps arrange the purchase of classroom textbooks to enable effective parental support.

63. The curriculum is appropriate to support medium and long term planning which is effectively monitored by the co-ordinator. Information technology has not yet been incorporated fully into planning. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory and appropriately support pupils learning.

ART

64. Achievement in art is good in all key stages because teaching is consistently good or better. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are effectively introduced to and become confident in using a wide range of media including pencil, charcoal, paint and clay. They are gaining control in the use of brushes and pens and in colour mixing so that they can achieve their own desired individual effect. Through good encouragement, demonstration and support pupils who had made models of a sarcophagus as part of their topic work on ancient Egypt were able to draw with care, expression and precision. By the end of that key stage pupils are able to develop an idea, for instance observational drawings of shells, and develop the work to make a suitable design for a linoleum print. They had learnt the printing method and produced good quality work. Skilful teaching at Key Stage 3 and 4 ensures work is presented to pupils in a very effective manner. The teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject supports pupils learning very well. Skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed through looking at the work of past and contemporary artists. Vivid descriptions hold pupils attention and stimulates their interest. Good demonstrations, for example how to shade to produce a three-dimensional effect, support pupils in working with confidence. This means that pupils are gaining a very wide experience through experimenting with media and techniques of those artists and many pupils by the end of year 9 are achieving the National Curriculum expectations for the end of Key Stage 3.

65. The teacher's high expectations have ensured all pupils have established the discipline of using a note/sketch book to practise, adapt and refine their work such as pastel shading, pen and ink drawing as well as computer generated pictures and designs. The teaching continually encourages pupils to appraise their own work and find ways to improve or to experiment with the same theme in a different media. This enables pupils to develop the skills of self-assessment and to widen their perspective of the challenge involved in creative tasks. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are developing good graphic design skills. Critical observations and praise from the teacher are appropriately balanced to provide creative challenge to the pupils. Pupils respond positively and understand their responsibilities. Support assistants are well deployed and effectively support individual pupils who find it difficult to work independently.

66. The quality of teaching is never less than good and on occasions excellent. The

beginning of the lesson is very well used to explain the task and the expectations of the lesson so pupils are clear about what they are to do. The teacher uses precise vocabulary so that pupils learn and use correct terminology. Displays of reproductions and pupils past work are brought into this opening session so that all pupils start their work with a range of stimulating ideas and examples. Hence they are able to work confidently and effectively. There are high expectations of pace of work and quality of effort so that many pupils exceed their own expectations in the lesson. In the excellent lessons there is a buzz of purposeful activity, high levels of concentration and perseverance in modifying and improving work and a real satisfaction which the work finally achieves. The very high level of knowledge enables the teacher to use a wide range of examples of art from other times and cultures, for example a self portrait by Rembrandt as the stimulus for pen and ink drawing and for year 10 pupils who were encouraged to study Etruscan painted sculptures as they were working on self portrait heads in clay. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They show perseverance and maturity in considering and refining their work. They show initiative in using the facilities of the art room and library as well as the displays and the computer. All work is carefully presented and stored in folders and notebooks.

67. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Areas identified in the previous report as a weakness have been addressed. The specialist teacher for the senior key stages also teaches older pupils at Key Stage 2. This, and the good liaison with the Key Stage 2 teachers, helps pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The co-ordinator is developing a useful assessment system that gives pupils realistic and useful individual targets. There is a commitment to high achievement and hopes of developing GCSE work for the end of Key Stage 4 in the near future. The display work in the art room and around the school both celebrates pupil achievements and informs every one of the potential of art in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

68. Pupils' achievement and progress in design and technology are satisfactory in the use of resistant materials at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Progress becomes good at Key Stage 4 as their skills improve and they develop a better knowledge and understanding of the design process. In food technology pupils' achievement and progress are very good at all key stages and by the time they are ready to leave school or move on to the next stage of their education many will have developed a good degree of independence. Some of the higher attaining pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of specific vocabulary. The progress of pupils with more complex needs is satisfactory in all aspects of design and technology.

69. In food technology pupils at Key Stage 2 learn about combining different foods using a variety of techniques, for example, how to make bread. Through an introduction to the key words for the lesson and careful explanations pupils understand and use the word ingredients and recognise that the main ingredient is flour. Following a lively demonstration that stimulates the pupils' interest and holds their attention the majority knead and shape the dough independently but some, who have difficulties with co-ordination, require help to do this. Support assistants provide effective support for these pupils through prompting and encouragement. In design and technology pupils are developing their use of tools and materials, for example when making a door for their model castles. They are carefully introduced to the design process through discussion about how to hinge the castle door. The higher attaining pupils listen carefully to instructions and use a coping saw well to cut out their doors. However, many at this stage are reliant on help from the teacher and support assistant. The teacher effectively provides additional support through demonstration, prompts and encouragement so allowing all to participate and achieve. At Key Stage 3 pupils are extending their design and practical skills, for example through

making different types of hinged wooden boxes, such as tool, toy and bird boxes. Appropriate challenge is given by the teacher to encourage pupils to build on their earlier learning. They discuss how the design can be improved by strengthening the way the bottoms are secured and select appropriate tools to use to make corner fixings. In food technology pupils continue to develop their knowledge about food through well-planned sequences of lessons. For example they learn that fatty food is high in calories and that fat can be removed before, during and after cooking. At this stage pupils are keen to get on with their work and most work independently, select the utensils required and enjoy preparing the ingredients for the meal. Pupils demonstrate very good skills when cutting, peeling and chopping a range of vegetables. Much of the Key Stage 4 work is structured towards gaining appropriate external accreditation. Pupils build on and develop their skills well as they move through the school and by the end of Key Stage 4 they are able to work more independently on design and make activities and achieve well in their accredited courses.

70. The quality of teaching in food technology is consistently very good and consequently the learning, attitude, response and behaviour of the pupils are also very good. The teacher's planning builds successfully on pupils' prior learning. In lessons learning objectives are clearly defined which helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding and teach new skills. Clear instructions, high expectations, probing questioning, good demonstrations and good management mean that pupils are physically and intellectually challenged but have the confidence to participate. Effective use is made of time, lessons go at a good pace, and pupils are actively involved in their own learning and concentrate and persevere well to complete the assignments. Rules of hygiene and key language are very well taught, practised and understood by the pupils. The teaching of other aspects of design and technology is good in half the lessons and satisfactory in all others. There are a few occasions when younger pupils in the workshop do not listen carefully enough to instructions, talk during demonstrations and then become frustrated when they find they cannot do the work. Health and safety aspects are covered well so that pupils wear appropriate protective clothing and are careful to observe safety guidelines when using tools. Support assistants are very well informed and have clearly defined roles, which makes their deployment very effective. They provide good support to small groups of pupils effectively.

71. The schemes of work are satisfactory in the aspects of design and technology currently taught, but the curriculum is too narrow. For example, there is no course in textiles and the range of materials used is very narrow and mainly limited to wood. Pupils have little experience of working with plastics and other more flexible materials. Assessment, which was identified as a weakness at the last inspection, has not improved. While teachers know the pupils well pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding, and their development and application of skills are not recorded in any systematic way. The school has not yet given sufficient consideration to using information and communications technology in the design process; there were a number of occasions during the inspection week when opportunities were missed particularly at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

72. Workshop and food technology facilities and resources are unsatisfactory. In food technology there are too few electrical points and the cupboards near the sink, which are used for storing cooking utensils are unhygienic. This means pans and utensils have to be washed before use. The craft room is very cluttered, the benches are very worn and facilities make it difficult to teach anything but woodworking in this room. The money allocated to design and technology for the purchase of equipment and expendable items is inadequate.

GEOGRAPHY

73. Standards of achievement are good in geography at both Key Stages 2 and 3. Geography is not taught at Key Stage 4. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 are gaining a useful understanding of the work of rivers which is effectively consolidated through a visit to the River Mole which the pupils enjoyed. Visits to a farm also enabled pupils to have a clearer understanding of the main features of a rural environment, which they are now able to compare with the urban environment of the school. Good planning of classroom work linked to visits enables pupils to experience and enjoy, at first hand, what they have been learning, and this supports their interest and enthusiasm well. Good planning allows pupils to carefully build on previous learning. For example, younger pupils survey the school grounds and identify key features and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to use maps at a variety of scales from world map to local street plan. Pupils are directly involved in their learning and listen and concentrate well on their work. They are able to locate places on these maps and record specific information on their own hand drawn maps.

74. Teaching in Key Stage 3 builds well on this secure base of skills. For example, following the study of the environment pupils know the importance of considering transport and labour availability before choosing the site of a factory. They can also look at actual industrial sites on photographs and come to realistic conclusions as to the site's suitability, problems and benefits. The scheme of work that has been effectively developed since the previous inspection now gives all pupils a very broad experience, which progressively extends their geographical skills and knowledge as they move through the school. This, coupled with good teaching, enables all pupils to make good progress.

75. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Lessons begin purposefully with clear explanations and expectations for the lesson so that pupils are clear about what they are to do. By re-capping past work and checking pupils' understanding the teacher enables pupils to set to work confidently and successfully. Pupils are continually encouraged to use specific vocabulary so that they are able to explain their point of view accurately. The teachers' high expectations of behaviour and co-operation successfully encourage pupils to collaborate really well on tasks and to be able to share their ideas and learn from each other. The teachers' secure subject knowledge is well used to encourage pupils to think of the wider implications of the situation and to bring past examples they have previously studied to the discussion. In a very few lessons weak management of difficult behaviour distracted from the learning process.

76. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. One teacher now teaches throughout Key Stage 3 and there is good liaison between the co-ordinator and the Key Stage 2 teachers so that there is consistency in delivery of the programmes of study. The co-ordinator monitors the work of the department effectively and sets a realistic annual action plan. The previous report identified weaknesses in assessment and the use of ICT. This is now being addressed pro-actively. Pupils' attainment is now recorded against national curriculum expectations and the system is being developed to inform the setting of learning objectives in teachers' planning.

HISTORY

77. Pupils' achievements in history are good. History is taught at Key Stages 2 and 3 and all pupils are gaining a real understanding and empathy for past events and the effect they had on people. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 2 know about the equipment needed by a Roman soldier and are able to show, with shields they have made, how the soldiers formed a defensive 'tortoise'. Older pupils have studied the Tudors and the Victorians and through careful observation of artefacts used by them can talk knowledgeably about and can compare the lifestyles of people in those times.

78. In Key Stage 3 teachers skilfully incorporate examples from the literature of the time and hence pupils are able to identify empathetically with the reality of, for example the hardships of medieval life. Pupils are able to use primary sources to gain an accurate understanding of events. In a lesson on the Second World War, having understood the role of the major decision-makers such as Hitler and Churchill they are able to realise the plight of ordinary people through reading letters from prisoners of war to their families. Pupils are encouraged to use and develop their English writing skills in diaries and accounts. In this way pupils are active in their learning and are able to write perceptively and knowledgeably about past events. The thorough scheme of work and the high expectations of all teachers ensure that pupils at both key stages learn well and make good progress.

79. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and frequently very good. Teachers at both key stages have a secure subject knowledge and the expertise to impart that knowledge so that pupils can understand often complex and conflicting points of view. Teaching is always enthusiastic with vivid explanations, which make pupils realise the full implications of events. In a lesson on the Black Death pupils who thought they knew the basic facts about the plague were, by the end of the lesson realising the true and terrible consequences for individuals and their families and the effect on the population of England. Pupils respond well to good teaching and because they are secure in what they are learning they are attentive, thoughtful and confident to join in and express their point of view. They appreciate the lively teaching, return the enthusiasm and try hard with their work for example, their written work is neatly and carefully presented.

80. The previous inspection identified an inadequacy in resources. This has now been addressed and teachers use artefacts, facsimiles and published resources well to give pupils an enriching experience. The co-ordinator has begun to access material from the Internet and sees the need to develop this facility for all staff. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have improved over a broad range of skills and knowledge. There is now a secure scheme of work adapted for the National Curriculum 2000. Pupils' attainment is recorded against National Curriculum expectations on a regular basis and the co-ordinator is appropriately exploring ways to integrate this assessment into the medium term planning. Good liaison between the co-ordinator who teaches at Key Stage 3 and teachers in Key Stage 2 ensures that there is monitoring and evaluation of curriculum delivery and the sharing of ideas and good practice.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

81. Lesson observations, conversations with pupils, inspection of their work and teachers' planning shows that achievement and progress by the substantial majority of pupils are unsatisfactory. This is because there are aspects of the National Curriculum which are not yet fully taught such as control, modelling and monitoring. A few of the higher attaining pupils make good progress and develop more advanced skills by the end of Key Stage 4. However, when the majority of pupils are ready to leave school or move on to the

next stage of their education most will not have acquired the knowledge and skills expected from pupils of this age.

82. Information and communication technology is currently a major focus for the school and is a developing subject. Pupils are now starting to get more 'hands-on' experience with computers. Pupils' work at Key Stage 2 showed good evidence of mouse skills being developed; for example, by dragging and dropping items of clothing to dress a teddy, and in another class moving weather symbols and placing them on a map of the British Isles. Others are developing keyboard skills and are starting to learn how to use the word processor. Paint programs are effectively used in all classes at Key Stage 2. In the discretely taught lessons at Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils learning about databases select an icon from the toolbar to load a scatter graph and then enter data in the correct fields. The majority of pupils require help to enter and understand the *best fit line* and how to interpret the data. Although pupils are developing confidence and are making progress in these lessons, it is not unusual for three pupils to share a computer. This means pupils do not have enough individual time on the computers to develop their skills and raise their level of attainment. Good examples were seen of pupils' work in science, showing the application of their newly acquired knowledge to create graphs to measure different parts of the body and display results of work about the heart rate. In mathematics, pupils successfully used computers to reinforce basic number skills by matching shapes and numbers and some very good work in art showed how pupils had designed Greek clay vases. These were isolated examples and the school is fully aware that the new resources need to be used more effectively in many other subjects if information and communication technology is to be established as an integral part of the school's curriculum.

83. The quality of teaching by the co-ordinator in the discrete lessons observed was consistently very good and resulted in pupil's learning well. Lessons have very clear learning objectives to develop knowledge, understanding and skills, which are shared with the pupils so that they are clear about what is expected of them. They build very successfully on previous learning and through their achievements, pupils are developing good attitudes and enjoying their lessons. Good management skills mean that effective use is made of time and pupils use the computers sensibly. The impact of recent staff training can be seen in the improved use of word processing, paint programs, CD-ROMs and data handling programs. Some teachers are beginning to use the digital camera effectively to record pupils' achievements.

84. Recently there has been good improvement in the use of information and communication technology and the development of pupils' skills. The main reason for this is the replacement of outdated hardware and the introduction of new computers and printers purchased with funding from the National Grid for Learning. Since the last inspection a new co-ordinator has been appointed who is enthusiastic and has the skills and ability to offer advice and training to other members of staff. She has worked hard to introduce a new scheme of work and is acutely aware that assessment is something the school has still yet to improve. There are training requirements for staff in the use of the Internet, digital camera, scanner, control, modelling and monitoring. The school has not yet given enough thought to how information and communication technology can be used to help pupils with more complex needs.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

85. Due to timetable organisation, only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Further evidence was sought from written work, teacher and pupil records and talking to pupils. However, from the limited evidence available it was not possible to make an overall judgement of this subject, which is taught only at Key Stage 3. In the lesson seen, pupils made satisfactory progress in learning how to ask for drinks in French and were able to talk about their day trip to France. They can count and respond to questions about their age in French and enjoy playing games to reinforce their learning. Appropriately pupils at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to use their learning during their 2 week residential visit to France which motivates the pupils to learn.

86. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory, although the activities of the lesson were rather formal with insufficient emphasis on speaking the language. Thorough lesson planning, linked to personal targets in IEPs allowed appropriate work to be available to individual pupils which supported their learning. Relationships between the teacher and pupils are good and support pupils being involved and being confident to participate.

87. The new co-ordinator has clear ideas for the development of French. There is an appropriate long-term plan and detailed medium term planning and assessment is in use and being developed. The shortage of appropriate resources hinders the more effective delivery of the subject, particularly for the focus on speaking and listening, role-play and French culture. As the co-ordinator has been newly appointed there has been little change in the subject since the last inspection.

MUSIC

88. The absence of detailed records of pupils' achievements and progress makes it difficult to make judgements about pupils' progress over time. However, during the lessons seen, pupils make good, clear progress in their musical understanding and ability. At key Stage 2, pupils enjoy their music lessons and listen very carefully to the teacher and to each other when they play instruments. The teacher knows them well and by using strategies selected to meet their needs, enables them to play percussion instruments in time to the piano, both loudly and softly. They begin to match instruments to pictures and symbols in their first steps towards composing, and are able to express the mood of music in simple terms like "nice" and "nasty". At Key Stage 3, pupils are more advanced in their ability to use symbols to represent the sounds made by instruments to compose their own musical sequences. Guided by the teacher's clear explanations and positive encouragement, some pupils are able to add rhythm and enjoy turning sequences read from colour symbols into tunes.

89. The teaching of music is good and the teacher has a good knowledge of the subject which effectively supports pupils learning. Lessons are well planned and lesson objectives are made clear to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson with clear explanations to ensure all pupils understand what they mean and what they are trying to achieve. The activities chosen are appropriate to the ages and needs of the pupils and this ensures pupils are interested and keen to participate. Appropriately pupils are encouraged to honestly evaluate their own learning at the end of lessons.

90. The music curriculum, based upon Curriculum 2000, is broad and balanced and appropriate to the pupils' learning needs. The previous programmes of study for Key Stage 2 are used well to provide more detail to support short term planning. While the teacher knows the pupils well, knows what they can do and what they need to do next, the

procedures for recording this information are inadequate. The curriculum is enhanced by numerous musical events, including an annual Christmas show that involves all pupils, frequent performances during assemblies, and visits to musical events, for example the ballet. At the time of the inspection the theme for the week was music which successfully promoted musical appreciation and understanding of music from a range of cultures and periods at all key stages. The specialist room for music provides satisfactory accommodation, though it is small for some of the larger class groups. The resources for music are good and support the curriculum. They are well looked after and respected by pupils. Pupils' good achievement and progress have been maintained since the last inspection. However, there has not been an improvement in formal assessment procedures used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. Pupils across all key stages achieve well and make good progress in physical education. Good and enthusiastic teaching contributes to pupils very positive attitudes to the subject. The extra school sports activities play a significant role in developing and maintaining this and pupils are keen to represent their school well in matches and competitions with other schools. They are proud of their achievements and strive to do their best.

92. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident to move around the hall in a variety of ways due to well known and established routines. Learning is made fun and pupils enjoy their warm up activities such as the "cat and mouse game". Through these activities pupils learn about co-operative work, follow the rules of a game and use their listening skills well. Following demonstrations from the teacher pupils show good physical control when practising individual movements and try hard to link movements together to form a sequence. In the water pupils are confident and able. Continuous assessment informs good lesson planning so that pupils are working on activities that are appropriate to them. Pupils are appropriately challenged to improve their own performance. High attaining pupils swim well using a variety of styles and one pupil achieved 50 metres of a full sized swimming pool. Pupils want to improve their styles and distance; they listen well to the teacher and show good effort and concentration. The majority of pupils swim a length using a variety of improving styles.

93. At Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils build on their earlier learning well. Assessment informs teachers' planning in all aspects so that appropriate work allows all pupils to make progress. Teachers know the pupils very well, and good relationships and teachers' good subject knowledge means there is mutual respect. Pupils are self-critical and take advice well to improve their performance. For example, when practising skills for netball pupils watched the good demonstrations by the teacher of catching and moving and improved their own techniques during the course of the lesson. Pupils show respect for each other and for the rules in team games and work well co-operatively, actively encouraging each other and recognising good play. Appropriate sporting attitudes are well developed, for example following a football match with another school the team spontaneously applauded the opposition and gave them three cheers. Lunchtime sports clubs are well subscribed, as pupils want to improve their play. In gymnastics pupils work well individually and in pairs and refine and improve their sequence of movements, taking a pride in their final achievements.

94. Teaching in physical education is consistently good and pupils learn well. Teachers'

good subject knowledge is shared with the pupils and their high expectations mean that pupils strive to meet the challenges set in all aspects of the subject. In all lessons, for example in a netball lesson, skills are broken down into smaller steps to enable all pupils to successfully participate in learning new techniques. Assessment is used very well to ensure pupils are on work appropriate to them. There is a very good ethos and great pride in the subject across the school.

95. Medium and short term planning for physical education is good. The co-ordinator monitors planning to ensure all aspects are covered and that pupils build on earlier learning. All sports teams are open to boys and girls and all have an opportunity to play for their school if they wish to, no matter their ability. Resources are adequate. The school hall limits the activities that can take place but good use is made of local leisure and sports facilities. Outdoor facilities are good. There has been a significant improvement in achievement, progress and teaching since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

96. Although the school makes effective provision overall for the pupils' personal and social education and they make good progress towards the targets in their IEPs, in discrete lessons and tutorial time pupils' progress is more variable and very dependent upon the skills of the teacher. Pupils make good progress at Key Stages 2 and 4 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3.

97. At Key Stage 2 pupils learn well because lessons are well planned and active learning techniques ensure pupils are fully involved in the lessons. Pupils behave well and show trust and respect for their teacher and this contributes to circle time activities being very effective. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The introduction of an accredited award scheme for older pupils has added increased focus and purpose to the curriculum and has contributed to pupils' interest in their work. However, in the majority of lessons at Key Stage 3 teaching was not planned for individual pupils' needs and there was little assessment of pupils' achievements. Teachers' planning was brief and pupils' personal targets in their IEPs were not reflected in the planning or the delivery.

98. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are effectively prepared for leaving school through the successful leavers' programme and accredited course work. In these pupils develop and use their personal and social skills well and make good progress. Within other PHSE lessons pupils' progress is more variable. Where teaching is good progress is good. Where it is good pupils appreciate the age appropriate ethos, respond well to the opportunities for active learning and are motivated by the responsibilities they receive. Pupils' progress in lessons is unsatisfactory where teaching is unsatisfactory. Activities are not made appropriate to pupils' maturity or learning needs and pupils make little progress.

99. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2 where teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour that pupils understand and rise to. At Key Stage 3 it is mainly satisfactory. Where it is good prompts and questioning are used effectively to encourage pupils' participation in discussions. Good use is made of support assistants who work effectively, giving good support to small groups. Where teaching is good at Key Stage 4 a firm, caring concerned and supportive teaching style gains pupils' confidence and involvement. Pupils discuss and apply their learning and listen carefully to others and support each other in their work. They learn well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory inappropriate activities and confrontational teaching styles heighten pupils' insecurity and misbehaviour, leading to problems of behaviour management and learning is limited.

100. The curriculum is well established and delivery of aspects such as human reproduction and substance misuse are co-ordinated with the science and religious education programmes. Year 10 pupils value and benefit from their social education programme. A whole school programme addressing the social use and understanding of language has contributed effectively to the personal and social development of pupils. In their final year at school all pupils receive a Record of Achievement which they value highly.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and 3 where limited time is given to the subject. It is good at Key Stage 4 where pupils follow accredited course work. At Key Stage 2 pupils remember stories from the life of Jesus well through work being reviewed at the beginning of each lesson. They show an interest and curiosity and from these stories, and challenging discussions about them, pupils begin to establish their own ideas of right and wrong. For example, in one discussion one pupil made the point 'I don't see why a football match is more important than helping someone who has been beaten up' following the story of the Good Samaritan. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are familiar with other cultures and religions, for example they identify the key features of Judaism and Islam and know the terms for the objects traditionally used. Pupils are interested and ask relevant questions to help their learning. Good planning and teaching enable pupils to discuss and recognise there are some similarities between religions. As part of their accredited course work pupils at Key Stage 4 focus on Hinduism and Christianity. They show in their questioning that they have considered some key questions about religions such as "Do you believe in reincarnation?" and "If there is a God, why does he let children die?" Since the last inspection pupils progress and achievements at Key Stage 4 have improved.

102. Teaching in religious education is good in the majority of lessons. In the most successful lessons, the planning was detailed into a sequence of short activities, making use of a good range of appropriate resources, so that pupils' concentration remained focused. Because teachers manage the class discussions effectively and reinforce and value their response pupils participated well, enjoyed the lesson, and gained new knowledge and understanding. Occasionally opportunities were missed to discuss pupils' observations, and communication needs of a small number of pupils were not fully met, with the result that pupils' learning was not as good as it could be.

103. The overall timetabled time for religious education is below national recommendations. Although the school complies with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, at Key Stage 2 there is no world religion focus, which limits pupils' experiences and learning. Resourcing, particularly of religious artefacts is unsatisfactory. Assessment has been introduced and is being appropriately developed at Key Stages 2 and 3. Assemblies comply with statutory regulations in fulfilling obligations as an act of worship by including a prayer but opportunities for reflection were not observed. There has been an improvement in assessment and teaching since the previous inspection, but resources remain inadequate.