

INSPECTION REPORT

HERONS DALE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Shoreham

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126169

Headteacher: Mrs S Pritchard

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 30.10.00- 2.11.00

Inspection number: 223671

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special school designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	4 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hawkins Crescent Shoreham by Sea West Sussex
Postcode:	BN43 6TN
Telephone number:	01273 596967
Fax number:	01273 591126
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Pickett
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jayne Clemence 22629	Registered inspector	Art and combined arts	Standards
		Personal, social and health education	Teaching and learning
		Equal opportunities	Leadership and management
Catherine Fish 11575	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			The school's work in partnership with parents
Tony Bell 20119	Team inspector	History	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Elizabeth Mildner 18206	Team inspector	English	The quality of curricular and other opportunities for pupils
		Religious education	
Jo Peach 20124	Team inspector	French	
Jennifer Taylor 17260	Team inspector	Science	
		Information technology	
		Geography	
Graham Todd 1224	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well the school cares for its pupils
		Design technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Associates Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU
Tel: 01305 251591

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hérons Dale is a special school with 116 pupils between the ages of four and sixteen. It caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The vast majority are from a white ethnic background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average at twenty five per cent. There are fifteen teachers and the average class size is thirteen pupils. The school has a primary and secondary department. In addition, there is a recently established assessment unit for pupils at the lower end of the school, and a unit for six pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The school is situated on the outskirts of Shoreham and pupils come from a wide distance, beyond the immediate locality. The school buildings and surrounding playing field are well maintained, creating a bright, attractive environment. The characteristics of pupils for whom the school caters makes it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age related national expectations or averages. There were no pupils under the age of five at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hérons Dale is a highly effective school, striving successfully towards achieving excellence. Pupils by the time they leave, are as independent as possible and many gain nationally recognised awards. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and vision for the education of pupils with special needs. A very high proportion of the teaching is very good with a small amount that is excellent, leading to the pupils making very good, and occasionally excellent progress. There is an excellent ethos, where the pupils' learning and continued achievement is central to school life. Teachers set high expectations for themselves and the pupils. The continuing rise in standards, and the numbers of pupils gaining nationally recognised awards, is the result of teachers' and pupils' hard work, determination and effort. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good, and the support staff is highly effective, as their work supports that of the teachers, making for a strong and effective team. The school provides very good value for money, with many additional opportunities beyond the formal curriculum that enrich the pupils' education. Herons Dale has the capacity for achieving excellence.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards for the degree of their special educational needs; standards continue to improve with more pupils gaining nationally recognised awards year by year;
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership; there is a strong and complementary senior management team and effective coordinators;
- The high proportion of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching is having a direct impact upon standards and the rate of pupils' progress;
- The curriculum is very well organised and enriched by an excellent range of additional activities that extend the pupils' educational opportunities;
- There is excellent provision overall for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; ensuring pupils are thoroughly well prepared for life beyond school;
- The pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and a high level of involvement in their own learning;

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology (IT), though improving, are not high enough, planning in some parts of the school is at its earliest stages and the use of IT across the curriculum is not entirely consistent;
- Facilities for the library and information technology are cramped, science has no suitable area for separate investigations, and showering arrangements for older pupils are unsatisfactory.

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 has made very good improvements since the last inspection. The many strengths that were identified have been sustained effectively and further improved, including leadership and management, standards, teaching and pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed systematically and methodically. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed, although there are new weaknesses, in a small minority of the teaching, that have recently emerged. The school used one of the key issues, relating to an audit for the provision of special needs as an opportunity for extending and improving the provision across the school. There is now a thriving support network for pupils with exceptional needs, a highly effective special support facility for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, and a good quality assessment unit. Some aspects of the school that were judged to be outstanding, including provision for the pupils' social development, remain high quality, with additional features that are now excellent, for example leadership and management, pupils' personal development and relationships, combined arts and extra curricular activities.

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 11	by age 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	A	Very good	A
Reading	A	A	Good	B
Writing	A	A	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	A	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

Pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Many pupils develop the basic skills for reading and show a real interest in books and a growing appreciation of literature as they move through the school. Younger pupils understand that print has meaning and use the illustrations for clues about the text. Older pupils read with increasing confidence for a variety of purposes, for example, by producing high quality poetry anthologies. Pupils use their knowledge of mathematics and number with increasing confidence, and by the time they leave, use those skills in a variety of practical circumstances. The high quality provision for pupils' personal and social development is firmly established throughout the school and underpins the entire curriculum. Pupils develop with considerable maturity, dignity and respect for themselves and others as a result. Individual education plans are specific and measurable. Pupils are set suitably challenging, yet realistic targets that are reviewed and revised regularly. The school is successful in helping pupils to achieve very well and test results show that standards are rising.

2000 achievements include:

Key Stage 4:

Certificates of Achievement

English

8 pupils achieved Distinctions

1 pupil achieved a Merit

Mathematics

6 Distinctions, 2 Merits, 3 Passes

Science

6 Distinctions, 2 Merits, 4 Passes

Food technology

6 Distinctions, 2 Merits

Achievement tests in Literacy

19 pupils achieved Level 1

7 pupils achieved Level 3

GCSE Mathematics

3 pupils gained grade F

GCSE Science

3 pupils gained grade F

Youth Awards

8 pupils gained Bronze level in drama and community service

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn and improve themselves
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils' behaviour in and around the school is considerate and courteous
Personal development and relationships	Excellent; pupils show maturity and confidence as they develop through the school
Attendance	Good

Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility for one another and understand the meaning of good citizenship. They understand the importance of effort and hard work in order to achieve their own personal best. Many pupils have suitably high, yet realistic expectations for themselves and recognise their own special challenges. The high quality relationships between pupils and with adults are based on trust, respect and kindness. This results in pupils who show a high level of security and confidence in themselves, are able to express their views and opinions clearly, and willingly attempt new challenges without fear of failure or ridicule.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 5-11	Aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. Ninety eight per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better and thirty two per cent was good. Forty five per cent of the teaching was very good and eight per cent was excellent. Thirteen per cent was satisfactory and a very small minority of two per cent was unsatisfactory or poor. There is a significant amount of good and very good teaching in English throughout the school. This is having a very positive effect on the pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Teachers plan opportunities systematically for pupils to develop their literacy skills across many other areas of the curriculum. This further helps the pupils' reading and writing standards. There are similar strengths in mathematics and science, with pupils achieving high standards by the time they leave because of the highly effective teaching strategies. Although teaching in information technology is never less than satisfactory, the teachers' skills and confidence vary widely throughout the school. In the very few examples where teaching was unsatisfactory, the work was not well matched to the pupils' wide ranging needs and strategies to manage their behaviour were ineffective, leading to lost time for pupils' learning and progress. The high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is having a direct and positive impact on the pupils' learning and rate of progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very broad, well-balanced and of high quality; extra curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is excellent; the very high quality provision for pupils moral and social development makes a very positive contribution to their attitudes; pupils develop a heightened sensitivity and awareness of spiritual matters, and celebrate their own and others' cultures regularly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care for pupils is very good at every level; procedures for monitoring progress and methods for assessment are systematic and rigorous.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Many parents express a high degree of satisfaction about Herons Dale, the quality of the leadership and management, their children's progress and teaching. They have a high level of confidence in the school to do the best for their children.

The curriculum has many strong features. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective and have brought about continued improvement in standards. The high quality opportunities for pupils in combined arts is having an excellent impact on their speaking, listening and presentation skills. The school has developed very good procedures for assessing pupils and their progress is tracked rigorously.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership is excellent, providing vision and direction; the senior management team are highly effective and the deputy headteacher has strong and complimentary strengths to those of the headteacher.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good; the governing body is led ably and organised effectively into groups; the chair of governors, as a parent, also has considerable knowledge and insight into the school, the pupils and priorities, making for a well informed group of governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; there is a strong culture of reflection and reviewing its practice and performance at every level; this is firmly established over a long period of time.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; resources are carefully allocated and used to make a strong impact on the pupils' learning and progress.

Overall, accommodation is satisfactory although there are some limitations. The information technology suite has to be housed in a corridor, there is a lack of specialist science facilities, the library area is cramped, and the facilities for showering are inadequate. The school applies the principles of best value to its decisions and provides very good value for money.

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 coming to school; • The school expects and achieves high standards; • The school is well led and managed; • The teaching is good; • Children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not know what activities the school provides outside lessons.

The inspection confirmed all the strengths identified by parents. It would be useful for the school to clarify with parents what is offered outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards since the last inspection have continued to rise. The school is successful in enabling pupils to achieve levels that are higher than those usually achieved in relation to their special needs and data from examination and test results show a significant improvement, for example in mathematics and science.
2. By the age of eleven, more pupils are achieving higher levels. By the age of fourteen, standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. By the age of sixteen, pupils take Certificates of Achievement in English, mathematics, science, food technology, information technology and, more recently art. Results are improving steadily as more pupils achieve distinction now than in previous years. A small, but growing number of pupils are entered for GCSE mathematics and art. The school's pass rate has increased significantly between 1998 and 2000 in mathematics for example. This is much higher than the average achieved in similar schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The school sets high standards and targets, often challenging the pupils to exceed their previous goals and aspire towards distinction grades.
3. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are working at Levels 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum. Their achievements are satisfactory in information technology, and good in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education and religious education. They are very good in art and design and technology. Pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills and good progress in their understanding and use of number.
4. By the age of fourteen, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory in information technology, French and music, and good in English, history, geography, physical education and religious education. They are very good in mathematics, science, design and technology and art and excellent in combined arts. In English, pupils show a good grasp of language using a widening vocabulary. They show appreciation for literature and insight into characters from English classics. This is from a very low baseline on entering the school. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, and use increasingly effective strategies for developing numeracy skills. In science, pupils make very good gains in their use of vocabulary in order to explain scientific principles, and achieve very well by comparison with other similar schools.
5. By the age of sixteen, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory in information technology and music and good in English, history, geography, physical education and religious education. They are very good in mathematics, science, art, design and technology. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills and by the time they leave, show considerable maturity because of the very good quality teaching and high expectations set for them. They achieve outstanding results in combined arts, for example when presenting and performing dramatic presentations on themes such as togetherness and fragility. Poetry anthologies are high quality pieces of work that include sensitive writing about issues such as life, death and grief. These skills are further enhanced by musical activities, film shoots and art from around the world.
6. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development as they move through the school. A significant proportion enter the school with low self esteem and a lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities. The school is highly effective in developing the pupils' self-confidence and enabling them to realise what they can achieve and how to go about improving themselves.
7. Standards and trends have continued to improve since the previous inspection, including an increasingly diverse population of pupils with more complex special educational needs. This is confirmed by the growing number of pupils gaining nationally recognised awards and examinations.

8. In English, the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented effectively. It has been adapted appropriately, and modified for the pupils' specific needs. This has resulted in an improvement and greater fluency in pupils' reading levels throughout the school. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively, and considerable emphasis is placed upon providing opportunities for them to express their views, opinions and feelings both individually and in more public settings. Pupils develop a genuine understanding of how they can influence others, including decision making both within school and the wider local community using these skills.
9. The National Numeracy Strategy is also being implemented effectively. Standards in mathematics are very good. Pupils are using their numeracy skills effectively in other subjects across the curriculum, for example in measuring materials for design and technology, weighing ingredients in food technology, estimating the required materials for textiles, counting rhythm and beat in music and drawing graphs to present data using information technology skills.
10. In science, pupils' achievements are very good when compared to their previous knowledge and understanding. They make good and often very good progress. Standards in information technology are satisfactory and good in some parts of the secondary department.
11. Standards in art are well above the level usually expected for pupils in similar schools. Pupils develop a growing appreciation for the work of well known artists and learn a wide range of artistic techniques. They produce art work of high quality, showing awareness of colour and tone, and sensitivity to art in the world around them.
12. The school places great emphasis upon the pupils' achievements and learning. As a result, the pupils aspire to achieve certificates, awards and merits for their efforts. They are highly motivated to do well both academically and socially, and develop a genuine enjoyment for learning. Pupils recognise one another's efforts and sometimes applaud achievements spontaneously in lessons, without prompting. The school is very effective in promoting the pupils' academic, social and personal skills and as a result, pupils achieve high standards for the degree of their special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The previous report showed that this aspect was good overall, with pupils having positive attitudes to the work of the school, generally good behaviour, relationships and personal development. The school's own judgement is that it has moved even further forward in this area and inspectors find this to be the case. Pupils' attitudes to school, and what it has to offer, behaviour and relationships are very good and personal development is excellent. Attendance is good.
14. Very positive attitudes are seen in class and around the school. Pupils are happy to attend school, a view supported by parents. They develop a genuine enjoyment for learning and respond enthusiastically to all the activities that the school has to offer. In many lessons, pupils show very high levels of involvement and enthusiasm. For example, in a literacy lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils settled quickly to their work because they were able to follow well established routines that enabled them to concentrate well and sustain their effort. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, pupils were very focused on the task, responded very well to questions and displayed very good attitudes to the work provided. This was due to the very good relationship between the teacher and the pupils, the management of the pupils and the good pace of the lesson. On the very few occasions where pupils' attitudes slip below a satisfactory level, this is due mainly to a lack of effective management of their behaviour by the teacher. Pupils understand the importance of effort and the need for hard work to achieve their own personal best. Many have realistic, but suitably high, expectations of their own achievements. The school's ethos fully supports the pupils' striving towards academic excellence, but not to the exclusion of developing the pupils' skills in other areas, including social, emotional and spiritual aspects of life.
15. Behaviour across the whole school day, both in and out of the classroom is very good overall; parents agree with this view. The school does not seek to apportion blame, but to resolve problems

and difficulties, to help pupils say sorry and mean it, and to make amends and move on. Pupils have a good knowledge of the school's behaviour policy and strive to meet the high standards expected by staff. Those who experience difficulties as regards their behaviour are well supported, both by the staff and by the carefully drawn up individual education plans. Pupils know that if they misbehave they will have to account for their behaviour, sometimes to the head teacher. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for their behaviour and many are prepared to remind others of the need to behave correctly. Many pupils are able to recognise when they have misbehaved and are suitably embarrassed if caught out. Incidents of misbehaviour are well handled and disagreements, for example in the playground, may be resolved back in the classroom through class discussion. The school uses, chiefly with older pupils, a mature system of peer mediation that is very well understood and much appreciated by pupils. Pupils acknowledge that there are some incidents of bullying, but they know what they must do and say that matters are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school excluded two pupils last year for one fixed term period each; they are both well settled back into school.

16. Pupils are very trustworthy and courteous; they thank staff for lessons and show consideration for others, for example by holding doors open as a matter of course. They have very good levels of respect both for themselves and for others. They accept one another's differences, and experience difficulties in various ways, and make allowances for each other. Pupils are respectful of their own, each other's and the school's property. There is no graffiti, vandalism or litter around the school. Nothing in school is locked away, except on grounds of safety or security and pupils are allowed in school, with permission to, for example, use the computers at breaks during the day.
17. Pupils' personal development is excellent. It is very well supported by the personal, social and health education policy, but its enormous success is because it is totally embedded into the whole ethos of the school. Everyone in the school is highly valued and this allows recognition of their own worth, and growth in maturity and understanding. The relationships between pupils and staff are very good; they are based on trust and respect. Pupils feel very well supported by staff, they are listened to well and what they have to say is heard and valued. Because of this, they are able willingly to share some of their deepest thoughts and emotions with staff and with others in more public arenas if appropriate. Pupils' achievements are celebrated; they will spontaneously applaud each other's individual success. Pupils learn from an early age to be as independent as possible, for example, the youngest pupils are expected to hang up their coats and to collect what they need for their tasks. Older pupils can take full responsibility for carrying and looking after equipment when out on a trip to the local woodland nature reserve. Many of the oldest pupils are responsible for getting themselves to college, community service or work experience. Personal development is further supported through the school's council, which has representatives from Key Stage 2 upwards. Meetings are held regularly and issues, such as the level of playground supervision and teachers being in classrooms at the start of lessons, are discussed. Ways of ensuring that it is a good forum for consulting pupils are continually monitored and it has been decided recently to split the council into junior and senior groups with one person from the other group also in attendance. Two members of the school council have been elected to represent the school on the Adur District Youth Council. This forum discusses local matters such as where to site an area specifically designed for teenagers.
18. Attendance at school is good. The rate compares favourably with those of similar schools. The level of authorised absence is broadly in line with other schools, but the level of unauthorised absence is considerably better. Most pupils make use of transport provided by the authority; this generally arrives on time, allowing the school day to start punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching is a strength of the school. The high proportion of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching is having a very positive impact upon standards, the pupils' learning and rate of progress. Ninety eight per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better and thirty two per cent was good. Forty five per cent was very good and eight per cent was excellent. Thirteen per cent was satisfactory, and a very small proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
20. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good in the assessment unit. There is specialist experience in teaching pupils with complex needs that results in effective strategies to ensure learning and progress is sustained throughout the day. Teaching in the special support facility is good overall, with some very good features. The pupils in this facility, with autistic spectrum disorder, have very well established routines that help them make sense of the world around them, and develop their communication and social skills effectively. Pupils with exceptional needs are supported sensitively, and potential problems are addressed swiftly in order to minimise disruption to their learning. Literacy skills are taught systematically and pupils learn to write well formed letters and for a range of purposes.
21. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, but varies widely between excellent and poor. Teaching is satisfactory in information technology and music and good in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education and religious education. Teaching is very good in art and design and technology. There are examples of very good and excellent teaching, for example in Year 3, expectations are high and activities are very well organised. There is a strong emphasis upon developing the pupils' language as they learn to express their ideas with increasing fluency. This is well developed across other areas of the curriculum. In environmental studies, for example, pupils thought of good questions to ask a visitor who remembered the surrounding area long before the development of a shopping centre close by. They posed the questions carefully and gained new insight into their immediate locality as a result. In art, teaching is excellent and pupils achieve very high standards in relation to their special needs. There are weaknesses in teaching at the end of Key Stage 2, where work is not always well matched to the pupils' needs and limited experience in teaching pupils with special educational needs. The content of lessons is often broadly appropriate, but not developed in small steps for the pupils to understand fully. The management of pupils' behaviour is not sufficiently rigorous to maintain good order.
22. In Key Stage 3, teaching is very good overall. It is good in history, geography, physical education and religious education, and very good in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology. Teachers generally have very good subject knowledge, and their secondary expertise, for example in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, textiles, information technology and art, has a very positive impact on the pupils' rate of progress and learning. Teaching in information technology is good when taught by specialist teachers, and satisfactory overall. The very good quality teaching in mathematics and science sets very high standards for the pupils, often resulting in them achieving distinctions as they move on through the school. Teachers' own secure subject knowledge in these subjects has very positive effects, for example as pupils use an increasingly complex range of scientific vocabulary in their investigations. Similarly in mathematics and design technology, teachers are highly effective in developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teaching is very effective in design and technology as pupils learn a wide range of techniques for designing, making and evaluating their work. In English, the good quality teaching enables pupils to produce poetry of a high standard, including anthologies covering a wide range of topics, that show insight into themselves and the world around them.
23. In Key Stage 4, teaching is very good overall, with a small, but significant minority of excellent teaching. It is satisfactory or better in all subjects, and good in humanities, physical education and religious education. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics, science, art, and design and

technology. In textiles, for example, pupils develop accurate skills for producing wall size advent calendars, taking care and paying attention to the detail of sewing, measuring and completing their work. The very effective teaching means that many pupils work independently and know what they should do in order to improve further. Teaching in the combined arts is excellent, with outstanding opportunities to develop a wide range of artistic skills. The specialist expertise in the secondary department has direct benefits on the pupils' achievements and their rate of progress. Teachers are skilful in helping pupils to understand clearly what is expected of them and provide realistic and useful feedback on ways to improve further. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used very effectively to emphasise the main learning points and to evaluate the pupils' own understanding. Support staff are very effective and highly efficient in their work. They know the pupils well and make a direct contribution to their progress.

24. Teachers are highly enthusiastic and committed to further improvement in their own practice. Their knowledge and confidence in using information technology is growing, but varies across the school. In some instances, their own limited knowledge hinders the further development of pupils' own skills in the subject. They reflect systematically on their own teaching, and the very open culture where the quality of good teaching and learning is discussed regularly helps towards continued improvement in the overall quality of teaching.

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

25. The school has been very successful in developing and enriching the curriculum since the previous inspection. Pupils experience a curriculum which has the National Curriculum 2000 as its basis, but the school also sees the promotion of the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development as interdependent in reinforcing the more academic aspects of the National Curriculum. It is very successful in achieving this aim so that pupils are developing mature attitudes and values which underpin their good and very good levels of both social and academic learning.
26. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught as is religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). All statutory requirements are met fully. Planning for the youngest pupils in the assessment class is based on the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. For older pupils, schemes of work based on the national curriculum programmes of study are consistently applied to ensure that all pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum. Those pupils who have more complex special educational needs are very well supported by the exceptional needs department. A range of effective approaches, are used for those pupils on the autistic spectrum so that the majority are able to integrate into other classes in the school from Year 3 onwards.
27. In Key Stage 4, the flexibility allowed in the curriculum is well used to give pupils a wide and rich experience which prepares them well for the transfer from school to college or employment. Pupils can study towards the EdExcel Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, a double science award, food technology and information technology. The school works well in collaboration with a local secondary school to enable individual pupils to take GCSE courses in science, English and art. GCSE Mathematics is taken at Herons Dale School. The Youth Award Scheme - bronze level - is used to enrich and extend pupils' experience in for instance drama and community service. The Associated Education Board certificate in literacy and graphicacy add to the list of accreditation which are recorded in pupils' National Record of Achievement by the end of Year 11. In addition, there are community placement awards for pupils in Year 10 and gold star accreditations for careers run by the local careers service. Pupils are successful in gaining awards in both these areas.
28. The secure base of academic achievement is enriched with careful and specific integration of many activities. The combined arts programme which includes drama, movement, creative writing, music and art, as well as elements of citizenship and environmental awareness, is highly successful in helping each pupil grow in confidence as their personal skills help take them forward into future life. In its curricular statement the school says-'The essential feature of the school is to learn and we

endeavour to make this exciting and inspiring'. This is certainly being achieved and it is particularly strong in the secondary department.

29. The National Literacy Strategy is now securely established in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and is having a very beneficial effect in terms of consistency of planning and the significant rise in standards in English. The national numeracy strategy is well established in Key Stage 1 and 2 and elements of the strategy are also adapted for pupils in Key Stage 3. This is having a similar beneficial effect on standards in mathematics.
30. The organisation of the curriculum to ensure equality of access and opportunity is very good. Classes and teaching groups are carefully and imaginatively organised to meet the needs of every pupil and teachers use a range of approaches to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the learning. The specific needs of each pupil are met effectively through focused targets in their individual education plans and those pupils with more complex needs are well supported through the Exceptional Needs Department so that they are able to be fully integrated into all aspects of school life. The school is pro active at noting any attainment anomalies between boys and girls and takes active steps to address the anomalies. Boys and girls enjoy playing all team games together.
31. The school regards the PSHE programme as a vital element in nurturing the pupils social and personal development. Provision in this area is very good, as a result of which pupils are encouraged to grow in maturity and responsibility. By year 11 pupils are well prepared to take responsibilities within school and feel confident to participate independently in out of school activities. There is a scheme of work for PSHE adapted for National Curriculum 2000 which ensures that pupils are aware of important health and relationship issues as well as citizenship. The scheme of work includes sex education and for older pupils drugs awareness.
32. Careers education is well developed in the school and provision is good. From Key Stage 3 onwards pupils are gaining knowledge about the world of work through modules in the PSHE programme. In Year 10, pupils take part in community service as an element in their Youth Award Scheme; they also attend Brinsbury Agricultural College where they can experience a range of agricultural and horticultural activities. This is followed by two weeks of work experience at the end of year 10. Year 11 pupils attend Northbrook College of Further Education on a taster course when they can broaden their experience and they then have a further two weeks of work experience. This means that all pupils are able to make final decisions about their futures from a secure base of knowledge of the world of work and further education. The school works in close co-operation with the Careers Service who give support to pupils and parents through interviews and discussions from year 9 onwards. This support culminates in tutoring a course for year 11 pupils leading to the Careers Gold Star award.
33. All the work of the school, its ethos, its activities in and out of class and the ways in which the school community works together, provide a consistent, coherent and holistic approach to the wider aspects of pupils' education. Everyone, from the youngest pupil to the oldest member of staff, is valued and included and is expected to make a positive contribution.
34. The school talks of a 'spiritual journey' for adults and pupils alike. Spirituality is often planned for sensitively in lessons, such as science. Pupils are encouraged to take time to marvel at seeing a rainbow in a prism for the first time, or watching a wren in the woods and think about the wonders of creation. Similarly in art lessons, pupils of all ages are helped to look in detail at beautiful and interesting works and explore their personal reactions. The excellent and innovative combined arts course for older pupils, allows them to discover and express deep feelings and beliefs. They produce poetry and performances of significant maturity and of a quality rarely seen in schools of this type, showing the opportunities that they have had to reflect on and develop their own beliefs and experiences. Younger pupils quickly learn that they can talk about their faith and emotions in a respectful, secure and supportive context, and are helped to listen to each other constructively. Regular assemblies give good opportunities for pupils to worship together, and they learn about the significance of reverence and prayer through lessons in religious education.

35. Care for each other and for the things around us, is explicit throughout the school day. Pupils are taught what is right and wrong through firm, clear guidance and excellent role models provided by adults and other pupils. On occasions when pupils do not live up to the high standards set, they are expected to apologise and make things right. They almost always respond quickly with genuine but confident contrition, ready to do better next time. Responsibility to the community is emphasised. Many areas of the curriculum have strong links to the local area, and pupils are very involved in the community through visits, joint work with other schools and groups and personal connections. This helps them see the importance of individual and collective efforts to improve and support activities. They are encouraged to work for charitable causes such as a local shelter for homeless people.
36. Environmental issues are addressed in many subject areas. Concepts of the importance of protecting and appreciating the natural environment are carefully developed as pupils move up through the school. The school is situated in a beautiful part of the country with rich resources for teaching pupils about their culture through history, geography and the natural environment of sea, rivers and woods. As in other aspects of the school's provision, pupils' concepts are developed from the immediate and personal, to local and familiar and then to contrasting areas of Britain and the wider world. All subjects include good reflection of other world cultures, such as the food that they cook in food technology and the study of African art. Religious education helps develop proper respect for other, faiths very different from their own - for instance when they celebrate Divali with music and incense. Pupils meet lots of people from other cultures, usually through dance and theatre groups, but they have not yet had sufficient planned opportunities to meet other young British people or ordinary community members from different ethnic backgrounds.
37. Pupils understand that there are wider opportunities and greater responsibilities as they get older. The school carefully develops these, such as increasing freedom and space at playtime for the oldest primary pupils. Families are involved too, in helping their children become increasingly independent ready for residential trips. The out of school activities for primary pupils build skills and expectations of looking after and carrying equipment, dressing properly, rules for outings and support from and for ones friends. Pupils are given real responsibilities on a regular basis and there are high expectations of what they can cope with. Older pupils independently organised a meeting, time and venue for a group people from different parts of the school to meet inspectors. Others took responsibility for meeting and introducing an inspector to staff in a local high school. Drama is used particularly effectively to help pupils reflect on and develop their responses to social situations. This can be role play in lessons, when they think about how they feel about hurtful put-downs, or a visit from a theatre company with a production about parenthood. The school creates good opportunities for pupils to work with mainstream peers and regular inclusion in other schools is a strong feature of provision. Pupils also work together with other community members, adults and children, in workshops and at festivals.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It has made good improvements since the last inspection and the creative, skilled attention given to these aspects shows that there is capacity to improve still further. It is a school at the heart of its local community with vision and values that extend to everyone that they work with.
39. Provision for extra curricular activities is excellent. Despite many pupils living a distance from the school evening visits to the theatre and other extended-day outings are regularly arranged. All pupils from Year 3 upwards have the opportunity for a residential visit which involves outdoor pursuits and social activities. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for some of the organisation of these visits with, for instance Key Stage 3 pupils helping at the centre for alternative technology in Wales. Lunch time clubs such as hockey, guitar, drawing and recorder are popular. The school participates regularly in inter school sports matches and events. Pupils perform with local poetry, drama and dance groups and staff arrange week end transport to enable pupils to attend rehearsals.
40. The school's links with the local community are very good and make a major contribution to the richness of the pupils' curricular experience. Many individuals and groups work with the pupils. For instance pupils researched the early film industry of Shoreham and a local playwright wrote a play

on that theme which was performed by pupils in a local theatre. A coach from Brighton and Hove Albion gives regular support to junior and senior pupils in football and twelve local artists supported pupils in a range of crafts and artistic activities in a very successful Arts day. Pupils are also involved in local poetry events as well as drama and dance. Facilities at a local college are used for music and swimming and the school makes very good use of local places of importance to enhance learning in geography, history and religious education.

41. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. When pupils first enter the school links are established to support transition with part time integration if necessary. A number of senior pupils have successfully studied for GCSE subjects at a local secondary school. Herons Dale School welcomes nursery nurse students on placement from the local college of further education as well as pupils from other schools on work experience. Therapists for example, frequently bring students to visit the school to widen their knowledge. The school has very well established links with two further education colleges as well as local employers as part of the careers programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. There was a strong, caring and supportive environment at the time of the last inspection and this is still the case. All staff in the school are committed to the well-being of the pupils and respect their individual needs and particular requirements for care. The school works hard to ensure that pupils' time in school benefits their academic and personal development. Parents speak very highly of the school; they feel that there is a very positive platform for learning where pupils feel safe and where they are well known to all staff. Because of their knowledge of individual pupils staff are able to quickly deal with any potential problems. The inspectors agree and they noted the very good level of supervision provided during the school day, including playtimes and lunch breaks.
43. The key issue raised in the previous inspection report, relating to health and safety with the home to school transport, has been dealt with effectively. Pupils are very well supervised and cared for when they arrive and depart at the beginning and end of the day. There are excellent child protection procedures. All members of the senior management team are appropriately trained and the headteacher is the named child protection officer. Induction procedures for new staff include training in child protection.
44. Overall, the school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. There is consistency throughout the school in the way in which pupils' strengths and weaknesses are identified. Procedures for the annual review of pupils' statements are very good; they fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. The transition plans, when pupils move to Key Stage 4, are detailed and fully involve the pupils, parents and careers officers. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good. Portfolios of pupils' work are kept and levels of attainment are recorded in all subjects, most being appropriately annotated although there are some weakness in French. Teachers use assessment effectively; this can be seen in the very good progress made by pupils as they move through the school and the success in external examinations. Assessment data is very carefully analysed and target setting is of a high quality, being much better than is usually seen in similar schools. Since the last inspection, the targets on individual education plans have improved and they are now of a very good quality.
45. The school uses a range of effective strategies to support pupils in improving their achievements. Praise is used well in lessons and opportunities to celebrate achievements are taken in assemblies. Personal, social education and health is taught throughout the school and forms an integral part of all the work of the school. Outside agencies are used effectively to the benefit of pupils. They are well supported by a good range of specialists and particularly by the educational psychologist and speech and language therapist. Progress and personal development are monitored through targets set in individual education plans. Parents are kept fully informed about what pupils are learning and contact is often made through the home-school book or by telephone. The head of the primary school is available on Friday mornings and can always be contacted then.

Annual reports to parents are very good; they contain details of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 produce a National Record of Achievement.

46. The monitoring of attendance is good. The registers are correctly marked and reasons for absences are noted at the end of each week. The education welfare officer checks the registers on a monthly basis and follows up any concerns. The school regards any form of bullying as being unacceptable and has very effective procedures in place to deal with any incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour that may take place. There are good procedures for recording any serious incidents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school's partnership with its parents is very good; it has built on the positive position described in the previous report. Those parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting before the inspection express a very high level of support for the school. The only concern expressed through the questionnaire is that a number of parents do not know what is the range of activities provided outside the classroom. All parents agree that the school sets high expectations and their children make good progress, that their children are helped to become mature and responsible and that the teaching is good. Parents also agree that their children like school, the behaviour is good, and the school is well led and managed. They feel they are kept well informed, and are confident in approaching the school with concerns and questions, because of the close working partnership with them. Something that parents particularly like is the non-judgemental approach with parents. Inspectors fully agree with all the positive comments made.
48. The information received by parents is very good. Reports are of a good quality giving good and specific details of what their child can do and what has been learned and understood. They contain a good section on personal development that shows the very good knowledge class teachers have of their pupils. Parents particularly appreciate their involvement in drawing up and reviewing pupils' individual education plans. They are kept informed about what their children are learning; for example, in the primary department this is done chiefly through the very well used home school books and for the oldest pupils through the information booklets provided for Years 10 and 11. A regular Newsletter keeps parents informed about events and activities at school and is appreciated by parents. Other letters are sent on a need basis.
49. The school works very hard to build and maintain good relationships with all parents. For those parents who are less happy about approaching the school the headteacher works particularly hard to make productive contact, including making home visits. The school runs a number of social events for parents ranging from bingo to quiz nights. Parents are invited to a number of meetings each year at which their child's progress can be discussed; annual review meetings are very well attended as are parents' evenings, especially those for the younger and oldest pupils. Meetings have been held about child protection and information and communication technology and one is planned for citizenship. Very good contact is maintained by staff in the primary department by telephone; the head of department is always available to talk to parents on Friday mornings. Parents are well supported if there are particular concerns, for example over behaviour, by the exceptional needs department.
50. The school involves the parents in working parties to support the school as much as possible; one of the most recent was the drawing up of the home school agreement. Questionnaires are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents, such as the usefulness of parents' evenings. The school is fortunate in having a number of parents who are able to come into school to help with listening to reading, supporting with French, helping with the library, food technology, swimming and school visits. The overall effects of all these links on the work of the school and progress made by the pupils are very good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, providing clear educational direction for the school, with vision for special educational provision more widely. There is a continual striving to improve further and the headteacher has high expectations for herself, staff and the pupils alike. The senior management are highly effective and the deputy headteacher has strong and complimentary skills to those of the headteacher. The impact is strong and evident in high standards achieved, over and above what is normally attained by pupils with this degree of special educational needs. Careful thought has been given towards developing the school's aims. These are revisited and refined regularly, and reflected consistently across the school in almost all areas.
52. The headteacher introduced systematic procedures for the school to review its own effectiveness long before it was a national initiative. There is a culture firmly embedded within the school of reflection and reviewing practice, in order to develop and improve further. This is evident amongst staff and pupils. It has strong features of a community that is continually learning about itself, what is done well and what areas should be given further attention.
53. Teaching is monitored regularly and systematic feedback provided. The quality of teaching has continually improved as a result, for example there is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection, weaknesses identified in the teaching at that time have been eradicated.
54. The school development plan is focused, precise and quantified and provides a rigorous tool for tracking and measuring progress. There is a clear understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses demonstrated by the senior management team and governing body alike. Staff are enthusiastic and have excellent capacity to succeed and improve further.
55. The senior management, including the deputy headteacher and heads of primary and secondary department are rigorous, robust and suitably strategic in their thinking; they have clearly delegated responsibilities for their respective departments. The headteacher and deputy headteacher teach throughout the school; they are high quality teachers themselves, providing excellent role models for other teachers to follow and model their own practice.
56. The deputy headteacher has skills that compliment those of the headteacher, for example in the process and implementation of new initiatives. Coordinators are effective in their work and have a clear understanding of the priorities for their subjects. In addition, they all have a breadth of understanding of the pupils, standards of work and quality of teaching through monitoring, teaching every class in their phase and discussing pupils' progress extensively across the school.
57. The governing body are active and well organised into sub groups. They have link areas to different parts of the school. The chair of governors is also a parent with useful insights into the impact of the governing body's decisions upon the pupils.
58. The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and have a good understanding of the school's current priorities and needs. Although supportive, they also question matters as critically friends and, for example, set the headteacher suitably rigorous targets for her own work that are monitored through the year. The school brochure is currently being revised. It is out of date and has significant gaps in its content that means it fails to meet statutory requirements.
59. Financial planning is efficient, and linked closely to current school development priorities. Staff with management responsibilities have clear lines of accountability and delegation throughout the school. Grants are used prudently, for example in employing additional support assistants. Many teachers have additional qualifications for their work, and half have completed, or are about to complete higher degrees with research based on aspects of the school in the last two years. There is a high expectation for teachers, after their induction year, to pursue MA qualifications that will not only benefit themselves, but also the school. Induction for new staff is given careful thought and there is a separate policy for the induction of new staff.

60. Accommodation is adequate but has limitations, for example in information technology, where resources have to be sited in the corridor and the lack of a separate and specialist science facilities that directly impact on the range and level of science investigations possible. This is particularly limiting for pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The library area, although improved, still has limitations. The changing facilities for older pupils are inadequate and unsatisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory and good in information technology.
61. Best value principles are applied, for example the headteacher has been on working parties related to identifying how schools can demonstrate they add value. These principles are now included successfully into the school's practice.
62. The leadership and management had strengths previously at the time of the last inspection that have been surpassed and improved even more. The very good elements of leadership have now become excellent. The school is dynamic and forward thinking because of the excellent leadership and management.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- **Further raise standards in information technology by:
improving planning at Key Stages 1 and 2;
developing pupils' skills and understanding more systematically;
increasing the skills and confidence in staff using information technology;
using information technology across the curriculum more widely.**

As referred to in paragraphs 24,120,121,122,126

- **Improve accommodation for science, information technology and the library, and specifically providing adequate facilities and arrangements for showering.**

As referred to in paragraphs 60,89,142

The school may also wish to address the following less important weakness:

To update the school brochure

As referred to in paragraph 58

Appoint a music coordinator for Key Stages 1 and 2

As referred to in paragraph 129

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	45	32	13	1	1	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	116
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9
Average class size	11

Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	666,853
Total expenditure	650,541
Expenditure per pupil	5657
Balance brought forward from previous year	19188
Balance carried forward to next year	35,500

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	116
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	32	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	0	0	6
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	42	0	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	16	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	45	0	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	32	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	40	0	0	20

Parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction about the school. A significant number feel they do not know about activities outside lessons.

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

ENGLISH

63. Standards in English are good and continue to improve. This is shown by the results of national tests and teachers assessments when pupils are aged seven, eleven and fourteen. Pupils make significant progress so that by the age of fourteen, a good percentage of pupils were assessed at being at National Curriculum Level 3. Pupils at fourteen take the Associated Examination Board test in Literacy and results are consistently good with the majority of pupils gaining Level 3 in that test by the time they leave the school. Pupils at sixteen now take the Assessment Qualification Alliance Certificate of Achievement in English and again the majority of pupils have gained distinction in this accreditation in both 1999 and 2000. Improvement in standards since the previous inspection is very good.
64. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to develop their skills in English. They are able to recall events and talk about them clearly in sentences with an awareness of the correct grammar. The contribution of the speech and language therapist to this age group is particularly helpful as she works alongside teachers in the classroom and is able to help pupils extend their language skills in all lessons. Pupils are practising copy writing with increasing control and accuracy. They really enjoy books and stories and are keen to read which they do with enthusiasm and expression. They regularly take books home to read which helps them to practise the words they know.
65. The National Literacy Strategy has now been established effectively from the youngest pupils through to the age of fourteen. This has been very effective in giving pupils a consistent and developing experience and forms the foundation for the good progress they all make.
66. By the age of eleven, pupils have increased their skills in speaking and listening so that they are able to join in discussion of more complex ideas. They have a clear understanding of the meaning of words and have a wide range of vocabulary so that these discussion skills can be used in many other subjects of the curriculum. This is especially useful in developing their social confidence to explain themselves and their point of view. By the age of eleven, pupils' writing is becoming more sophisticated - they can write simple sentences correctly with legible, even handwriting using joined up script as well as correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. There is a strong teaching emphasis on correctness in writing which gives pupils the tools to express themselves in writing stories, poems and accounts for a range of purposes. By the age of eleven, reading has become an integral part of each pupil's life and hence they can develop real enjoyment from literature of all kinds. Teachers foster this enjoyment with careful selection of exciting literature which extends pupils' vocabulary and awareness. A poem read by Year 5 pupils about leaves was used very effectively in this way and the pupils had great fun in comparing the description in the poem and their experience and observation of leaves on a visit to local woods they had made earlier in the week.
67. By the age of fourteen, pupils are really confident to talk and read to their group and in the drama and Combined Arts sessions to a wider audience. All pupils in a Key Stage 3 group, reading a play, were keen to take a part and were able to do so with considerable skill in the use of expression and timing. In a history lesson on the Civil War, pupils showed they were able to empathise with and explain the motives of the people involved. By this key stage, writing is becoming confident enough for pupils to experiment in story writing and especially poetry, with great success. Many pupils have found in poetry a rich source of ideas and a medium for expressing their thoughts and feelings. By Year 9, pupils are beginning to read with discernment. They are able to use the text to deepen their perceptions of the characters in the novel or play.
68. By the age of sixteen, pupils work successfully through the syllabus for the Certificate of Achievement and this is enhanced and enriched by the integration of drama and poetry. Pupils' skills and knowledge of the techniques of dramatic writing are at a high level so that they are able

to use these skills in a range of contexts; for example in discussing social issues, thinking about the characters in a play, or in rehearsal and performances of themes in the combined arts programme. These skills culminate in an annual public performance of a very high standard. The most recent production - a story based on the early film industry in Shoreham - enabled pupils to learn about the task of script writing as well as film making. In their poetry sessions they show their ability to read with real expression and to consider and describe complex insights into the mind of the poet. They use words with precision and can explain their viewpoint clearly and persuasively.

69. The foundation of this good progress and high standards is the way teachers use the national strategy to give rigour to planning a consistent experience for all pupils as they move through the school. This is backed up by thorough focused teaching of the specific skills of English which is well supported for some pupils by the exceptional needs department. Added to this is the very rich experience of carefully chosen literature and drama opportunities which becomes the medium of the teaching and it is this which inspires and motivates pupils to learn with enthusiasm and perseverance.
70. The quality of teaching seen in over two thirds of lessons is very good. Other lessons are good with one lesson with weak management of pupils being poor. All teachers plan with clear and challenging objectives. They know their pupils' skills and aptitudes well and plan work to extend those skills and fill the gaps. They are skilled in using the literacy strategy and have high expectations of 'getting it right' in handwriting, punctuation and spelling. ICT is used effectively both to consolidate spelling and phonic skills and in word processing and presenting final drafts of work. The support staff are deployed very effectively and are themselves very skilled in assisting pupils. Pupils' work is assessed regularly to keep a measure and track of progress. The features of the very good teaching include careful listening and support given to pupils' contributions. This enabled pupils to gain confidence, use the vocabulary necessary to express themselves and extend their thinking. The inspired choice of literature including novels, poetry and plays is used very well and becomes the vehicle for the development of language and the effective development of grammatical skills. For instance a play reading was used to develop first the use of expressive reading, and then analysed to show how the writer had used punctuation. In another lesson the teacher gave special attention to rhyming words to consolidate phonic awareness and then focused on specific words to develop empathic skills to tease out the complex story in the mind of the poet in "The Trap".
71. Pupils respond to this high quality teaching with enthusiasm. They enjoy their lessons, work hard and persevere to draft and perfect work so that they can do their best. Presentation of work is neat and careful and they are rightly proud of it. In discussion they take turns and are sensitive to others in the group.
72. The co-ordination of the subject is very effective in both the Upper and Lower school. Teachers are well supported. There is an active vision to find ways to develop pupils' experiences and raise standards for instance in the use of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for pupils in the special class or consideration of how standards can be raised from level 3 to 4 for older pupils. Resources are overall satisfactory. The library has been re-organised and is now a pleasant and welcoming area. The range of books is, however, only just adequate and senior pupils lack an area suitable for research and personal study and hence their library skills are not as strong as they could be.
73. The level of improvement since the last inspection is very good. Standards have risen especially by the age of fourteen, and the implementation of the Certificate of Achievement for the oldest pupils between fourteen and sixteen has been very successful. The quality of teaching has improved and information and communications technology (ICT) is now well integrated into teachers' planning. Whole school targets in literacy are now regularly set. All pupils are now developing literacy skills which are enabling them to make full benefit from all their other experiences in school life.

MATHEMATICS

74. The achievement of the majority of pupils is good by the ages of seven and eleven and very good by the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Pupils in Year 11 achieve very good results in the Certificate of Achievement examination and a few of the higher attaining pupils attain standards that are close to the national average in GCSE mathematics. In 2000, a third of the pupils entered, gained A-G grades in GCSE. Standards in mathematics are much higher than those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils make good progress by the ages of seven and eleven, and very good progress by the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The high standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' work is of a consistently high quality. Their performance is similar to that in English and there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The National Numeracy Strategy is providing a clear framework for planning, particularly for pupils up to the age of eleven, and most teachers are implementing it successfully. It is also having a significant influence in developing teachers' planning in other subjects.
75. By the time they are seven, pupils in the assessment unit are learning to recognise and count numbers up to five. The teacher puts knitted woollen bees on the fingertips of one pupil and encourages the class to chant a number rhyme. This helps them to learn the names of each number and order them correctly. Good planning to use different resources such as coloured blocks, number plaques and jigsaws further reinforces the concept of five and helps them to make good progress. Pupils in the special support facility with autistic spectrum disorders are beginning to write numbers and count to 20. The higher attainers apply their knowledge by doing simple addition sums. The teacher challenges them to think of different ways to set out their addition sums and then asks them to check their answers by counting with coloured blocks. Whilst doing this work, the opportunity is taken to teach mathematical language; for example, the concept of more or less than eight. Teachers use the daily mental arithmetic sessions effectively to sharpen pupils' knowledge of basic number work such as addition and subtraction. Planning is particularly good for these oral lessons, with carefully thought out questions that build successfully on their previous learning. Pupils with complex needs enjoy mathematics and receive a curriculum that is adapted effectively to meet their learning difficulties.
76. By the time they are 11, pupils' mathematical skills are improving. In a very good lesson, pupils count on using different numbers; for example, the teacher asks the pupils to count on in 2s, 3s and 5s. For lower attaining pupils, who have difficulty with this work, the teacher provides sets of cotton reels and asks them to arrange them in different sets. This helps them to gain a better understanding of sets and develops multiplication skills. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to work more independently, most are familiar with numbers to 100 and can order them correctly. When the teacher asks how they can tell the difference between an odd and an even number one pupil tells the class that even numbers can be shared out equally. Occasionally, a few pupils at Key Stage 2 pupils are inattentive, chatter too much and call out, this wastes time and leads to unsatisfactory learning.
77. By the time that pupils reach the age of 14, they are developing skills of investigation. In a very good lesson to introduce probability, the teacher places a £5 note on the magnetic board and tells the pupils that the winner of the bingo game they are about to play can keep it. The pupils are very excited and listen carefully to the rules before commencing play. After about ten minutes, one pupil realises that it is impossible to shake the dice three times and then get the numbers to add up to 19, 20 or 21 to match those on the bingo card. A very good explanation by the teacher leads into a discussion about the probability and how slim the chances are of shaking three dice and obtaining a number such as 18 or a low number such as three.
78. By the time they are 16, pupils are well prepared for leaving school, all having followed an accredited course in mathematics during their last two years in school. During the inspection pupils studying for their Certificate of Achievement examination examine different graphs about breakfast cereals. The work is challenging for the majority, especially when the teacher asks the pupils to answer questions about the graphs. Very good teaching enables the majority to read the graph correctly and then interpret data, which results in the pupils producing tally charts and writing sentences in answer to the questions. In another very good lesson, the teacher working with the GCSE group outlines a design task for the pupils. They are asked to prepare for a three day camp in Edale by

getting a camping stove, sleeping bag, clothing and most the of food they will require into a rucksack. The teacher leaves them to work independently in pairs for a considerable time before stopping them and sharing some of the things they are learning; for example, some pupils discover that it is much easier to carry packet soup than canned soup and drinks can be bought as they are required.

79. Numeracy skills are applied very well in other subjects. Good examples of this are: working out how many pupils in the class are present at the beginning of the day; interpreting a timeline in history when learning about the Victorians and contrasting the temperature of the UK with the Sahara desert in a science lesson.
80. The teaching of mathematics is very good in over 60 per cent of lessons, good in 25 per cent and satisfactory in almost all others. Teachers have responded to the numeracy training enthusiastically and whole-class teaching at the beginning and end of lessons is having a very positive effect on raising the level of attainment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Planning is very good overall and there is some outstanding lesson planning which clearly identifies the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught. Most teachers have high expectations and use very good questioning skills to reinforce learning outcomes and assess what pupils have learned. The school has not given sufficient thought to how information and communications technology can be used to support the work in mathematics. Most teachers manage their pupils very well, use time effectively and adapt lessons well to meet the diverse learning needs of the pupils. However, occasionally time is lost managing unsatisfactory behaviour; this affects the quality of learning for other pupils.
81. Pupils' response is very good overall. Most work very well individually and when asked, collaborate well in smaller groups. They are attentive and show interest in their work with some higher attainers sustaining their concentration for long periods of time.
82. Mathematics is very well co-ordinated throughout the school. The co-ordinators liaise very well together and have been instrumental in the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment is very good. The use of assessment to formulate mathematical targets on individual plans was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. This aspect of the work has improved and targets are now very good.

SCIENCE

83. Standards of attainment in science are above those in similar schools. The school has maintained a high standard of provision since the last inspection and developed aspects of resources and curriculum. This represents good improvement. All pupils make good progress working through a broad, relevant programme that progressively builds skills as they move up through the school.
84. By the age of seven, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can talk about what plants need grow. They point to roots and shoots and know that the bulbs they plant will flower in spring. They experience different materials and experiment with magnets. They are encouraged to observe closely and some pupils have produced impressive and detailed drawings of fruit and vegetables. By the time that they are eleven, at the end of Key Stage 2, they recognise and name several common birds, flowers and trees. They know about the ways in which some materials change when heated and that sometime these are reversible. They use some good technical vocabulary appropriately such as the names of gases and food groups following the good models set by adults during lessons. They are encouraged to hypothesise and, for example when in the woods, scan the environment for clues and answers to questions such as 'Where is the crab apple tree? Why are the fruit so far away from it? How do we know that these burrows are deserted?'
85. By the time that they are fourteen, at the end of Key Stage 3, they know what to do to keep healthy, can name a number of internal organs and describe their functions. Higher attainers give considerable detail, others give less but still use the correct terminology. They study habitat and are challenged by the teacher to find out how a desert rat survives in the fierce heat or how a seal

manages to live in icy conditions. This gets them thinking creatively and searching CD ROMs for answers. Pupils in a group of lower attainers remember the words 'transparent', 'translucent' and 'opaque' and use them correctly. They learn about forces and can talk about gravity and the properties of magnets. The national tests at the end of the key stage show that pupils are doing best in aspects of science about plants and animals and about forces and the physical world. The lack of specialist accommodation in the school means that pupils have had less experience of working with apparatus and chemicals. Their experimental skills and knowledge about aspects of materials are not as developed as other aspects of the science curriculum. By the age of sixteen, all the oldest pupils follow an accredited course and gain at least a pass grade. The highest attainers gain distinctions at both levels of the certificate course and gain GCSE passes, working with pupils at the local high school. Pupils use the correct scientific terminology for all the topics that they study, and enjoy displaying this knowledge. They can talk in detail about systems in the human body, such as digestion and the way oxygen is transported. They draw labelled diagrams to show how plants reproduce, and can explain the effects of pollution on the environment. They extract information from tables and graphs, but not always with the same confidence or accuracy that they show in other aspects of their work.

86. Teaching is good in the primary department and very good for secondary pupils, with some excellent lessons. In the best lessons, planning is detailed and shared with support assistants. This allows concepts and vocabulary to be very well emphasised and echoed by the pupils throughout the lesson. Work is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Concepts are carefully developed through modules and over time. Pupils are encouraged routinely to hypothesise, ask and answer questions. Close observation is encouraged, and pupils are taught to scan an environment for clues. Boisterous younger pupils were immediately quiet, still and attentive when the teacher said 'Sh, what's that bird?'. There is shared delight when a senior pupil first sees the rainbow in a prism and says 'It's magic'. Good links to other lessons such as geography and art help pupils to learn more effectively. Teachers take care to develop English skills too during lessons, such as the correct spelling of 'light'. They encourage pupils to speak at length and add detail and reasons for the things that they say. Social, moral and spiritual aspects of development are also included in planning, for example, when younger pupils are given copies of the country code before a field trip to a nature reserve and think carefully about how they can help look after the natural environment. Pupils are helped to express their own opinions and become confident to express their faith and feelings in relation to the lesson. The best teaching is underpinned by very good subject knowledge as well as high expectations of learning and behaviour; pupils rise to this and give of their best too. In the few lessons where there are unsatisfactory features some activities are rushed so that there is not sufficient time to focus on the scientific knowledge. Work routines are not sufficiently secure and time is lost because of difficult behaviour.
87. The curriculum is broad and balanced, at all key stages. Good use is made of the nationally published materials for primary pupils, while younger secondary pupils follow an appropriate commercial scheme. Work for the oldest pupils is based on a suitable accredited scheme leading to GCSE for the highest attainers. Teachers work hard to make the work immediately relevant to the pupils, making very good links to their own experiences and using local resources where possible. The lack of specialist accommodation has a negative impact on some aspects of provision – particularly work involving chemicals and heat, and the independent choice of methods and recoding strategies when conducting experiments. ICT is used well in some lessons, but requires further development to permeate all classes.
88. Assessment is thorough and useful. Annual reports to parents are good and explain what pupils have covered during the year as well as explaining the progress that they have made. Information from assessments, together with teachers' very good knowledge of pupils, is effectively used to plan lessons.
89. Science is very well co-ordinated by a primary and a secondary teacher who collaborate very successfully. They have a very well researched development plan, where the views of pupils were canvassed along with information from teachers. This has led to a focus on aspects such as the interests and attainment of girls in different areas of the subject, and a widening of the range of

teaching and learning styles. There is a very positive ethos in lessons and pupils look forward to them – sometimes thanking teachers spontaneously afterwards and saying that they have enjoyed themselves. Resources are well managed and where appropriate, stored centrally. The lack of specialist accommodation is currently being addressed and for one term a year, senior pupils will use laboratory space in a local middle school. There is very good use of community and personal connections – for example one of the co-ordinators is a member of the teachers advisory panel to the Science Museum.

90. Science provision makes a very positive contribution to the life of the school and the academic and social achievement of pupils.

ART

91. Pupils make very good progress in art during their time at school. They achieve higher standards than is normally expected for the degree of their special needs by the ages of seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen. Art has a very high profile across the school and the pupils' work is celebrated with care and creativity.
92. All pupils have very good quality sketch books that are used regularly, in close observation work, line drawing, colour mixing, collections of postcards, pictures or samples of fabric. All teachers have sketch books that are used to encourage pupils to use their eyes and notice the world around them with increasing awareness and detail. As a result, there are many examples where pupils show a growing appreciation of culture and artistic qualities.
93. Teaching overall is good for pupils up to the age of seven, very good for pupils up to the age of eleven, with some excellent features, very good for pupils up to the ages of fourteen and sixteen, with excellent features for example in combined arts. Pupils develop the skills for reviewing their own work and making constructive comments on other's work. There is a very effective emphasis on planning, doing and reviewing with younger pupils and older pupils show awareness of how they might improve further in the future.
94. Combined arts make an outstanding contribution to the curriculum, enriching the pupils' academic and social opportunities. The activities make an excellent impact on many aspects of the pupils' learning and development academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Pupils develop skills in music, poetry, art and drama whereby they gain increasing confidence to express their feelings and emotions in considerable depth. These skills make an excellent contribution to the pupils' personal development as they have greater insight into themselves and others. Many pupils for example gain growing confidence to express themselves in public and all pupils show a high level of respect and courtesy for one another's contributions. They learn to explore life issues including love, grief and fear and in drama for example concepts including togetherness and fragility were conveyed powerfully and dramatically. The high quality poetry anthologies demonstrate sensitivity as pupils create and read work of their own and others at times leading to emotional and moving moments in the school.
95. The pupils' artistic skills are developed systematically, using a wide range of materials. Teachers set high expectations for pupils to gain nationally recognised awards and a GCSE course has been more recently established. Art and combined arts makes a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Art has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspections with very good improvements overall.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Pupils' achievement and progress in design and technology are good up to the age of seven and very good by the time they are eleven, fourteen and sixteen. Since the last inspection the school has developed a very good scheme of work that fully meets the needs of the pupils at Herons Dale School. The National Curriculum is well covered and accreditation is offered in resistant materials, textiles and food technology. This provides a good focus for the work at the upper end of the school, and has a positive impact upon pupils' attainment and progress.
97. Some of the youngest pupils in the school in the special support facility discuss how they are going to make a fruit salad. The teacher stresses the importance of good hygiene and proper use of equipment. The pupils enjoy the lesson and are well supervised with staff taking care to ensure that they follow instructions and are careful when peeling and cutting fruit. Good questioning by the teacher about the shape of apples, oranges and bananas leads to a deeper discussion about the pip and growth of apple trees.
98. By the time they are 11, pupils' skills of design improve significantly. Pupils making their own pages for a pop-up book are inspired by some very good teaching; this helps them to appreciate a different range of joining and fixing techniques. For example, different adhesives, split pins and sliding components. In the plenary session the teacher invites pupils to talk about their projects and some higher attainers give clear explanations about how they have constructed their pages. Their responses show that they are making very good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to disassembly, design and construction.
99. By the age of 14, pupils develop a better understanding about materials. In the craft workshop a group are being introduced to a new project where their brief is to design a barbican with a working gatehouse. The pupils respond well to the teacher's questions about the different materials castles are made from and they go on to discover that stone had to be transported a long way to build the castles in Sussex. Some of the group are using the workshop for the first time and the teacher takes the opportunity to stress safety, especially when machinery is being used; pupils learn where the electrical cut-off points are located.
100. In their final two years at school, pupils study accredited courses. They experience working with a wide range of materials and tools and develop very good design and making skills, which will be of practical use to them when they leave school. In an outstanding textiles lesson, pupils are designing a fabric advent calendar as part of their Youth Award Scheme. They are challenged by the teacher to think about quality, cost, resources and the tools needed to complete the task. Further excellent questioning enabled the pupils to extend their thinking by selecting materials with an eye to colour and durability. Pupils studying for the Certificate of Achievement in food technology design a vegetarian meal. The teacher outlines the task well and invites pupils to express their ideas. The teacher values their opinions and then extends the pupils' thinking by suggesting different avenues of research. Unfortunately the Internet is not working because of very bad weather conditions; however, the pupils show their maturity and growing independence by using a range of books and magazines to develop their ideas. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by the teacher and support assistant. Pupils working with resistant materials are assembling a shelf as part of their Youth Award Scheme course. They watch closely as the teacher gives a very good demonstration of how to use a cordless drill. Clear explanations and very good questioning by the teacher develop pupils' understanding of different functions; for example, how to increase the speed of the drill and adjust the tension.
101. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at all other Key Stages. The best features of teaching are the planning and secure subject knowledge of the teachers. Learning objectives are very clear and the modules of work are carefully structured to develop pupils' skills and their knowledge and understanding of design. The design aspect of the work is very well taught. All staff take care to ensure that pupils wear appropriate protective clothing and are careful to observe safety guidelines when using tools. Information and communication technology is starting to be used in design and technology but the school is aware that this is an area that requires

further development. Aspects of the work relating to hygiene are well taught. There are good links with other subjects such as English, mathematics, science, art, history, and geography; for example, the Africa project was used effectively in food technology to prepare different foods and develop cultural awareness. The management of behaviour is very good and support assistants have clearly defined roles and provide effective support.

102. Pupils enjoy design and technology, they respond very well to their teachers and work co-operatively together. They are able to concentrate for long periods of time, their behaviour is good and they can be trusted to use the equipment sensibly.
103. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a very good scheme of work. Accommodation and resources have been improved in the lower part of the school with the provision of work benches and tool boxes; the craft workshop is now satisfactorily used and the food technology room has been refurbished. The quality of teaching has improved significantly at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and the high quality of the teaching has been maintained at Key Stage 4.
104. Design and technology is very well led, assessment is very good and work displayed around the school and photographic records are evidence of the wide range of work being covered.

GEOGRAPHY

105. The pupils' standards in geography are above those in similar schools. Pupils throughout the school make good progress. They study interesting topics that are linked to their own experiences and environment and are taught by teachers who are skilled and enthusiastic. This maintenance of good standards, with continued development of resources and curriculum, represents good improvement since the last inspection.
106. The youngest pupils explore their immediate environment and all the adults in the school help them to learn about the special things that happen in different parts of the school, and who belongs where. This is extended into the local community and they learn to recognise different sorts of buildings and land use. They develop the vocabulary of topics such as weather and direction, through conventional infant activities. By the time that they are eleven, pupils have experienced a rich variety of field trips and skills have been carefully developed. They have first hand evidence of the impact of building a shopping centre on the immediate environment of the school, and can talk about how this affects the local population. They have also been taught about their own personal responsibility towards the natural environment, identifying risks, such as fire and damage, and discuss how to avoid them. They respond by showing great respect for their surroundings in the countryside and take a pride in relating what they have learned to the things that they see. They know the four points of the compass and follow a simple sketch map on a walk through the woods, noting landmarks and recalling what they saw at different points. They begin to compare the area where they live with very different places within Britain and settlements in less economically developed countries.
107. By the time that they are fourteen they have a good knowledge of rivers and waterways, and have studied the course of the nearby Adur. They identify features, using the correct terms such as mouth, tributaries, source and describe the functions of locks on canals. They are very aware of places beyond their locality, and can talk about what gives places their character. Teachers' stories and the resources that they use, such as dressing someone in a full ski suit when talking about towns on the snow line, bring the subject to life. Pupils are eager to find out more and learn to select the sorts of information that they need to answer geographical questions. The oldest pupils follow an integrated humanities course, leading to ASDAN accreditation. They look at the way that Shoreham has developed this century and talk knowledgeably about changes, thinking carefully about the reasons for changes that they see in photographs. They relate this to inventions and economic developments as well as hypothesising about the impact of particular family circumstances and decisions. They compare pleasant and unpleasant features of communities and discuss these with their friends, weighing advantages and disadvantages carefully.

108. Teaching is consistently very good. Planning and preparation are detailed and show high expectations of what pupils will learn. Lessons are very effectively based on pupils' previous experience. There is a clear picture of how activities are scheduled and developed which is understood by pupils. Younger pupils can see how skills and routines that they learn are going to prepare them for later work. This helps to create lively, responsible and independent learners. Classes are well organised and managed. The seating arrangements for the oldest pupils allowed them change from a class discussion to work in pairs and small groups with no loss of pace or time. Younger pupils going out on a field trip were very well prepared and equipped, giving them a sense of purpose and rigour. Support is very well used. Sometimes this is particularly effective in providing physical and emotional boundaries for pupils so that they can explore ideas and places with security. All lessons are taught from a basis of very good knowledge with humour and affection for pupils.
109. The curriculum is broad and balanced, reflecting the appropriate programmes of study very well. Appropriate elements of national schemes are used while maintaining the involvement of local people and places. This provides a rich and exciting programme, systematically developing skills during lessons, within modules and over time. Pupils themselves are aware of, and look forward to, the increasing opportunities for visits and residential activities as they move up through the school. Assessment is thorough and consistent. Teachers know pupils very well and good records are kept. Photographs are well used to document activities. These are regularly revisited to help pupils recapture the experiences and learning. Pupils have good knowledge of their own learning.
110. The subject is very well led with two skilled and enthusiastic co-ordinators working well together. The strong provision makes a major contribution to the very positive ethos of the school, helping pupils to work together, develop a love of the local landscape and an informed interest in their community.

HISTORY

111. Pupils in all key stages achieve well in history. By the age of eleven, pupils understand chronology and change over time by looking at times in the past. Pupils are able to use historical inquiry to find out about previous civilisations. They use reference books and computers and CD-ROMs to find out about the homes of the Ancient Greeks. They know about the clothes people wore in those times and the food they ate.
112. By the age of fourteen, pupils know about the Civil War and what life was like compared to life today. They act the roles of different people from that time and are able to sensibly question each other about their lives. By the age of sixteen, the focus is on modern day history. Three periods of history in the same street are studied. Pupils look at life in their community during the last world war. They see the changes by looking at photographs of bombed houses comparing them with how they look today.
113. Teaching is very good overall. Teaching is at least good or better in all lessons observed. In lessons there is a clear structure. Teachers plan effectively and include timed sections, objectives and resources. They question pupils carefully to check understanding. They manage the pupils well, sensitively intervening when pupils show signs of misbehaving. There is a strong emphasis on providing pupils with opportunities to talk about their work and develop their speaking and listening skills. For example a Key Stage 2 class prepared questions to ask a local resident to find out what life was like in their area in the past. Effective use is made by teachers of a variety of community resources that give pupils first hand experience to further their understanding of chronology and conditions existing at different times.
114. Pupils' behaviour and response are good and often very good where the work is challenging and appropriate for the different levels of ability. They work well together and relate well to teaching staff.

Pupils showed good levels of concentration when looking at the Bayeux Tapestry, where they made their own tapestry, drawing figures dressed as they were in those days.

115. The broad-based curriculum is considerably enhanced by museum visits and to the local area, as well as cross-curricular links through historically based drama productions. There is effective use of assessment linked to the record of achievement, individual education plans, class records and end of year reports. Good displays around the school and in classrooms positively enhance the working environment.
116. Since the last inspection, a new scheme of work and policy have been produced for Key Stages 1 and 2. There is increased use of information technology and more opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. The standards of teaching have improved and staff have maintained the high standards of achievement. The school is continuing to develop assessment and recording systems in order to inform planning more and the progress of individual pupils over time.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Standards of attainment in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with those in similar schools throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress during the primary phase and good progress in the secondary department. Major contributors to this progress are good teaching with specialist facilities, and a sound programme of work.
118. By the time that they are seven, pupils are familiar with a range of software. They are learning to move the cursor with a big trackerball, understanding the idea of 'dragging' and 'dropping'. Some pupils still need help with this. Some load their own favourite programs that they use to help develop literacy and numeracy skills. By the time that they are eleven pupils have experienced work with a programmable floor turtle. They have created bar graphs in science to show each person's lung capacity. They develop appropriate keyboard skills and format text for pop-up books that they have made, changing the size and colour. They begin to work with digital cameras and scanners with a good deal of help from an adult.
119. By the age of fourteen, all pupils are independent in their basic use of word processing software. Most pupils have good keyboard skills for their age and ability. They copy type, or format their own writing and poetry with reasonable accuracy, adding clip art and effects. They work with spreadsheets, carefully entering data into tables. Higher attainers use the 'autosum' facility independently, although most need some help. They also use spreadsheets to create graphs and charts, and are beginning to look for information on the Internet. In design and technology they do some control work. One group is currently making a shop window display with flashing lights. Pupils also have individual sessions using a midi keyboard and software. Pupils quickly learn to copy repeated phrases and to play and stop their compositions. They use their musical skill effectively, working enthusiastically alongside a skilled adult. By the time that they leave school, pupils have good keyboard skills. The highest attainers work quickly and accurately to copy data and text, understanding the purpose of tasks and the advantages of using a computer. Lower attainers work steadily and carefully. They understand the sort of information that can be obtained from different electronic sources. Most still need some help to carry out successful Internet searches. They learn to use presentation software to display their work.
120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good and very good lessons for secondary pupils. Lessons are well planned so that all staff and pupils know what is expected and work very well together. In the best lessons, pupils are given good explanations of the underlying principles – for example, why we use different forms of data. This helps to develop an understanding of the purpose of what they are doing. Good questioning helps pupils develop independence by modelling the sort of questions that they should ask themselves when they get stuck. Skilled support staff use very effective physical prompts when appropriate, for example to develop the use of the shift key. They help some lower attaining pupils make good progress in some lessons. Where there are weak features of lessons, it is often because of a lack of knowledge, for example about the best

way to carry out a task or what parts of a system are called. There are still times when the resources let people down, such as printers without sufficient coloured ink giving poor quality output. Sometimes there is a lack of coherent purpose for activities, and the objectives for lessons are not sufficiently clear.

121. The curriculum for all pupils has improved since the previous inspection. It is broad and balanced for secondary pupils, and the oldest pupils follow a useful accredited course. The provision for primary pupils, however, is insecure. Pupils have some good quality experiences and appropriate access to new technology, but provision varies from class to class and work does not always build sufficiently on what has gone before. There is some planning from a recently developed checklist of skills, but this does not ensure that pupils have the full rich programme that is evident in other subjects of the curriculum. The use of ICT in other subjects varies for both primary and secondary pupils. It is used well in a number of lessons, for example when pupils research topics on the Internet, develop their spelling skills, conduct a survey or format their poetry for display. However, in some areas this sort of activity is too infrequent. The school is starting to develop the use of ICT to support individual pupils in accessing the curriculum and recording their work. There is a need to use a wider variety of resources, such as whole-word word processors and predictive software. There is not yet a recognition that developing individual access strategies, with the supportive features of technology, is as important for the oldest and highest attaining pupils as those with complex needs. Assessment is thorough, with regular recording of skills in the primary department and rigorous end of module tests for senior pupils. This information is not always used sufficiently in matching work to the needs of individuals in lessons.
122. ICT is well co-ordinated by an enthusiastic teacher. She has worked from a basis of good subject knowledge using a very well researched and argued development plan produced by a senior manager. There has been very good improvement to secondary provision. Overall improvement has been satisfactory, as work still has to be done to secure primary practice, the wider application of ICT for individual pupils and the use of new technology across other subjects. This work has already begun with all the teachers undertaking nationally funded training, obtaining the services of a technician for a short time each week, and the provision of good quality hardware throughout the school. There is a will to develop provision and very good capacity for improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

123. Only pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen study French, which they do for forty minutes a week. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen have had their curriculum modified in line with national guidelines to place more emphasis on other aspects such as citizenship.
124. Pupils are achieving standards which are in line with their ability in French by the end of Year 9. The assessment made by teachers that all pupils have reached Level 1 does not, however, reflect their actual achievements. Several pupils are currently working at Level 2 as they can say their name and answer basic questions about where they live, count to ten and know the names of classroom items. Most pupils can copy individual words correctly and some can label pictures from memory with reasonable accuracy. Pupils find it more difficult to understand spoken French from tapes but with support the more able note the important details from, for example, a shopping dialogue. Almost all pupils can sing some French songs and know what they mean.
125. The teaching of French is satisfactory and enables pupils to learn satisfactorily in lessons. Lessons usually start with a well-paced warm up activity such as a song or memory game and pupils clearly enjoy this. There is much emphasis on speaking and listening, using a variety of resources such as videos and tapes. Pupils do not always learn to pronounce words correctly, as the teacher is not a specialist, but the extensive use of tapes means that they are not solely

dependent on the teacher for the correct model. Some worksheets, however, contain errors so pupils do not always learn the correct spellings. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work and recently they have produced some good work in their exercise books, which they can refer to when asked. Pupils persevere, even when they find a task difficult. A great strength of the teaching is the regularity with which the topic is linked to a practical activity. For example, when learning about food and drink pupils enjoy making pancakes. They also watch plays led by professional companies and then write and act out their own version. The trips to France make a lasting impression on the pupils and they return having found out about French people and their way of life. Pupils do not have a variety of materials to read and so make less progress in this area; much of the reading is limited to the textbook although pupils do occasionally use materials such as French supermarket brochures. Pupils are not always aware of how much progress they are making, particularly within the topic that they are studying, and they do not know what they need to do to improve. Formal assessments have not been accurately recorded.

126. Following the departure of the previous co-ordinator, French is temporarily being led by the Head Teacher until the appointment of a specialist is possible. This is a satisfactory arrangement in the circumstances. Documents have recently been updated and provide a sound framework for planning. Weaknesses, for example in assessment, have clearly been identified and there are plans to improve the quality of the materials especially regarding reading and ICT. The curriculum is organised to cover all the skills but the emphasis is correctly on helping pupils to develop better speaking and listening skills. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupils are enthusiastic about speaking French, especially when greeting people and singing French songs.

MUSIC

127. Pupils are making satisfactory achievements overall in music in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding. In the small number of lessons observed, learning was good as a result of good teaching.
128. By the age of seven, in singing lessons, pupils are able to sing in tune. They understand the need for warming up exercises and make good progress in learning new songs and words. They remember hymns learned previously. By the age of eleven, pupils learn to play a range of percussion instruments with expression, and practice rhythm patterns. In the age fourteen, pupils develop listening skills. They are able to identify high and low notes, quiet and loud sounds, music patterns and different instruments, in music they listen to. In singing, they learn to sing in tune and to create moods to match a story, using percussion instruments. By the age of sixteen, they develop their composing skills using electronic keyboards and computers, creating their own rhythms and melodies. They learn how to use the mouthpieces when they are learning to play brass instruments.
129. There is no coordinator for Key Stages 1 and 2 and the newly appointed coordinator for Key Stages 3 and 4 has not yet had time to impact on standards.
130. Teaching is good in the lessons observed. Strengths include detailed planning of lessons, management of pupils, questioning pupils to check understanding and very good relationships with pupils. In one lesson teacher expertise was clear when questioning pupils about the sounds they were hearing.
131. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy singing, listening to music and making music themselves. Key Stage 3 pupils showed very good levels of concentration in a lesson where they had to look for patterns in a melody and spot different musical instruments. The music curriculum is satisfactory in the lower school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, lesson planning is based round the Silver Burdett scheme. It is better in the upper school as a result of a new scheme of work. However, pupils have only recently been taught to this scheme and this has not yet had chance to impact on standards. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by support from a governor who teaches the

piano to interested pupils, an advisory teacher from the authority who teaches the electronic keyboard and opportunities to play brass instruments and the recorder. Additionally, the school drama club produces a musical annually and the school choir performs at Christmas and in the community. Assessment is satisfactory and linked to the end of year report and Record of Achievement. However, the coordinator intends to develop assessment and recording procedures. Resources are good and include keyboards, percussion instruments, recorders and brass instruments. However, the newly appointed coordinator has not yet had sufficient time to organise these or produce a stock list.

132. There has been limited improvement in music provision since the last inspection. The very recent appointment of a specialist music teacher responsible for Key Stages 3 and 4 should make a significant difference to standards in music. However, there is still no coordinator for Key Stages 1 and 2 which is having an impact on standards in these key stages. There is a new scheme of work for Key Stages 3 and 4. The school has identified the weaknesses in music provision and music is a priority area next year in the school development plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils in all key stages achieve well in physical education. In some areas, particularly swimming, a few higher attaining pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations.

134. By the age of seven, in swimming, pupils gain confidence in the water. Higher attaining pupils learn to jump in and can swim at least one width of the pool on their front or back. By the time they reach the ages of eleven, fourteen and sixteen, many pupils are confident swimmers. They are able to use several different strokes, both on their front and back. They are able to dive and jump into the water and retrieve objects and many are able to swim distances of over 100 metres. Many pupils have certificates including silver and bronze awards. Pupils by the age of seven show improving throwing, catching and ball control.

135. By the age of eleven, as part of a sequence of lessons on folk dancing, they develop control and balance through learning dance routines. More able pupils combine their skills of balance and control to produce their own sequence of twisting and turning movements. They improve their ball control and coordination and show improving skills in dribbling and trapping a ball.

136. Pupils' achievements by the ages of fourteen and sixteen are good. Both boys and girls demonstrate good skills. They learn how to pass and receive a ball in football and hockey with an emphasis on the development of skills for effective team and group work. Pupils use number effectively when keeping scores. They are given frequent opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example in dance when listening to instructions and in gymnastics when explaining how to twist and turn. During the cricket season, pupils visit and watch County cricket matches on occasions, giving them further understanding of the rules and practice in the game.

137. Teaching overall is very good. Teachers have the expertise needed to develop pupils' knowledge and skills to an appropriate level. For example, swimming teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4 are all qualified to teach swimming. Planning is thorough and often includes timed sections. There is a clear structure to the lessons, with appropriate emphasis on safety, including the need for stretching and warming up and relaxing exercises at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and know them well. High standards of behaviour are expected.

138. Pupils show a sense of fair play, accept decisions, acknowledge others success and encourage each other. In all games sessions seen pupils were competitive, but sportsmanship was paramount. This positive attitude was observed in leisure time when pupils played hockey. The pupils in swimming were seen to encourage each other in all activities, especially if someone found a task difficult; for example, jumping in. Pupils enjoy the subject and show enthusiasm for the work,

especially in swimming football and netball lessons. They are respectful to adults and caring for each other. For example in a swimming lesson, one pupil spontaneously comforted another who was distressed after swallowing too much water.

139. The subject is led by two coordinators who work well within their own areas. However, there are insufficient opportunities for these coordinators to meet in order to have an overview of the subject across the school. Because of good staff expertise and the use of additional experts, pupils have access to a wide curriculum. This includes swimming on a regular basis, soccer coaching from a local professional coach, games, netball, hockey, athletics and dance.
140. Staff are very aware of safe practice requirements and there is an emphasis on safety in all activities. The department has already identified any shortcomings in physical education in the curriculum review and as a result intends to develop better gymnastics provision and improve the recording and assessment procedures, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2.
141. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the wide variety of out-of-school activities offered to pupils and many inter-school competitions. Pupils have had great success in both football and swimming championships. Pupils have two residential trips, which place a strong emphasis on outdoor pursuits such as abseiling and mountain biking. This provision is exceptional for a school of this type. Additionally, links with local primary and high schools allow pupils access to their resources.
142. Accommodation overall is at best only satisfactory for physical education. Outdoor provision is good with a large playing field and hard play area. However, the school hall, which is small, acts as the gymnasium, assembly area, dining room and classroom for large groups. On wet days there is insufficient room for pupils in the secondary department. There are inadequate changing facilities for secondary aged pupils nor are there sufficient suitable showering facilities.
143. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in curriculum time for Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has the Top Play and Top Sports resources and staff have had appropriate training in their use. There is a new draft scheme of work for Key Stages 1 and 2 and a new policy. Staff have managed to maintain and in some areas improve the standards of achievement since the last report. Additional links are planned with other schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. Lessons in religious education were observed during the inspection only in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, but the subject is taught consistently throughout all key stages. The scheme of work based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education is a useful basis for the whole school planning so that all pupils experience a valuable and developmental curriculum in this subject as they move through the school. Through careful teachers' planning pupils gain a secure foundation of knowledge and have the opportunity to explore and express their ideas so that they have good levels of learning and progress as they mature.
145. Standards in religious education are overall good. Pupils by the ages of fourteen and sixteen show very good discussion and debating skills when considering moral issues. The youngest pupils are beginning to know and realise the special aspects of their lessons through an understanding of Christian stories while those by the age of eleven know the story of Moses and can empathise with Moses' mother and how she had trust in God. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are beginning to think about the elements and purpose of celebrations, while older pupils are able to discuss sensitively illness and death in relation to the story of Lazarus and the role of Jesus as a healer. By the age of sixteen, pupils show real maturity in considering moral and social dilemmas they may meet in life and they are able to discuss them honestly and responsibly.
146. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and more often good or very good. This shows a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Teachers plan effectively and are

skilled and confident to enable pupil discussion to be the learning focus of the lessons so that the teacher's specific learning objectives are achieved through pupils using their own experience to extend their knowledge and understanding. Good use is made of stories and situations from both the Old and New Testament to extend pupils' thinking about the dilemmas people faced in following what they saw as the correct action. This gives pupils a clearer understanding of the biblical stories in the context of their own lives. In Key Stage 4 for instance pupils were challenged to see the earth as God's creation and discussed their personal responsibility in protecting that environment, whilst others, through very effective scenarios had to make personal choices about real life moral issues.

147. The pupils' attitudes to their lessons are very good. They are attentive, keen to participate, they take turns and are sensitive to the views and feelings of others. They are confident to share their thoughts, including difficult personal concerns, because there is an atmosphere of trust in their groups.
148. This is a well co-ordinated subject, led from the front by the head teacher but the subject is considered by all staff to be an integral and vital part of each pupil's experience and one of the areas of the curriculum which develops their moral and social awareness.
149. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are now more confident and better prepared through improved resources and developmental planning. Good use is made of visits and visitors when pupils are studying other religions. There is now sufficient time allocated for lessons and religious education is well integrated into whole and departmental assemblies. There is a need to devise an end of module record of pupil's learning which would track progress in knowledge and understanding of the subject over each year.