

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HUNTERS HILL SCHOOL**

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103609

Headteacher: Mr K Lewis

Reporting inspector: Sarah J Mascall  
20536

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 245866

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spirehouse Lane Blackwell Bromsgrove Worcester
Postcode:	B60 1QD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Scanlan
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20536	Sarah Mascall	Registered inspector	Modern Foreign Language	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay Inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14691	Jenny Hall	Team Inspector	Mathematics Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1769	Michael Holohan	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
30597	Robina Howells	Team Inspector	Science Personal, social and health education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
10781	Bob Thompson	Team Inspector	Art and design Design and technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
20024	Paul Wright	Team Inspector	English Religious education	Residential provision

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hunters Hill is a residential school for 75 boys and girls between 11 and 16 who have emotional and behavioural needs and /or moderate learning difficulties. The special needs of the pupils has changed since the last inspection when the majority of pupils had moderate learning difficulties as their main special educational need. Now the majority of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment on entry is low and all pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are considerably more boys than girls; the ratio being 10 boys to every one girl. There are fewer girls than at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils receive free school meals. Pupils come from all over Birmingham LEA. Eight per cent of pupils are of Caribbean heritage and one pupil is from Pakistan. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school has been awarded a School Achievement Award, and received recognition for the quality of its careers education and work experience. It has also been awarded the Healthy School's Award and Investors in People. The school has had difficulties recruiting a teacher for music.

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

Hunters Hill is a good school with many strengths. The head teacher leads the school well and is effectively supported by his senior management team and staff. Teaching is good and behaviour is managed well. As a result pupils make good progress. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The school is well led. Staff work very well together and there is a very good commitment to provide the best for pupils.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and the provision for pupils' personal and social education ensures that pupils' social skills are very good.
- Very good links with other schools have improved pupils' opportunities to return to mainstream and have been used well to support their learning.
- Careers education, work experience and links with colleges and other training providers are very good and prepare pupils' well for the world of work.
- Relationships in the school are very good and pupils clearly benefit from the support and help they get from all staff.
- The use of specific grant money is very good and ensures all pupils gain from the range of activities that it helps to provide.

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

- Attendance of a small number of pupils.
- The provision for music.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic progress and the setting of whole school targets.
- The composition of the governing body prevents it from carrying out all its roles effectively.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and has made good improvement since then. It has addressed nearly all the key issues well, particularly in improving the quality of teaching of English and physical education. The length of the school day has been extended, although it is still short compared to most similar

schools. Teaching and pupils' progress have improved overall as have many aspects of the school's provision. The involvement in a number of projects has benefited pupils greatly.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils make good progress overall. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, health and social education both in lessons and through the good quality work and support in the residential homes. Pupils make very good progress in physical education. In nearly all other subjects progress is good. There has been a very successful drive to develop pupils' interest in reading and this is well supported in the residential homes. Pupils are good communicators and are very mature in their discussions. Although pupils extend their skills in writing in English this is not developed in other subjects where the over reliance on worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to write for different audiences. Aspects of literacy and numeracy are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. Pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in information and communication technology. In French progress is satisfactory rather than good because there is not enough time given to the subjects. In science pupils make satisfactory progress. In the past they have made good progress however, the science teacher is on long term sick leave and at present pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 do not have access to a subject specialist. This reduces their ability to make good progress. The present curriculum for religious education is narrow and as a result pupils only make satisfactory progress. In music progress is unsatisfactory because pupils do not have sufficient lessons to develop their skills. The school has set appropriate whole school targets in a number of areas for pupils' achievements, but has yet to do so for literacy and numeracy.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and work well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond well to teachers and appreciate the rewards gained for behaving well. Their behaviour is often very good when they are working in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. The very strong sense of community results in pupils feeling valued.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. For the majority of pupils attendance is good and they are keen to come to school. However the long term absenteeism of a small number of pupils reduces the overall level of attendance. Punctuality to lessons is good.

Pupils value the reward systems and as a result work hard to improve their behaviour. They have a lot of respect for staff, responding appropriately to their encouragement. Pupils are very proud of their achievements and keen to show off what they have done. When they go on visits out of school pupils' behaviour is a credit to themselves and the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Years 7 – 11</b>
Quality of teaching	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 and learning are good. Teachers use a range of strategies that interest pupils and are effective in managing pupils' behaviour. In physical education teaching is very good and in nearly all other subjects it is good. There are high expectations of pupils in information and communication technology and teaching is effective. Teaching is good in French but there is insufficient time to enable pupils' skills to develop appropriately. In religious education teaching is satisfactory. When pupils are taught by a qualified teacher in science teaching is effective. However in Years 7,8 and 9 teaching varies although overall it is satisfactory. In music pupils benefit from good teaching from a visiting teacher who works with pupils in Years 7 and 8. The teaching of personal health and social education is very good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory. The very good teamwork between all support staff contributes well to pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Particular strengths are in the provision for personal, social and health education, extra curricular activities, careers and vocational education. However the length of the teaching week is below recommended levels. The provision for music is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. It is very good for social development and this is supported very well within the residential homes. Moral and cultural development are good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Staff provide very good role models, the excellent diversity of cultures represented by staff contributes positively to pupils' cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There is very good monitoring of pupils' personal development and the residential provision supports the work of the school well. Recently introduced systems for assessing pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. There are good strategies to support pupils' academic progress including the setting of individual targets. However, the monitoring of how well pupils are achieving in subjects is unsatisfactory.

Links with the community contribute very well to pupils' learning. The school has developed very good links with other schools and training providers from which pupils clearly benefit. There are good opportunities for pupils to return to mainstream education and the support systems that have been established are much appreciated by the schools involved. Partnership with parents is good overall. Parents appreciate the good quality communication they have with all staff and are kept well informed about what is happening in school. However the governors' report to parents and school reports do not give sufficient information.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school. He is well supported by his senior management team and there is a good team spirit amongst staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities appropriately. However, there is an insufficient number of governors from outside the school to ensure that there is clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are effective systems for monitoring what goes on in school and this ensures that aspects such as teaching are good. School development planning is effective and enables the school to improve its provision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has made very good use of resources and grants. This is particularly the case in developing provision for gifted and talented pupils.

The finance administrator is effective and ensures that the principles of best value are applied well.

Staffing is good and all staff, including support staff and residential staff, are well trained. Learning resources are good overall. They are very good in humanities and information and communication technology. In music resources are unsatisfactory. Although accommodation is satisfactory, it is particularly good for food technology and motor vehicle maintenance. However the indoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory. The senior residential home is in need of extensive refurbishment and is not appropriate residential accommodation.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and support that exists with all staff</li> <li>• The quality of teaching</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to do their best</li> <li>• The leadership of the headteacher</li> <li>• The range of activities provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' behaviour.</li> </ul>

The team agrees with parents' positive views. However the inspection team does not agree with parents' views about behaviour. It was good during the week of the inspection and evidence suggests that this is normally the case.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' achievements and progress are good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. At that time there were concerns about poor classroom discipline and the fact that tasks that did not match pupils' ability. These have been resolved and pupils do well because teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and behaviour is managed well. Pupils are achieving better standards now because teachers have higher expectations and are more aware of what pupils can achieve. For example, in mathematics higher attaining Year 9 pupils work towards the same attainment levels as their mainstream peers. A group of higher attaining Year 10 pupils take a GCSE mathematics examination a year early. In information and communication technology there are opportunities provided for Year 9 pupils to work with mainstream pupils on an intensive computer course, leading to a GNVQ ICT qualification. The needs of lower attaining pupils are met well and this ensures that they make the same progress as their peers. Pupils are effectively supported in the residential homes in doing their homework and extending their learning in areas such as reading and personal, social and health education. This contributes greatly to pupils' progress.
2. All pupils make good progress in English. Progress in reading is good because the school has successfully focused on the needs of those pupils who are struggling to learn to read by providing them with regular opportunities to develop their skills. The school has engendered a love of books in nearly all pupils to the extent that they are keen to receive a book from the headteacher's "book box" as a prize for reading. This aspect is also well supported in the residential homes where pupils are encouraged to read for half an hour each night after school. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because their ideas and opinions are valued by staff and consequently they are confident to contribute in class discussions. Progress in writing is satisfactory. It is not as well promoted across the curriculum as communication and reading and the over reliance on worksheets limits pupils' ability to write at length. In mathematics achievements are good because teaching is effective and pupils are interested and enjoy the subject. In science pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 just make satisfactory progress. However older pupils benefit from an experienced teacher who ensures that their knowledge and skills are extended and they are able to successfully achieve accredited courses.
3. In physical education and personal, social and health education pupils make very good progress because of very good teaching. In the majority of subjects pupils' progress is good. There is insufficient time allocated to French to enable pupils to make better progress; they benefit from good teaching but can only make satisfactory progress in the limited time available. The school has been unable to appoint a music teacher. They use the local education authority's music service to provide pupils with

musical experiences. Although pupils make good progress in the limited lessons they have, progress over time is unsatisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education, however, the curriculum is at present being developed and this should improve pupils' progress further.

4. Literacy and numeracy are promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy vary with pupils being encouraged to read worksheets and discuss their ideas. However opportunities to write in detail are limited. In subjects such as history, science and food technology pupils are encouraged to use their skills in calculating, adding and weighing.
5. The school has set itself targets in a number of areas but has yet to set whole school targets for literacy, numeracy and science for pupils who will be in Year 9 in the summer 2003. There are however high expectations and pupils' achievements are improving. For example, appropriate plans are in place for pupils to take GCSEs in a wider range of subjects including art.
6. There are a very small number of girls in the school and teachers make sure they are included in all aspects of learning and have the same opportunities as boys. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are gifted and talented and these pupils make good progress in developing their skills. Their talents are many and varied for example in the field of trampolining or information and communication technology and staff work hard to ensure that they are given plenty of opportunities to extend their skills further. There are a very small number of lower attaining pupils and the school is developing individual programmes to enable these pupils to make the same progress as their peers.

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

7. The vast majority of pupils are very positive about school and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Although there is a small but significant minority of pupils who remain absent from school for a range of reasons, observation of pupils in school, the residential homes and on school activities show that they like school. Pupils clearly enjoy lessons and are keen to learn, listening carefully to instructions and joining in discussions. They respond well to encouragement and stay on task throughout. For example, in a Year 7 food technology lesson pupils work conscientiously to complete a meal. Older pupils, such as in a Year 10 English lesson, are fully involved in presenting ideas about what will happen next in a story. Pupils show considerable pride in their achievements and are keen to show off what they have done. School assemblies demonstrate how well pupils celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils treat equipment with care and work together safely.
8. The last report judged that, whilst behaviour was generally satisfactory and the majority of pupils wanted to learn, there was a significant minority of pupils who could be both offensive and rude. Current behaviour shows a significant improvement with the vast majority of lessons having a calm and workman-like atmosphere with pupils showing a willingness to learn. In history, Year 9 pupils showed the ability to settle quickly to work and to discuss topics such as castles, with both confidence and insight. However, where teaching fails to grasp the attention of

the pupils, then restless and unsettled behaviour results but, given the overall quality of the teaching, such incidents are rare.

9. A strength of the school is the relationships that exist between all members of the school staff and the pupils, both in lessons and in the residential homes. They are strong and supportive and consequently play a significant role in the improvement in pupils' behaviour and their development of positive attitudes to learning. A further consequence is the strong sense of community in which pupils feel valued and respond with a developing sense of personal responsibility and regard for others.
10. There were only seven incidents of fixed term exclusions last year and this is low for a school of this type. Once again the strong sense of community is responsible for the low level of such behaviour and the high expectations of politeness and regard for others which pervade the school.
11. When pupils are admitted to the school they lack self-confidence in their ability to undertake tasks both in school and in the wider community. The school council demonstrates how pupils are able to take responsibility not only for themselves but also for others in ensuring the smooth running of the school. It is notable that this confidence and regard for others is also evident in lessons as when Year 10 pupils discussed how a baby in the family could affect lifestyle. Pupils attending a local authority computer centre were very well behaved and mature. This potentially daunting task was handled with enthusiasm with pupils showing well-developed social skills as well as the confidence to do the work. School plays demonstrate not only the confidence to act, dance and sing before a large audience but also the commitment to work together as an effective team. Older pupils' successful completion of work experience and college courses is a further illustration of their developing social skills and personal confidence.
12. For the last complete school year whole school attendance figures were 78.8%. This is a big deterioration on figures at the time of the last inspection. However, during the first two and a half terms of this school year an improvement is recorded and rates have risen to 84.4% but are still unsatisfactory overall even when compared to similar schools. Many pupils go home during the week for between one and four nights. Most have a good rate of attendance and many are very keen to attend every day. However, overall rates are unsatisfactory because of the significant small number of pupils who do not attend regularly enough and this is despite the hard work on the part of school staff to encourage good attendance. A few pupils are either wrongly placed at the school, are awaiting transfer to another school, have medical concerns or are disaffected and have very persistent attendance problems. For this minority, which numbers about ten, attendance is poor and the effect of poor attendance on their achievements is significant. When pupils abscond it is not always possible to get them back into school quickly and this too affects figures. Punctuality, which was raised as a weakness in the previous inspection, has improved and lessons start and end on time. During the week of this inspection pupils arrived well on time on the Monday morning because new arrangements for transport were started that week.

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall. There is now a much higher percentage of good teaching and very little unsatisfactory teaching. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is attributable to temporary staff who are unqualified and inexperienced. The school has worked hard to address the weaknesses noted in the last inspection and the focus on improving the management of behaviour and the range of strategies to make lessons interesting has been successful.
14. Pupils work well because of the very good relationships that exist between them and staff. Pupils' contributions are valued by all staff and there is considerable respect for each other. Pupils are encouraged to come back to class if they have left and teachers are very good at bringing them back into the group with a minimal amount of fuss.
15. One of the main strengths of teaching is the way in which teachers manage behaviour. All staff have very clear boundaries in terms of behaviour and pupils know this. Because there is a consistent approach across the school pupils respond well and understand what is acceptable and unacceptable. There are clear expectations that pupils are in class to learn and as a result they settle to lessons quickly and in many subjects such as French, mathematics and design and technology pupils look forward to the work. Humour is used effectively, defusing situations and teachers celebrate pupils' achievements. For example in a Year 7 poetry lesson the teacher reads pupils' poems to the class in an animated way so that they come to life. Pupils were very proud of their achievements.
16. There is very good team work between teachers and all support staff and the latter contribute to pupils' learning well. They are quick to spot potential problems and deal with them before they get out of hand. Whilst in a Year 9 art lesson staff supported a pupil who was less confident to work with papier mache to make a Japanese mask and this helped him to achieve and avoided a situation where he would refuse to work. In addition support staff contribute to lessons well often offering their own ideas and getting involved. In a Year 8 drama lesson for example the support assistant participated well in an activity encouraging pupils to concentrate on communicating.
17. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this well to make lessons interesting. This is particularly evident in mathematics where teachers' knowledge and high expectations have enabled pupils to achieve well in GCSE. They are enthusiastic about their subject and this is passed on to the pupils. For example in physical education teachers use their knowledge very well to enable pupils to extend their skills. Teachers show pupils how to improve, for example, their bowling in Kwik Cricket and pupils respect their decisions such as when refereeing a football game. In English teachers are non specialist but are well supported by the co-ordinator. Teaching is good rather than very good because teachers are not sufficiently experienced or confident to be more adventurous and exciting in their teaching of English. However when teaching their own subjects their confidence is very evident and teaching and learning are often better.

18. Teachers use resources very well and this is particularly evident in the increasing use of ICT to support learning. For example pupils are very impressed with a teacher's use of the new interactive white board when revising work on angles. In history the interactive board is used to support pupils on a one to one basis so that they can research aspects of the topics they are studying. Opportunities to use items such as small white boards for working out problems are good as when Year 7 convert fractions to decimal and percentages. Outside agencies are brought in so that pupils can, for example understand more about the Romans and have opportunities to dress up as Roman soldiers. In English Year 7 work on poems linked to the jungle is well supported by the big book of "Rumble in the Jungle" and all pupils have their own smaller copy to refer to. Very good resources and accommodation support the teaching of design technology and teachers make very good use of the resources available to them.
19. Literacy and numeracy are promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum with teachers encouraging pupils particularly to develop numeracy. Opportunities though are missed to develop literacy. For example in a good lesson in food technology pupils have to calculate increasing the ingredients of a cake by a half because they are making a three layered sponge cake instead of two. However, opportunities to improve skills in reading were missed when the recipe is presented in picture form rather than as a proper recipe.
20. The school is gradually adopting the successful format used in the literacy and numeracy strategies. In many lessons pupils are made aware of what the aims of the lessons are and what is to be achieved. However teachers do not always recap on what pupils have learnt. For example in a Year 9 English lesson pupils started reading "Mathilda" but there was no discussion of the events that had happened before or, at the end of the lesson, what they could recall from the work they had done in the lesson. However in a number of subjects pupils are encouraged to assess their own achievements and consider whether they have made progress both in their learning and behaviour. Teachers use this information well to plan the next stage of learning.
21. There is considerable variation in the marking of pupils' work. In some subjects such as English it is generally good. Teachers make comments about how pupils can improve their work and recognise how hard they have worked. However in a number of subjects including science, history and geography work is not marked at all or merely just ticked giving no indication to the pupils how well they have achieved. This is unsatisfactory.
22. Homework is used well to promote learning and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The good links with the residential homes ensures that pupils are well supported and staff work well with pupils to complete their work. For example pupils in one home worked on science revising the work they had done on magnetism that day.

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

23. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It has improved since the last inspection and now has aspects that are very good. There are, however, areas that require further development.
24. The provision for the majority of subjects is good and for some such as physical education and for personal, social and health education it is very good. However in both English and mathematics the curriculum plans for Year 11 are not as well developed as those for other years. Planning for the use of literacy and numeracy skill in other subjects is not rigorous enough and is an area for continuing development. Also, too much time is allocated to the formal timetabling of a commercially produced computer programme which consolidates pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This arrangement is too inflexible and time consuming and does not meet pupils' individual needs adequately.
25. The overall quality of music provision in the school is unsatisfactory. There is not enough time allocated to the teaching of music in Years 7 to 9. At present the school is not able to provide the breadth and depth of study to meet the statutory requirement for music. Pupils do however have opportunities to participate either on stage or behind the scenes in annual musical productions, in performances for assembly, and in music composing and performing as part of the programme for gifted and talented pupils. Good links are developing with mainstream schools for joint performances, for example, a dance and drum routine, performed in assembly.
26. The length of the teaching week has improved since the last inspection but still remains below the national recommendation; it is also below that of many similar schools. The short teaching week, especially the Friday timetable, narrows the number of academic subjects available as options for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils can gain accreditation in a number of subjects however there is not enough teaching time for pupils to study other subjects if they so wish.
27. The school provides a very good range of additional activities and programmes, which add extra quality to the learning opportunities provided. A particular strength is the programme devised for the schools' gifted and talented pupils during the school day or after school. These activities are very diverse and include English, ICT, French, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, music, gospel singing, drama and dance, skiing, ice skating, trampolining, motor vehicle and cycle maintenance. It is through this programme that pupils have the opportunity to work in mainstream schools.
28. The quality of careers and vocational education is very good and the school has received recognition for its work in this area. Pupils are very well prepared for leaving school. The school benefits from a very close working partnership with the careers and education business partnership (CEBP). Training providers work closely with the school, and older pupils are offered flexible part-time placements in the community, for example, in a garden centre. There are well established arrangements with local colleges for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to learn for part of the week in college settings. All the pupils' timetables in Years 10 and 11 are carefully constructed to meet individual learning needs through a flexible combination of school work on site or in other schools, activities provided in the residential homes, college based work, work with training providers and work experience placements.

29. The school provides a very good personal, social and health education (PSHE) course. This links well with activities provided in the residential homes and with the 'Compact 2000' course for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are taught about healthy and safe lifestyles through sex education, drugs education and work on healthy eating. They complete many personal, academic, work and leisure based challenges. Pupils learn to make choices and take decisions about their individual projects. They are very motivated by this programme and by the opportunity the course provides for them to gain bronze and bronze/silver Youth Award certificates. The course helps pupils to consolidate and apply their basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and extends their knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects like geography, food technology and physical education, for example.
30. The range of links the school has within the community is very good, and these add significant extra quality to the pupils' learning opportunities. Links with other schools are very successful, enabling pupils to study in mainstream settings. This enhances their chances of returning to mainstream education. As a result, during a 15 month period, seven pupils were returned to mainstream schools illustrating the effectiveness of these links. Mainstream pupils work at Hunters Hill School, for example on a good quality music and dance project. The Year 9 GNVQ ICT initiative is another example of very effective links with mainstream schools. There is good voluntary support from many within the community for much of which the school does, for example, football activities after school. Local charities also support the school with donations used to purchase extra resources.
31. The school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity is very well promoted through the range of learning opportunities the school provides. Every member of the school community is valued and the school promotes the entitlement of all pupils to fair treatment. Evening activities in the residential homes are available to day pupils. Minority ethnic pupils are included very well in all lessons and extra-curricular activities. Although the numbers of boys far outweighs the number of girls, the girls have full access to the learning opportunities provided.
32. The very small number of pupils with additional learning needs, for example, the lowest attaining pupils, receive appropriate and caring additional support of good quality. Their individual educational targets are well matched to their learning needs. In Year 7, for example, the mathematics programme for the lowest attaining pupil is appropriately taken from the National Curriculum programmes of study for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Year 10, the lowest attaining pupils follow a special programme leading to Accreditation for Life and Living course (ALL). This course includes age appropriate literacy and numeracy work drawn from the National Curriculum for primary pupils.
33. There have been improvements in provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils since the last inspection when it was stated that only the social needs of pupils were met. This area of school life is planned for more rigorously and provision overall is now good with particular strengths in the social and moral development of pupils and clear improvements in the provision for cultural and spiritual development.

34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Displays demonstrate that pupils are given opportunities to understand human feelings and to explore different values and beliefs; for example their recent work on Judaism including reference to Anne Frank. In humanities pupils empathise with children who worked in harsh conditions in 19<sup>th</sup> century factories. Assemblies promote social values and the importance of everyone at the school working together as part of one community but they also provide pupils with a quiet spiritual moment when for example they listen to each other perform music. Prayers are not a feature of assemblies but pupils have very recently started to say grace before midday meals. Opportunities for spiritual development are not consistently planned for but nevertheless staff support a set of values, principles and beliefs, which encourages in pupils respect and tolerance.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and this is rightly given very good attention by all staff who work consistently to improve behaviour. Older pupils can express with insight how they have matured since being at the school. The good range of activities planned for them do much to promote confidence, self-esteem and an enjoyment of school. The school council is an example of staff listening to their views and sharing plans to further promote personal and social skills. It provides pupils with opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility. Older pupils are expected to act as good role models for those new to the school. Work experience programmes, college placements, residential visits and day trips, for example to France, are purposeful and a well established part of school life which also promote successfully social development. The school monitors provision and its impact particularly on an individual basis.
36. Pupils are always encouraged to make the right decisions and to understand what is right and what is wrong. They are expected to be polite, courteous and friendly to visitors and they are. Moral development is good and significant progress is made by the time pupils are ready to leave. The school's systems for supporting pupils are sensible, well thought out and something the pupils know about. They are also shared with other schools. Rewards contribute positively to moral development. Behaviour during outside breaktimes is generally harmonious because pupils are guided by a moral code, which is promoted by the aims of the school. During class discussion for example on the behaviour of international football players they can reflect and articulate on moral issues. The school's behaviour and moral code is displayed clearly in homes as well as on school walls.
37. Provision for the cultural development of pupils including elements of multiculturalism is also good. Days with a theme are planned and purposeful, involve the whole school community and give pupils a real taste of different cultures. Anti racist posters and slogans are displayed in the residential homes and pupils are developing a good awareness of other cultures. They particularly benefit from the very good role models offered by staff and the range of cultures they represent. There is evidence of work in art and music drawn from across the world. Work in history and religious education also promotes an understanding of other cultures. Overall there have been improvements in how the school seeks to broaden pupils' understanding of different cultures.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS AND STUDENTS?

38. The standard of care provided for the pupils is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Much is reflected in the way staff speak to and about the pupils. They do so with the greatest respect and they are visibly and audibly polite to the pupils and to each other. They generously reward the pupils' appropriate behaviour with warm responses.
39. The systems for managing behaviour emphasises the rewarding of positive behaviour. Throughout each day pupils' personal development is assessed using pupil profiles which include individual targets. Pupils appreciate the system and are well aware of the graded awards that may be achieved. They make a concerted effort to achieve higher award certificates which are presented with great celebration. Negative behaviour is addressed through problem solving although sanctions are applied for specific misbehaviours. For example, time out of class results in detention. A similar behaviour monitoring system is applied in the residences and the special awards are based on progress over 24 hours. The head teacher monitors the progress of the pupils and those causing concern or who become involved in serious incidents are given extra support to help them overcome their difficulties. These systems and the good team work between teachers and support staff provides a consistent approach to behaviour management.
40. The school's health and safety policy is carefully implemented to ensure the safety of staff and pupils. Regular food safety checks and fire drills take place, proper medical procedures are followed and thorough records are maintained. Risk assessments are prepared and are carefully considered in school and when pupils are taken out of school. Thorough records are kept of serious incidents, absconding and class absence. Care staff are on duty during the day to support pupils if necessary.
41. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory overall. There are strengths, for example the daily recording of attendance is accurate; staff use proper codes in registers to distinguish between unauthorised and authorised absence. Pupils educated off site or in work experience are recorded according to regulations. Communication about attendance with colleges and work placement providers is good. Monitoring of the majority of individuals across the school is good. When pupils do not attend procedures are followed to find out why they are not in school and where they are. However no one has a clear picture of attendance as a whole. Attendance figures are reported clearly in pupils' school reports but not accurately in the school prospectus nor in the annual report from Governors. The school has had no support from the education welfare service this year. This is partly because neither the local authority nor the department for education and employment have requested attendance data and so there is no obvious cause for concern on their part. Strategies for improving attendance which include very close liaison with families are successful in a few cases but have not been effective overall in improving unauthorised attendance. The school accepts that a small number of older pupils have a history of non-attendance. However despite its best efforts it has been unable to get them back into school. Where pupils abscond the school has struggled to get them back into school quickly and this too affects the attendance figures. A target of 100% attendance has been set which is unrealistic.

42. The school has developed broadly satisfactory assessment procedures and has embarked on a new assessment system in recent weeks. The new procedures have the potential to assess more effectively the smaller steps made by pupils compared with mainstream pupils. It will be important for the senior managers to monitor that these new procedures are fully implemented across the curriculum. Targets set at the time of the annual review for English and mathematics are used mainly consistently as the starting point for pupils' individual educational plans for the following year. In mathematics the targets for the lowest and highest attaining pupils are especially well matched to the pupils' different stages of development. As reported at the last inspection, subject targets included in the annual reports to parents are frequently too broad for progress to be monitored effectively. Teachers are currently receiving training to help them write more specific targets.
43. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is not well developed. The gains that pupils make from year to year in their knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects of the National Curriculum are recorded by individual teachers, but the school does not have an adequate overview of this academic progress. Annual reports to parents provide very little information about specific academic gains and are not especially helpful when evaluating whether pupils make good enough progress in a subject during their time in school.

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

44. The school works closely with parents and carers and in the majority of cases is very successful in doing so. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Many parents and carers live some distance from the school and transport is not always easy to organise so in many respects the encouragement of all parents and carers in the education of their children presents a challenge to the school. The effectiveness of links, communication and partnership with parents and carers is good. A particular strength is the very well established verbal communication that exists between all staff and parents and carers.
45. Parents' and carers' views of the school, on balance, are very good. Although only a very few attended the meeting with inspectors and responded to the questionnaire evidence indicates that parents' views are very positive. They have great faith in the school and speak of big improvements in their children in many areas, over time. They are pleased with the very good role models and examples set by all staff. Strategies to manage behaviour are shared and parents report a calmer atmosphere at home as a result. They find staff easy to approach and believe the school is well led and managed. In particular parents and carers think that teaching is good and that standards of care throughout the day are high. They feel able to share problems and believe that staff at the school are there to help them as well as their children. Parents and carers know about the good range of activities provided for pupils after 3.30pm and they also think the school has improved over the last few years.
46. Parents and carers are encouraged to phone the school and many do so on a very regular basis. The school too is quick to involve and inform parents and carers on a daily basis about any issues, which may arise. Sometimes achievements are reported to families immediately.

47. Written information provided by the school has strengths and weaknesses and is satisfactory overall. The school prospectus is clearly presented and gives a good picture of school life. A video has just been completed which will be available for new parents and carers. The annual report from the governors to parents is very brief and does not properly inform them; for example it does not tell parents who the governors are. The school sends one written report home at the time of annual review meetings, which does not clearly explain progress and achievements across all subjects of the curriculum. The headteacher and staff make home visits to help keep parents and carers informed and regular termly newsletters also inform parents and carers well about general issues and events in the school. Overall the quality of information, including about pupils' progress, is satisfactory.
48. Even though the school is active in seeking to involve parents and carers as much as possible it reports difficulties in recruiting parent representatives on to the governing body and there is no tradition of a parent teacher association. Nevertheless there have been improvements in involving parents and carers in the life of the school and successes in recent years in encouraging contributions to learning at home. Parents and carers are invited to and many attend an annual sports day and the leaver's assembly. Sometimes they have tea in the residential homes with their children. The "Inspire" project, which was supported by outside funding, and which was initiated last year involved a small number of parents and grandparents working in the school once a week. This strengthened links and succeeded in involving some who had not had much contact with the work of the school before. Many, including parents, who are involved with the school speak positively about the school's attempts to involve parents and carers and overall links are effective for the majority and contribute to the many achievements for pupils.

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

49. Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good. There have been improvements in a number of areas since the last inspection and this reflects the shared commitment of all staff to succeed. They have worked hard and effectively at improving the quality and range of provision. Behaviour has improved and there are now effective handovers from care to school in the mornings and evenings. Many care staff work with pupils in the classrooms during the morning sessions. This works well and helps pupils to settle into their work quickly.
50. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and through his open, collaborative, team approach there is good potential and capacity for the school to improve further. The school's aims and values are clearly identified and reflected in the school improvement plan. The day to day management of the school is good and it is a well ordered community. As well as a senior management team the school has a general management team, and this is effective in ensuring that all are involved in the decision making processes. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles appropriately and contribute well to development planning.
51. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. However, at the moment it is three members short, and the composition of the body is made up of four members from the school, and four members from outside. This inhibits the governing body from being a critical friend to the school, and the outside members tend to rely upon the staff for too much information, such as monitoring of the curriculum or attendance. The chairperson is fully committed to the success of the school and wholehearted in his support for the work of the headteacher. He is a

frequent visitor and has excellent knowledge, which he brings to bear, of financial issues. However, at present neither he nor the governors have a clear, impartial overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this is unsatisfactory.

52. Systems for identifying pupils with additional special needs are satisfactory because teachers know their pupils so well. However there is a need to formalise these arrangements as the school currently lacks procedures which ensure that such additional special needs are clearly identified. Also the governing body does not have anyone who has the specific responsibility for monitoring the provision the school makes for pupils with additional special needs.
53. Specific grants are used very effectively for their designated purpose. For example, the headteacher has worked hard with the authority to acquire government grants for 'gifted and talented' pupils, within the context of the school. This is an innovative step within special education. The way in which the school accesses and uses this grant, ensures that all pupils gain from the wide range of activities and experiences that are offered.
54. There are rigorous procedures for checking and improving teaching. They are well established and have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching. The better standards pupils are achieving and the better progress they are making in many subjects is a direct result of this. Strengths and areas for development are fed back to teachers after being observed, and this system is much appreciated. Much of this work is through Performance Management, which is carried out by senior staff. This model also guides the setting of targets for senior staff and other teachers. Each has annual targets, which are linked to the school improvement plan, and have been identified through the procedures for monitoring teaching.
55. All staff, teaching, support and care, have an annual appraisal meeting with the headteacher. In this way all have opportunities to have their ideas and contributions listened to, and feel valued. An indication of how the governing body and senior management value all staff was the way in which the School Achievement Award was equally divided among all staff.
56. The school is very adept at using new technology. Most classrooms now have interactive white boards. Although these are very new, staff are very keen to improve their knowledge and understanding and make more effective use of them. The school has arranged for staff New Opportunities Fund training (NOF) to take place in June. Part of this training will be to improve staff's proficiency with this equipment.
57. Administration staff use a management information system to produce up to date financial information. Through a very effective financial administrator and the headteacher, figures are presented to the governing body on a very regular basis. Monthly figures are also available for subject co-ordinators to monitor their subject spending. Appropriate whole school targets are set and monitored and are an integral part of the school development plan. These are supported well through good financial planning. The school development plan is costed and guides development well. The process for setting the budget is good, although in many cases the final amount of

money from the local education authority is late in being advised to the school, and makes financial planning very difficult. Through the finance committee, and particularly the expertise of the chair, the governing body is closely involved in budgeting the school expenditure and has played a significant part in ensuring the prudent management of the school's finances. These meetings are now minuted and signed and there are clear terms of reference for members. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

58. Best value principles are appropriately applied in the school's management and use of resources when deciding how funds will be spent. The school buys into the LEA finance scheme to help ensure best value is gained. The recent auditors' report judges the school to be satisfactory. The few recommendations have been implemented into the procedures.
59. The school and residential homes are generously staffed with teachers, classroom support assistants and residential social workers. The staffing represents a good balance of subject expertise and knowledge of special educational needs. However the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting a music teacher. High quality residential and classroom support staff are well integrated into the life of the school and play a significant role in helping to extend pupils' learning opportunities. There is a comprehensive in-service training programme open to all staff and this is linked well to the school's performance management scheme. It enables many staff to develop additional skills in meeting aspects of the particular special educational needs reflected in the present pupil population. There are satisfactory arrangements for the induction of new staff. Teaching assistants and residential social workers receive good induction and support from colleagues to ensure that they understand pupils' special needs. This is a good improvement from the last inspection when arrangements for the induction of new teachers were unsatisfactory.
60. The quality of the teaching accommodation is satisfactory overall. The premises' staff ensure that the buildings are kept in good order and are very clean. The main building is adequate for teaching most subjects and there are now good teaching facilities for science and food technology. The school makes good use of accommodation available and the learning environment is greatly enhanced by a range of good quality displays in classrooms and corridors. The school has extensive grounds which are used well for physical education lessons and evening activities. The indoor accommodation for physical education is too small. However the school has recognised this and drawn up appropriate plans to improve for a new gym and library. The quality of the residential accommodation is satisfactory overall and provides pupils with the opportunity to live in a homely non-institutionalised atmosphere. However the senior residential home has some areas that are unsafe for pupils to enter and the building needs extensive repair to the exterior fabric.
61. Resources for teaching and learning are good in English, modern foreign languages, religious education, food technology and motor vehicle maintenance and are very good for information and communication technology, history and geography. The school has a good range of books in classrooms and the library, although isolated from the main school building, has a good range of both fiction and non-fiction

books. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. However resources available to support the teaching of music remain unsatisfactory.

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

62. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

Improve the overall attendance levels in the school by:

- Developing better links with the educational welfare service.
- Ensuring that there is a system for monitoring absenteeism which includes recording accurate figures.

(paragraphs 12,41)

Improving the monitoring of pupils' academic progress and setting whole school targets by:

- Ensuring there is a member of staff who can oversee the provision for assessment.
- Setting whole school targets for literacy, numeracy and science for pupils who will be in Year 9 in the summer 2003.
- Improving the quality of reports on pupils' progress so that what they know understand and can do is clearer .
- Developing a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work.
- Monitoring information gathered from assessments so that it can be used to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

(paragraphs 5,12,43,47,76,88,109,114)

Improve the provision for music by;

- Continuing with efforts to recruit a music teacher.
- Developing resources for the subject.
- Ensuring there is sufficient time allocated to the subject to enable pupils to develop their skills and knowledge.

(paragraphs 3,25,127,130)

Improve the role of the governing body by:

- Continuing with efforts to recruit more governors.
- Developing processes by which governors have a more impartial view of what goes on in school.
- Ensuring that information provided by governors to parents is more detailed and accurate.

(paragraphs 47,51)

In addition the following issues should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve pupils' opportunities for writing at length by reducing the use of worksheets and encouraging teachers to provide a wider range of opportunities for pupils to record what they have learnt. (paragraphs 2, 73)
- Improve the teaching of science for pupils in Years 7,8 and 9. (paragraphs 2,86)
- Increase teaching time to bring it more in line with other similar schools. (paragraph 26)
- Continue with plans to develop the gym and a new library (paragraphs 60,76, 136)
- Improve residential accommodation for Year 10 and 11 pupils (paragraphs 60,68)

## **RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

63. The provision for residential pupils is good and the quality of the care staff is a strength of the school. The residential homes cater for up to 70 pupils. At present there are 54 pupils of whom three are girls. Pupils are in residence from Monday to Friday, although not all stay for the whole week.
64. The quality of care and support offered by the residential staff is very good. They work closely with pupils during the day and there are always staff available to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties in lessons. Staff are involved in the annual review of pupils and in decisions concerning home going programmes. There are individual behaviour support programmes which are linked to the system used in school. Development planning for the residential provision is effective and staff have a clear view of what they want to do. There is a good range of activities for pupils in the evening both on and off the school site. For example, pupils use a local sports centre for trampolining while others go to the local youth club. All activities are monitored well to ensure that pupils receive a very good range of experiences.
65. Relationships are very good. Pupils sit with their friends at meal times and share jokes and chat about things that have happened during the day or at the weekend. Pupils are very courteous to visitors, inviting them into the homes, offering refreshments and initiating conversations. They complete a variety of jobs with good humour, for example clearing tables and helping collect clothes and bedding. Pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of the staff and try to do their best.
66. The welfare of pupils is satisfactory. There are regular fire drills and aspects of health and safety are monitored well. Staff are aware of the procedures for child protection and the recording of incidents has recently been improved to comply with boarding school requirements. Although information concerning "Childline" is prominently displayed in the residential houses pupils do not have access to public telephones located in private situations. As at the time of the last inspection there is no guarantee that pupils have access to an independent listener.
67. The care team is very well led and managed and they work very well together. There are regular meetings with care and teaching staff. Daily briefings for all staff take place to ensure continuity of information and care throughout the school and residences. These meetings enable all staff to be aware of any changes to pupils' individual education programmes. Residential staff establish and maintain good links with parents and carers. They visit new parents and maintain regular contact with

them during the pupils' stay. Parents value the level of support that they receive. The quality of information provided for parents is also good.

68. The homes are well staffed and residential social workers are fully involved in school INSET days. There is a good gender and ethnic mix of staff to provide appropriate role models to the pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and staff have worked hard to create a homely atmosphere by putting up age appropriate wall displays. Pupils are also encouraged to personalise their own bedrooms. However, although most bedrooms are well decorated and comfortable, others are less so. Communal rooms are pleasant and the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. However the senior residential accommodation is in parts sectioned off for being dangerous and in need of extensive external repair.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

61
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

50
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		9	38	11	3		
Percentage		15	62	18	5		

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

No of pupils
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Number of pupils on the school's roll	75
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Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A
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#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils
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Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils
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Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
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Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7
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***Attendance***

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	13.55

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	7.65

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2001	Total 13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 3 and above	Total	Disapplied	69%	69%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	Total	Disapplied	30%	46%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	Total	Disapplied	0	15%

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 3 and above	Total	54%	77%	7%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	Total	0	15%	23%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	Total	0	0	0

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2001	24

17 pupils entered for GCSE mathematics - 9 pupils gained passes D – G

18 pupils entered for Certificate of Education – 11 pupils gained passes including 4 distinctions

17 pupils entered for Science award and 16 gained passes – 9 of which were bronze award

16 pupils entered for Certificate of Education in mathematics - 14 gained passes including 8 distinctions

10 pupils entered for Certificate of Education in PE – 8 passed – 4 with merits.

Pupils also gained passes in AEB literacy and numeracy

24 pupils entered for Compact and 12 gained bronze and bronze/silver awards

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	62
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	2	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	5	1
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: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size	8

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	32
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1136

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	01 - 02
	£
Total income	1,879,086
Total expenditure	1,872,165
Expenditure per pupil	24,634
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,000
Balance carried forward to next year	1,921

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Only 7 parents or carers returned the questionnaire and four parents/ carers representing three pupils attended the parents evening to meet inspectors. One set of parents also came into school during the inspection to talk to inspectors. Parents are very positive overall about the school. They appreciate the good links with staff and feel that their children have improved both in behaviour and academically since starting the school. They feel that the school is well led and that their children have positive attitudes to school.

Very few concerns were raised in discussions or on the questionnaire. However two parents at the meeting raised concerns about the time pupils get home from school on a Friday which is often quite early.

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

### **ENGLISH**

69. Pupils' overall progress and achievement in English are good. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the provision and standards. This is because of the good overall quality of teaching. This has been effective in improving teachers' planning, ensuring that work is planned so that pupils build on what they have already learned. The high quality of relationships in lessons is a very important factor in the progress that pupils make.
70. Key strengths:
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills
  - Teachers ensure that lessons are interesting and relevant
  - Opportunities for pupils to become good communicators
  - The subject is managed well
  - Support staff are very well used
  - The residential homes support reading well
  - Flexible introduction of the national literacy strategy

#### Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills
  - Assessment is not consistent and work needs to be moderated
  - ICT could be used better to support pupils' learning
  - The teaching of drama is not effective at present
  - The library is not well positioned
  - Literacy across the curriculum needs to be better developed
71. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in reading because they have many opportunities to practice and develop their skills. In morning reading sessions and in the residential houses pupils enjoy reading age appropriate but simplified versions of fiction books. For example, a Year 9 pupil reads an age appropriate version of "The Godfather" showing good understanding of the main characters. Pupils in the residential homes work enthusiastically to read ten books in order to receive a head teachers' book award. Older pupils' in Year 10 read extracts from "Deep Water" by Anne Turnbull and identify key words from the passage to set the scene such as, "choppy" "whirlpools" and "flood". The teacher makes very good use of an interactive white board to involve all pupils in reading from the board. They willingly participate with higher attaining pupils reading with fluency and accurately. This lesson provided a good example of the positive effect of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy – pupils learned to scan the text to find important words for themselves. The school makes very good use of the local library and museums service to borrow a variety of specialist topic books to support work in the classroom.

72. Achievement in speaking and listening is good. Pupils ask and answer questions sensibly and clearly in response to teachers' questioning. In their reading of 'Sahara' by Clive Kessler Year 10 pupils use their knowledge of the text to describe the desert. Other pupils enter into a productive discussion about the different ways that writer describes extreme weather conditions. Pupils are willing to contribute and make mistakes in lessons as they know that their contributions will be accepted without "put downs". Pupils in a good Year 7 poetry lesson enjoy reading animal poems out loud and selecting poems they enjoyed. One pupil recalls "onomatopoeia" from the previous day and explains its meaning. Pupils enjoy listening as the teacher reads another pupil's poem and recognise that parts of it rhyme. Speaking and listening is also well developed during personal, social and health education sessions in the residential homes. For example, pupils discuss aspects of racism and equal rights. They speak clearly, use socially appropriate language and make sensible contributions to discussions while listening attentively to each other's point of view. These discussion sessions are led very well by residential care staff who skilfully ensure that all pupils are involved and encouraged to expand on their ideas.
73. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory overall. As part of their Certificate of Achievement coursework, older pupils in Year 10 produce writing that is organised, imaginative and clear. They are given the opportunity to redraft pieces of writing and produce work of a good standard. Pupils in Year 9 have produced a series of very imaginative "Our Alien Stories" linked to work undertaken in class. They have produced these in newspaper format and illustrated them by importing appropriate clip art. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to practise handwriting for a variety of purposes. For example, by Year 8, most pupils use cursive script and can use computer programs to word process simple articles. However, it is recognised that there is a need to develop this skill further for pupils as opportunities, particularly in other subjects, are limited.
74. Teachers maintain a good pace and display very firm, calm management, which contributes to keeping the pupils on task. At present there is only one English specialist who teaches the subject although teachers benefit from very good support from the English co-ordinator and this ensures that teaching is good. However, the current arrangements for teaching drama using an unqualified supply teacher are unsatisfactory. Classroom support staff are very well used and work very closely with the teacher in keeping pupils' focused on their work. Lessons also cover subject matter, which is relevant, interesting and appropriate to the pupils' stage of development. For example, in a good Year 11 lesson, pupils discuss coursework for a forthcoming Certificate of Achievement examination. They are able to express opinions, consolidate learning about books they have studied and produce good quality work. Very good, consistent use of praise by teaching and support staff is used effectively to manage behaviour and motivate pupils.
75. Literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers use a range of resources in lessons and pupils are encouraged to use information from different sources. For example, in a good year 9 humanities lesson pupils' have to read and sequence assorted facts into the correct timeline chronology. However in a small number of lessons there is not a clear understanding of the range of ability in the class and

worksheets are not adapted to enable all pupils to read them. Opportunities are missed for pupils to find information or become independent learners. Pupils spend a large amount of English lesson time using an integrated learning system and planning needs to ensure that pupils experience relevant opportunities to practice in other lessons the basic skills they have learnt. There are satisfactory examples where pupils use computers to produce a finished example of their work. For instance, pupils in Year 9 print off newspaper articles about “alien news” and older pupils re-draft their written assignments for accreditation. However, there is scope for pupils to use computers more regularly to help them with their work.

76. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and this has led to good improvements since the last inspection. There is good recording of the work that has been done, however, there is a need to ensure assessment is consistent and for pupils’ work to be collected and collated so that it can be moderated to assist in assessment. The subject development plan appropriately recognises where there can be improvements. However, the location of the library remains unsatisfactory as its present position makes it unsuitable for pupils to undertake private study.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning support is good. As a consequence, by the end of Year 9 the higher attaining pupils achieve the national average standard; and pupils achieve up to grades F and G in GCSE mathematics, by the time they leave school. Higher attaining pupils are entered for GCSE a year early, in Year 10. Provision for mathematics has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

78. Key strengths

- Pupils’ achievements
- There is a good match of targets and work to pupils’ learning needs
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and make lessons interesting
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, are well motivated and interested
- The subject is well led

### Areas for improvement

- The plenary sessions are not always used well
- The mathematics computerised programme does not support pupils’ work in mathematics sufficiently
- Improve guidance to mathematics teachers about the use and application of mathematics and the use of ICT
- Numeracy in other subjects is not planned rigorously enough

79. There is a wide span of ability when pupils start school. In the current Year 7, the lowest attaining pupil is learning to count to 20 and to subtract single digit numbers using objects like coins and bricks. In contrast, the higher attaining Year 7 pupils are

learning to convert fractions into percentages. By the end of Year 9 pupils across the range of attainment have made good progress in mathematics. Higher attaining Year 9 pupils understand how to convert fractions and decimals into percentages and they add, subtract, divide and multiply letters in algebraic problems. They apply mathematical principles to calculate angles formed by triangles and intersecting parallel lines. Pupils have a good understanding of how to retrieve data; and they use mathematical vocabulary accurately and fluently. The lowest attaining Year 9 pupils make good progress to reach acceptable standards.

80. In Years 10 and 11, as in Years 7 to 9, there is a good match of mathematics targets and work to pupils' learning needs. Pupils follow graduated assessment programmes leading to GCSE where appropriate. There are accredited basic tests in numeracy, and for the very small number of pupils who have the greatest learning difficulty they consolidate their understanding of addition, subtraction, and money, for example, as part of the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) course.
81. Pupils are given some opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as in physical education, humanities and science. However opportunities are not planned rigorously enough. This is an area requiring further development. In a topic on motion in science, Year 7 pupils calculate average speed whilst in Year 10 they draw bar graphs to compare the conduction properties of different metals.
82. Teachers and learning support staff make lessons interesting and fun. Pupils look forward to their lessons and behave well. One Year 9 boy said 'I love maths'. He thinks the lessons are not long enough. There is a good, purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Relationships are well developed and conversations about the work in hand flow easily. Time is used most productively and pupils are very receptive to the support they receive. Support staff make very effective contributions in lessons. Pupils enjoy the mental mathematical games used at the start of lessons. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are not quite so effective because insufficient time is set aside for questions to check how well each pupil has understood their mathematics work. Pupils tend not to be as attentive in the final plenary compared with the start and middle of lessons. Teachers have produced high quality paper and pencil activities and classroom displays, especially in Year 9. There are good supplies of resources for practical mathematics but these are not yet deployed to full effect.
83. Good use is made of the local mathematics advisory service to support developments in this subject and to help teachers keep up to date with national developments. There are no written plans yet, however, to show how the current Year 10 pupils who have already achieved GCSE standard will be challenged to make further progress in mathematics when they move in to Year 11. Although pupils learn a good range of skills in mathematics lessons, the curriculum plans provide little specific guidance for the mathematics teachers on where they can promote the use and application of mathematics and the use of computers in their lessons. Each week pupils use a computerised mathematics programme but this is not yet an integral part of the mathematics provision.

## **SCIENCE**

84. Progress and achievements in science are satisfactory overall. In the past pupils have made good and often very good progress with some achieving levels on a par with national expectations. However there have been changes in staffing and the permanent teacher is on long term sick leave. At present the subject Years 7, 8 and 9 are taught by an unqualified teacher. Older pupils are taught by an experienced teacher and this ensures that they make better progress and achieve appropriately in accredited courses. Standards remain similar to the time of the last inspection.

85. Key strengths

- Good science facilities
- Effective teaching for Years 10 and 11
- Pupils have, in the past, achieved very well

Areas for improvement

- The teaching and planning for Years 7,8 and 9
- Marking of pupils' work
- Lack of challenge in accredited courses

86. In Years 7, 8 and 9 teaching is just satisfactory and as a result pupils do make appropriate progress in their learning. They show an increasing understanding of physical processes such as energy sources and transfer. Pupils clearly enjoy opportunities to be involved in practical work and teaching is often effective in getting them interested straight away. For example in a Year 7 lesson based on calculating the speed of a moving object the teacher asks pupils as they arrive to time a ball moving along a bench. Pupils are beginning to understand formulas for calculating speed although they are not yet confident in using them. They have studied some properties of materials and the characteristics of living things including an introduction to the structure and functions of organs of the human body. On occasions teachers' explanations are good and reflect appropriate subject knowledge. As a result for example pupils have a good understanding about how electromagnetism is used in operating switches because of very clear description of how this works. However, this is not always the case and opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to become more involved. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils were told about force fields rather than being given the opportunity to share their knowledge. Later they carry out a practical experiment involving a bar magnet and plotting compass but do not know what to do and become confused and bored. Pupils show an interest in science topics and are keen to ask and answer questions but they are frequently distracted or display disinterest when work is not pitched to meet their particular needs.

87. In Years 10 and 11 pupils complete modules of the accredited Certificate of Achievement course. They consolidate work they have done earlier such as energy and forces but develop their knowledge further by looking at, for example, the use of energy in the home. Their study of the human body is linked well to personal, social and health education and pupils are aware of the damage caused by smoking on their lungs. They produce good work based on the solar system and show an understanding of food chains and photosynthesis.

88. The standard of marking across the school is poor. Work is often unmarked, teachers do not write comments to encourage or advise pupils and there is no indication of the level of attainment.
89. The work planned for Years 7,8 and 9 is currently under revision and planning for how pupils will develop their skills and understanding is unclear at present. Planning for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is based on an examination board syllabus and is better defined, so ensuring that all elements of the course are covered. However, while the examination pass rate is good, the course does not present enough challenge for most pupils whose previous test results indicate that they have the ability to study GCSE.
90. Both science teachers have been appointed this year and the co-ordinator, aware of the shortfalls, has prepared a plan for the development of science. The new laboratories will enable the teachers to provide better and more frequent science enquiry opportunities. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for better organization of the preparation rooms to ensure safety and ease of access to apparatus.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. Achievement and progress is good for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 because teaching and learning are good. Pupils' achievements are good because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils do not have opportunities to extend their skills and undertake accredited courses because art is not taught to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in teaching and learning.
92. Key strengths
- Planning is good and ensure that pupils are given a good range of experiences
  - Good team work and a calm atmosphere ensure lessons run smoothly
  - High quality displays motivate and inspire pupils
  - ICT is used well to research areas of interest
  - Self assessment is used well
  - Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in Years 10 and 11
  - Opportunities for pupils to take externally accredited courses
93. Pupils develop a range of skills as they move through the school. This is reflected in the present project on Japanese art. By the end of Year 7, pupils make good progress in their skills by designing and making Carp streamers. To do this they research Japanese culture in books and on the Internet. Pupils cut out their fish and create patterns by using felt tips and water colours. They then glue the two halves together to create a three dimensional fish. By the end of Year 8, pupils make Japanese lanterns. Pupils use tracing paper as the main fabric of the lantern. They trace and draw on the paper and construct the lantern. By the end of Year 9, pupils continue with their Japanese theme and create masks called 'Kabuti'. They use inflated

balloons as a base, covering them with paper mache. There was much discussion about Japan and Japanese culture, such as art, dress and foods.

94. There is a healthy working atmosphere in lessons. Music plays in the background which creates calm. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, as a result pupils respond well, work hard and behave well. Pupils show obvious enjoyment and pride in their work. The high quality of displays of pupils' work in the art room is highly motivating for pupils and effective in raising their self-esteem. The teacher and support staff work very well together, are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and manage challenging behaviour very well. As a result, lessons run smoothly and all pupils make good progress. At the end of lessons, as part of the assessment procedures, pupils are encouraged to complete a self assessment form indicating where they think they have done well, why and how could they improve their performance.
95. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who is responsible for all art teaching in the subject. An area for development is to find an appropriate external accreditation to do credit to the pupils' work. The co-ordinator accepts this, but realises that to succeed, pupils would have to be taught art up to Year 11.
96. Art makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the range of experiences they are given.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Design and technology is taught as three separate subjects; there are:- resistant materials, food technology and motor vehicles and each has a co-ordinator. Standards of achievement are good. All pupils are achieving well and making progress throughout the school because teaching and learning are good. This is good improvement since the last inspection.
98. Key strengths
- Teachers have a good subject knowledge of their areas of design and technology
  - Pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of health and safety in the work areas
  - Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff that they will behave sensibly and maturely in work areas
  - There are good opportunities for self assessment
  - Good facilities
99. By the end of Year 9, pupils are familiar with basic tools in the workshop and basic equipment in the food technology room. They pay good attention to health and safety issues surrounding the use of cutting tools, knives, machinery and hot cookers. Pupils discuss what they want to make and suggest different materials or tools that could be used. They are encouraged to complete design and evaluation briefs, select and prepare different ingredients, and know the most effective equipment for preparing food. Pupils' skills are extended in all areas of design and they measure and mark out work, cut different materials using saws and jigs, and fasten them together using pins or screws. They understand how to strengthen joints using card and glue. Using this

knowledge, pupils make working 'frog' models to illustrate 'systems and control'. They show a good knowledge and understanding of 'structures' and which structures are strongest and why. Pupils work with different ingredients and prepare them to make healthy dishes showing a good knowledge of the importance of healthy eating and sources of essential vitamins and minerals.

100. By the end of Year 11, pupils plan and cost their meals in food technology. In the workshop, they show good understanding of sand casting. Pupils know the principles of mixing air and gas to change the strength of the flame and explain how a car's braking system works. They carry out work safely, for example, in the workshop they wear appropriate clothing, such as overalls, and goggles when removing pins from brake pads. There is an adult working atmosphere in the workshops, and pupils respond well to the extra responsibility they are given.
101. A strength of the subject is the way in which pupils are managed. Teachers offer appropriate and interesting activities and lessons proceed at a good pace. Well-focused support from teachers and support assistants maintains pupils' interest well and keeps them on task. The way in which pupils enter the room, settle for work and then organise themselves for the practical activities ahead is good, and illustrates the teachers' insistence on clear routines. There is some restless behaviour from the youngest pupils, who have been in the school for the shortest time, but skilled support and good use of praise and encouragement soon brings them back on task. It is noticeable how pupils' maturity and responsibility increases as they move through the school. Attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Most pupils work independently for long periods of time, requiring little support from the teacher or support assistant. The team work between teacher and support assistants is very good and enhances the progress pupils make. Pupils look after their work and are keen to show it off to visitors. Completed work is of a high standard of presentation and this stems from high expectations on the part of staff and an insistence on quality.
102. Lessons are well planned, in the form of ongoing projects, which contain processes that enable the pupils to develop their design and making skills well. Teachers use questioning well in order to enable the pupils to recall what they know, and to make them think about what they will need for the project and how they will organise their work. Good use is made of 'what if' and 'why' questions as well as checking for understanding. During practical tasks, there is a good mix of direct instructions, questioning and enabling, so that pupils work on their own for most of the time. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and this enhances the progress that pupils make. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and are keen to do well.
103. New technology is used well. In the design and technology classroom, there is a new interactive white board. This is very new, but staff are coming to terms with its potential and it is very motivating for pupils. Good use is made of word processing to make appropriate and relevant work sheets and self assessment sheets to help pupils in their understanding of the theory of technology.
104. The three elements of the subject are well led and managed by their respective co-ordinators who are well qualified and have a wealth of relevant experience.

Accommodation for food technology and motor vehicle studies are good. The food technology room has been upgraded and re-equipped to a high standard. The motor vehicle workshop is of a high standard.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are good. The extended use of information technology together with an emphasis on the acquisition of skills such as map reading and physical geography up to Year 9 and the application of these skills in a practical way has been responsible for the raising of standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.

106. Key Strengths

- Teachers ensure the work is challenging and interesting
- Opportunities for learning through practical experiences
- The focus on developing older pupils' skills through a project on tourism
- ICT is used well to support learning
- The subject is managed well
- Resources are used well

Areas for improvement

- The marking and assessment of pupils' work
- The lack of external accreditation.

107. In Years 7 to 9 teachers concentrate on broadening pupils' knowledge of the British Isles and developing their understanding of geographical concepts for example map reading and the formation of volcanoes. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils have a good understanding of the geography of the British Isles, such as the location of major cities, climate and physical geography. They also show good progress in their acquisition of map reading skills. For older pupils the recent adaptation of the theme of tourism provides pupils with opportunities to apply their earlier skills but also to consider a range of countries, such as Brazil and Ireland, and to consider them as tourist destinations.

108. The emphasis placed on practical exercises combined with a developing use of computers provides pupils with a range of interesting challenges. From the limited number of lessons seen an example of this approach is the use of a computer display to enhance the knowledge of Brazil by Year 10 pupils. The interactive "white board" is used well for example when working on maps and pictures of the country. The expectation that pupils would give a verbal response to the information was an effective way of developing their geographical knowledge and also practising their speaking skills. This imaginative use of resources is a favourable development since the last report when it was judged that there was an over reliance on work sheets and the available range of resources was too narrow.

109. Geography is well managed and there have been some good developments to curriculum planning. However, there is a need to identify an appropriate external

examination for Year 11 pupils to enable them to attain accreditation for their work. Similarly, the marking of work requires further development, as does the assessment of pupils' work. The current marking does not inform pupils as to how their work could be improved and the assessment procedures do not adequately record the geographical skills they have achieved.

## **HISTORY**

110. Pupils achieve well in history because teaching and learning are good. Their current achievements are an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. The introduction of computers and improved resources, such as new textbooks, have resulted in greater challenges for pupils.

111. Key strengths

- Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies to make lessons interesting
- The use of ICT to support learning
- Pupils are encouraged to find out information for themselves
- Pupils are developing skills in analysing information

Areas for improvement

- The marking and assessment of pupils' work
- The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress more effectively

112. Year 7 pupils have a good understanding of medieval history and life. Their work on castles has involved them in using a range of approaches, which involve literacy, making and research skills. By answering questions, making models and visiting a web site of castles pupils showed an understanding of how castles were built as well as the siege techniques used. In Years 8 and 9 there is developing emphasis on pupils' research skills. In Year 8 for example pupils showed themselves to be capable of investigating the land enclosure of an eighteenth century village through the use of comparative maps and analysing data from original sources to complete a picture of the village "before and after." In Year 9 pupils further develop their research skills in a range of topics. Pupils show both insight and understanding in their use of historical research skills for example when using photographs and written information to carry out a role play about poverty in the workhouse in Victorian times and use computer graphics and maps to investigate the life styles of Native American tribes.

113. The weaknesses in teaching identified at the time of the last inspection, namely a narrow range of teaching strategies and a failure to match the work to the pupils' abilities, have been rectified through the successful use of computers and textbooks. These approaches are illustrated by two year 9 lessons. In one lesson pupils wrote a report on Victorian poverty. By creating a "model" of the report on the board, ensuring that pupils had access to the key words of the report and through well structured discussion pupils were able to produce a good piece of written work. In another lesson pupils considered the location of Native American tribes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through visiting appropriate web sites and referring to written records, the pupils were able to work independently to locate the position and numbers of each

tribe. A significant element of this lesson was the confidence of the pupils' computer skills allied to their accurate analyse of written records.

114. The subject is well managed. Curriculum planning is much improved and the criticism of the last report, that work does not always match pupils' abilities, has been successfully addressed. The emphasis has been shifted from the use of worksheets and copying from books. However, there is still a need to further develop the processes of marking pupils' work to ensure it gives pupils guidance on how to improve it. Similarly, there is a need to further develop assessment procedures so that pupil's progress may be more readily identified.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

115. Teaching and learning are good and as a result pupils' achievements are good. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching of pupils between Years 7 and 9 was judged to be satisfactory because pupils' poor behaviour and lack of language skills were unsatisfactory.

116. Key strengths

- Pupils develop good quality computer skills as well as the means to use computers in a range of subjects for both research and word processing
- The development of teachers' skills
- The development of the school's links with other schools and organisations which have resulted in some Year 9 pupils having access to the NVQ examination and all Year 9 pupils having access to a wide range of resources
- Resources are good

### Areas for improvement

- There are no opportunities for external accreditation for Year 11 pupils
- Assessment and marking of pupils' work is in need of further development
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to assess their own work

117. On entry to the school pupils' levels of achievements are low. However, well-structured teaching results in good levels of learning. By Year 9 pupils are using computers with confidence to produce a wide range of word-processed material such as personal profiles or personal letters. More advanced skills are also evident with pupils using tables to consolidate information on items such as the type and value of second hand cars or the hair and eye colours of fellow pupils. Accurate graphs and other diagrams are also produced. Pupils have been taught well to use the Internet and their research skills are well illustrated in a range of subjects such as the history of castles or background information on countries such as Brazil or Ireland. Access to sophisticated equipment combined with specialist teaching enables Year 9 pupils to develop more advanced skills such as writing programs to operate machinery. By Year 11 pupils are demonstrating good skills in their ability to construct web pages using graphics and music as well as building data bases for a range of information. Unfortunately, at present the school is unable to provide an external qualification for year 11 pupils although active consideration is being given to remedy this.

118. Teaching is well structured and demanding placing an emphasis on pupils' development of the ability to closely follow instructions to ensure their development of skills. An example of this was seen in a year 7 lesson where, despite the tendency to restlessness as a consequence of a rainy break time, the clear demonstration by the teacher combined with the effective behaviour management support of the learning assistant resulted in pupils successfully mastering the use of Logo equipment enabling them to draw shapes with the computer. The teaching emphasis on pupils' independent working is also reflected in a lesson for Year 10 pupils when adding music to their web pages. Discussion with pupils demonstrated their understanding and observation showed their skill at putting the web page together.
119. The teaching and learning of the subject is enhanced by the links that have been established with other schools and with the City Learning Centre. A lesson at the latter amply illustrated the benefits both to the teaching and learning of pupils. Teachers benefit from access to advanced equipment and skilled support, pupils benefit from access to challenging ICT tasks, such as writing a program for a sequence of flashing lights and operating a motor, as well as the opportunities for developing social skills by working in a new and adult environment.
120. ICT is well used in a range of subjects throughout the school. The acquisition of interactive "white boards" has provided teachers with opportunities to use pictures, text and maps to support lessons and to challenge pupils. The number of computers and the developing skills of the staff enables ICT to be incorporated into a range of subjects, such as word processing in English, Internet research in history or language programs in French.
121. ICT is well managed with detailed and clear curriculum planning. However, assessment procedures, whilst satisfactory overall, require further development to accurately match pupils' learning and to ensure that work is consistently marked. Opportunities for pupil to evaluate and comment on their own work are currently under-developed.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

122. Pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory. They benefit from good teaching but the lack of sufficient time prevents pupils from making better progress. At the time of the last inspection provision for a modern foreign language was satisfactory. Since that time there have been appropriate improvements.
123. Key Strengths
- Teaching is effective in encouraging pupils' to be confident in speaking French
  - Very good relationships with pupils
  - There are a good range of activities in lessons
  - Opportunities for pupils to visit France

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient time allocated to the subject for pupils to make better progress

124. Pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 have a good understanding of the differences between French and English cultures and have clearly benefited from a recent trip to France. They discuss the different types of food and show awareness of vocabulary such as “croissant” and “biere”. All are confident in recognising numbers and can count up to ten with a minimal amount of prompting. Pupils complete worksheets which reflect their growing understanding of colours, days of the week and the names of animals.
125. The very good relationships and effective management of behaviour ensures that pupils stay on task well. Lessons are generally well paced and a range of activities such as listening to a tape and completing worksheets keeps pupils interested. The teacher’s secure knowledge of the subject enables pupils to hear French spoken well. She uses praise well and as a result they are not self conscious when being taped. They enjoy opportunities to practice their French and Year 9 pupils repeat phrases such as “Je voudrais un bonbon s’il vous plait”. They are confident to say “merci” without prompting. The teacher introduces lessons by recapping on what pupils have learnt and this is necessary as they struggle to recall the work they have done in the past for example Year 8 pupils needed a lot of prompting to remember any of the vocabulary from the previous week.
126. Resources are used effectively to support learning including ICT matching games and card games. Pupils do not have the option to take this subject in Years 10 and 11 although a small group studied for their Certificate of Education once a week after school. The curriculum is satisfactory to meet the present time allocation but it is recognised that it would need to be extended if more time was allocated to the subject to enable pupils to make better progress.

## MUSIC

127. The provision for music is unsatisfactory but has improved since the last inspection when pupils’ progress then described as very poor. The school continues to experience difficulty in recruiting a specialist music teacher and relies on support from the local authority music service.
128. Key Strengths
- Pupils benefit from the visits of the LEA’s music specialist
  - They enjoy opportunities to perform and sing
- Areas for improvement
- There is no music teacher
  - Resources are inadequate
129. Year 7 pupils achieve well in lessons. They make good progress learning to play percussion instruments in the style of Cuban music, for example, and compose short improvised solos for the xylophone. They enjoy their time in lessons and are keen to practise and improve their skills. The visiting music tutor knows the pupils well, enjoys good relationships with the pupils, and manages difficult behaviour very effectively. Work is well matched to each pupil’s stage of musical development and maturity.
130. Progress over time for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, however, because music is only available in Years 7 and 8 for about half an hour a week, and for only half the year. The statutory requirement for this subject is not met because the not all

areas of the subject can be covered adequately in the time available. Pupils make some, but not enough, progress in the skills of listening and appraising, performing and composing. They develop the confidence to perform in assemblies and in public. There is not enough time to use computers to full effect for composition. There is limited opportunity to learn notation, to hear music from different periods and cultures, and to experience the music of famous composers and performers. Resources are limited. In art lessons, pupils learn to appreciate music in the classical tradition because it is played to good effect as an accompaniment to their practical work.

131. Pupils with a particular talent or interest in music perform in annual school musical productions, learn gospel singing, compose and perform their own songs, and perform in assemblies. One Year 9 boy is having electronic keyboard lessons. He has improved his skills, playing with two hands, but especially his playing of left hand chords. He is improving his use of the auto accompaniment. The school has made videos and compact discs of pupils' musical performances, in which their skills and enthusiasm for music are very evident. Pupils from a mainstream school visit to play drums, percussion instruments and dance with pupils from Hunters Hill school. This is a good initiative between the two schools, extending the limited opportunities for music making.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

132. Pupils achieve very well across the school and make very good progress because of very good teaching. As a result of high quality teaching and management, pupils respond well, try their best and behave very well. Since the last inspection provision has made very good improvement. Pupils' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour in lessons has improved significantly.

133. Key strengths

- Pupils benefit from very good teaching and lessons are planned very well
- Pupils skills are enhanced further by very good after school activities
- There is good recording of pupils' progress
- The outdoor facilities are very good

### Areas for improvement

- Indoor facilities are inadequate

134. During the week of the inspection, the PE topic across Years 7 to 9 was Kwik Cricket. This was the end of the module and each group was due to be assessed. Year 7 were assessed for the bronze award, Year 8 for the silver and Year 9 for the gold award. As part of the assessment, pupils had to perform at throwing, catching, batting and bowling, from various distances depending upon the standard of the award. Pupils performed very well indeed and achieved their awards at the three levels. Their performance was similar to pupils in mainstream and would be equal to a national level of attainment for their age. Years 10 and 11 had a games afternoon where they had a choice of activities, such as football or gym activities. Pupils

listened carefully and made their choices with little fuss, changed for their activity and performed well all afternoon.

135. Lessons are planned well so that no time is wasted. There is very good team work between the teacher and learning support assistants. Pupils are very well managed. Staff know the pupils so well that any sign of challenging behaviour is immediately pre-empted and the pupils brought on task straight away before a minor incident can become a major one. This works well and minimises disruption of lessons. Staff are very skilled at questioning pupils. They give them just that little bit of extra time to allow them to answer, then they challenge the pupils to extend their answers. This works well and increases pupils' listening and speaking skills. Good use is made of praise, encouragement and good humour. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when counting and measuring in PE, often counting in French. Because of the very good relationships in class, pupils respond well and their attitude and behaviour is very good.
136. The subject is very well led and managed. The curriculum is effectively planned to cover a good range of activities which ensures each pupil develops their skills to the full. This is enhanced by well organised extra curricular activities after school. PE enhances pupils' social and moral development well. It gives opportunities to mix with each other, and through the gifted and talented activities, pupils from Hunters Hill mix with their peers from mainstream schools. The PE co-ordinator uses IT to keep detailed assessment records of each pupil. There is an abundance of photographic records, many taken with the digital camera which can then be put directly onto pupil records, showing pupil achievement and progress. Outside accommodation is very good, with large playing fields and room for cricket, athletics and cross country running. However, the gymnasium is too small for secondary PE, and one wall has boxed in pipes which presents as a hazard during lessons. The school development plan clearly indicates the need to develop a new sports hall and sports changing rooms.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. Provision for religious education is satisfactory. Due to timetabling arrangements no lessons were observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of work and interviews with staff and pupils indicate that pupils throughout the school acquire a satisfactory range of religious knowledge and teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 all studied the same lesson content.

### **138. Key Strengths**

- There are appropriate plans to develop the curriculum
- Resources are good

### **Areas for improvement**

- The current curriculum is too narrow
- Assessment and recording procedures are not sufficiently developed

139. Pupils in year 7 study parables from the Bible and complete an assortment of related worksheets. They recognise some features of religious life and practice and religious

words. In Year 8 pupils look at Hinduism and show an understanding of “reincarnation” and “life after death”. As part of this study pupils also looked at the lives of people of importance. For example, pupils have studied the lives of Martin Luther King, Mahatma Ghandi and Nelson Mandela with the emphasis on how religious beliefs affected their lives and how, through their actions, they brought awareness of justice and racism. By the end of Year 9 pupils have studied aspects of Islam and Sikhism. This has included why and how people worship, the Koran and how people show they belong to a group. However, the current curriculum offer is too narrow in Years 7, 8 and 9, focusing only on the study of world religions and not covering issues of spirituality in enough depth.

140. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 study relationships and moral issues. They look at different aspects of relationships and how they affect themselves and others, for example, marriage, first love and breakdowns in relationships. As part of the recent developments in religious education the school has run “Religion Days”. A half day in May was dedicated to raise awareness and understanding of Judaism. Each year group looked at different aspects of the religion producing displays for all areas of the school and being given the offer of a kosher meal as a choice at lunchtime. For example pupils in Year 8 produced a display of Jewish worship while pupils in Year 9 studied the festivals of Shabbat and Pesach.
141. A new co-ordinator has been in place since September and developments are in place to review planning. The aim is to ensure that there is a comprehensive curriculum which gives good guidance in clarifying what should be taught and what the learning outcomes should be. Documentation has been reviewed and extended since the last inspection and this has been influential in achieving improvement. Resources are now good and as a result there are sufficient resources and artefacts to support planned work. However, the subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve assessment and recording procedures to enable the school to effectively monitor pupils’ progress and to evaluate the teaching of religious education throughout the school.

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

142. Pupils make very good progress because teaching is very good. This is reflected in the respect they display towards each other and to the adults in school, their ease in conversation on a variety of topics, their enthusiasm to help those less fortunate than themselves and their success in work experience and community service. No judgements were made about this subject in the last report.
143. Key strengths
  - Pupils develop confidence in expressing their ideas
  - The curriculum is good and enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills
  - There are good opportunities for self evaluation
144. Pupils develop a range of skills and study topics on personal, social and health issues, and this subject includes topics on citizenship. By the age of 14 the pupils have learned how to keep themselves clean, healthy and safe. They learn about the importance of behaving responsibly and of respecting themselves and each other

through activities such as circle time when they share their thoughts and ideas and are encouraged to look for the good in themselves and each other. Pupils learn how to cope in a range of settings. For example Year 7 pupils learn about what to do in dangerous situations. There are good relationships with the teacher and this encourages them to contribute and provide a range of answers. They know about dialling 999 and the dangers of playing on the railway line. Lessons are used well to update pupils' progress files and provide them with good opportunities to talk about what they are doing and where they could improve. Older pupils develop an understanding of Aids and HIV whilst in Compact 2000 Year 10 pupils prepare well for work experience.

145. A significant strength of these lessons is the opportunities for pupils to talk and know that their views are respected. They develop the ability to assess their own progress and work together. This subject contributes greatly to pupils' social and moral development. Wall displays illustrate the pride they take in their achievements. Pupils were keen to explain which piece of work on hygiene each had completed.
146. The school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme is good. The co-ordinator has worked with other teachers and care staff to prepare a very good scheme of work. The programme supports the work of the school by ensuring that pupils acquire the knowledge and personal skill they need to enable them to become good citizens and to keep themselves safe.