

INSPECTION REPORT

OAK LODGE SCHOOL

East Finchley

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101394

Headteacher: Lynda Walker

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 February 2003

Inspection number: 249919

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 to 19 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heath View
Off East End Road
East Finchley
London

Postcode: N2 0QY

Telephone number: 020 8444 6711

Fax number: 020 8444 6468

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Houldsworth

Date of previous inspection: 23 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23411	John Baker	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How well is the school led and managed?
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
19352	Kiran Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Special educational needs Religious education	
20444	David Hughes	Team inspector	Design and technology Post 16	
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	History Modern foreign languages	
15197	Eric Nash	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship Personal, social and health education Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Geography Physical education	
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The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oak Lodge is a larger than average maintained day special school, which although designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, now caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs. Pupils are aged from 11 to 18 and, currently, 154 full and part-time pupils are on roll. Nearly three-fifths of pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Around a fifth of pupils are pupils with autism, who are mainly taught in the school's specialist base. There are small numbers of pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), emotional or behavioural difficulties (EBD) or speech and communication difficulties. Pupils are either taught in the main part of the school or if they are autistic are mainly taught in the school's specialist unit. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below that expected for their age, although a few have more capability. A third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. About three-tenths of pupils have English as an additional language (Gujerati, Urdu, Punjabi and Somali), and just over a half of these are at a stage of early language acquisition. Over half the pupils are white, although the rest of the school roll is made up of pupils from minority ethnic groups, the majority from Asian or Asian British-Indian cultures. Two-thirds of the school's roll is boys. The school has had staffing difficulties. There has been a large turnover of staff in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oak Lodge is an effective school, which has some very good features to its work. It very strongly reflects its aims in all that it does. It promotes pupils' personal development well and they make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects and achieve well. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent aspects, which help pupils to learn at a rapid pace. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' personal development is good and supported well.
- There is a very strong commitment to pupils' achievements, both academically and vocationally, and to the school improving further; the work-related programme is very strong.
- Pupils make very good progress in their resistant materials (RM) work in design and technology because of the excellent provision and very good teaching.
- Pupils' achievement in English is very good; the strategies for literacy and numeracy are successful.
- Activities which take place outside lesson time are wide-ranging and of very good quality.
- Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- The work of governors in checking more fully on the school's work.
- The role of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in supporting pupils' needs.
- The support for a few pupils' additional needs, particularly through the use of information and communication technology (ICT); and the challenges in work for a small number of higher-attaining pupils.
- The accommodation, which is unsatisfactory.
- The opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream school activities and the involvement of parents in the work of the school and in their children's education at home and school.
- Provision for history, which is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in June 1997. At that time, there were considerable weaknesses in important areas of the school's work. These have now been rectified and pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching have improved and are now good, overall. In most subjects provision has been strengthened well. The curriculum, assessment and the support for teachers' planning are now good. The monitoring of teaching and the role and work of co-ordinators is

now adequate, although all this could be more rigorously undertaken. Appraisal/performance management systems are good and staff are deployed efficiently across the school. The new approach, which allocates support staff to subjects, is working well. Health and safety issues have been addressed and pupils' attendance has improved significantly upon the 1997 levels. The school now reports all the information that it should to parents. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key	
speaking and listening	B	A	A	very good	A
reading	B	A	A	good	B
writing	C	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	B	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	C		

* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils' achievements are good. They are good in Years 7 to 9 and good, with very good features, in Years 10 to 13. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE at end of Year 11 are significantly better than similar schools of its type. Pupils' results in other award courses, such as Certificate of Achievement/Entry Level GCSE and National Skills Profile are also good. A few pupils achieve very well and leave school with C grade passes at GCSE. Whole-school targets are well-considered and help raise pupils' attainments well. Pupils' progress in English is very good; the recently increased use of ICT, especially in reading and spelling, contributes positively to pupils' progress. The successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has also had a positive effect on provision for English and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, art and design, music, science, physical education, ICT and PSHE. Progress in design and technology (resistant materials) is very good; it is good in other aspects of the subject. Progress is satisfactory in other subjects, but is unsatisfactory in history. The pupils with autism and other additional needs make good progress. Their needs are well understood, although greater and more consistent use of signs and symbols, and ICT, would support their progress even better. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are, however, not used as effectively as they could be; although pupils make sound progress towards the targets that are set, these need to focus on the pupils' main needs and be supported through teachers' planning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils settle quickly to lessons and are interested and responsive. They concentrate well and only occasionally lose focus, usually when work is not as well-matched to their needs and abilities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well around school, move around in an orderly way and are polite to staff and visitors. Occasionally, exclusion is used to deal with very difficult behaviour. Last year there were eight temporary

	exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Older pupils meet their responsibilities well. Pupils take part in mature discussions and relationships in the school are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory, overall, but affected by term-time holidays.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 - 9	Years 9 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good and has some very good features in Years 10 to 13. Almost all the teaching was satisfactory or better, although a very small amount, mainly in Years 7 to 9, was unsatisfactory. The latter was generally because of a weakness in teachers' knowledge, either about the pupils' needs or the subject itself. Overall, teachers' knowledge and understanding is one of the strongest features of teaching. Teachers have high expectations, manage pupils very well and pupils work hard in lessons. Support staff also have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils and a good, growing knowledge of the subjects they support. Teachers' planning does not always show what individual pupils or groups will learn and a few higher-attaining pupils do not always have work which provides a sufficient challenge for them. Although ICT is used well in English and mathematics to support the teaching and learning of specific skills, it is not used consistently in all subjects. The teaching of English, including literacy, is very good, overall, although there is a lack of consistent support for some pupils' communication and writing needs, for example, in the use of signing, symbols, communication systems and ICT. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Skilful questioning supports pupils' understanding well. The teaching of science is effective with good attention given to practical work. Teaching is good in ICT, although the methods teachers use are not as effective as they could be because of the limitations of the accommodation. Good teaching was seen in PSHE. The teaching of pupils with autism is good and occasionally excellent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, in the main part of the school, for pupils' with autism, and in Post 16. There is a suitably wide range of subjects taught, relevant to the needs of pupils and enough time is allocated for learning. A few pupils with autism are not taught a modern foreign language, but apart from this omission the legal requirement to provide the National Curriculum is met. Links with mainstream schools are limited.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)	Good. The school has made effective use of its funding in appointing a teacher who focuses well on pupils' early language skills. Their communication skills are well supported in lessons and good practice is shared.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is soundly promoted through assemblies, lessons and the celebration of festivals and pupils' achievements. Staff are very good role models, enabling pupils to develop a very good sense of right and wrong. Provision for social development is very good. A good range of cultural experiences helps pupils appreciate their own, and other's culture.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides good quality educational and personal support and guidance. Staff know the pupils well and work well together to promote pupils' personal welfare and to make them feel safe and secure. Child protection procedures are good.
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Links with parents are good. The school works hard to establish good communication and regular contact with them. Unfortunately, however, parents have little involvement in the school and there is limited attendance at parent consultation evenings, despite the home-school agreement which parents sign.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school's work and has been instrumental in raising standards and improving the quality of the work of the school since her appointment. Teamwork among staff is strong and communication throughout the school is good.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Sound and supportive. The chair, in particular, supports the school well and is well-informed. Governors fulfil most of their statutory duties adequately, but need to be more involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, in order to be better informed of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior staff have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff well and give them good support. Co-ordinators' roles need developing so that they check more effectively on all aspects of quality and standards in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning procedures are good and overseen effectively by the finance officer. These are well tied into school improvement priorities. Governors regularly monitor budgetary spending. Specific grants are used well.

The accommodation is unsatisfactory; in too many parts it is inadequate. Staffing levels are good and there are good numbers of experienced and skilled support staff. Learning resources for subjects are sound. The school applies best value principles soundly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents feel welcome when approaching the school for help or to make a suggestion. The school is well led and managed. Pupils like school and are well taught. Children are expected to work hard. Children make good progress. Children are helped to mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of work pupils get to do at home. The amount of speech and language therapy. The range of activities outside lessons. Pupils' behaviour.

Parents are generally pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments. About 20 per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire were concerned about the range of activities outside lessons, but the inspection team considers that the provision of activities at lunch-time and at other times is very good. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of

homework but the inspectors conclude that the work the pupils are encouraged to do at home is appropriate, though this is an area that parents could usefully be consulted on. Speech and language therapy provision is insufficient to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils' behaviour is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Introduction

1. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding, although, overall, their attainment is below average. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although a small number of pupils, who also have autism, have low levels of attainment. The school has a small number of pupils who are relatively high attaining for this type of school. A few attain levels in line with that expected for their ages in some subjects. Some pupils in the Post 16 department also have quite low levels of attainment. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is decreasing; some pupils' attainment is below that recorded at National Curriculum Level 1 and is assessed between P3 to P8 on the nationally recognised *differentiated performance criteria* (P levels).
2. Pupils' achievements are good across the whole school, including those of students in the Post 16 department. In Years 10 to 13 there are some very good features to pupils' achievements, which are strongly supported by the courses which lead to awards. The good knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs, and of their personal circumstances, together with good teaching and mostly well-constructed programmes, mean that pupils make good progress. In Post 16, the relevant, wide-ranging, well-planned curriculum and the very strong emphasis on vocational skills support pupils' progress particularly well. Pupils' achievements have improved well since the last inspection.
3. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress across the school in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make equally good progress in developing language, in line with their prior attainment and their special educational needs. Their progress is well supported by strong teaching in the main school and in the special unit for pupils with autism, which allow pupils to develop their language skills in small steps, through well-structured and sequenced teaching and learning activities. The specialist teacher for EAL contributes to the good progress, through in-class support for pupils and also through guidance for teachers on strategies for language development. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills through whole-group discussion and one-to-one support from teaching assistants. The school's 'value-added' analysis reveals particularly good progress in Years 10 and 11 in language acquisition.
4. Pupils with additional special educational needs make good progress, overall. This includes the small number of pupils with SLD and EBD. The pupils develop confidence and social skills through working in groups and individually in the special unit. Their progress is supported by the close liaison between learning support staff and specialist subject teachers and departments, the good range of support from external services; for example, there is a counselling service available to all pupils and a very good range of therapeutic support for pupils in the specialist unit, which includes dance, music and art. The progress of pupils with autism in the specialist provision is supported by the staffs' very good knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and of the strategies which enable progress to be made in social and academic skills. However, the progress of pupils with autism in the main school is sometimes limited by insufficient training for teachers to extend the ways of teaching them so that pupils with autism fully access classroom work.
5. Occasionally, a few pupils in the school achieve near or in line with the national expectations for their age. This changes from year-to-year, however, because of the variation in the make-up of the different groups. Some pupils attained Level 5 in mathematics and science in their 2002 Year 9 National Curriculum tests last year, representing very good achievement. In 2002, one pupil gained a grade C in GCSE art but grades generally range from D to G and are mostly E and F. This is a considerable achievement and reflects the commitment the school has to

supporting most pupils' individual needs. The school's range of award-bearing courses and the grades that pupils achieve have improved in recent years. Pupils' results, overall, are above those of schools with a similar intake of pupils.

Pupils' achievement in subjects and in relation to their personal targets

6. Pupils' achievement in English is very good. The literacy strategy has had a positive effect on pupils' achievements. In Years 7 to 9 pupils make good progress in speaking listening, reading and writing. As pupils' progress through Years 10 and 13, their progress in these aspects of English improves and is very good. Pupils' progress is good in communicating. The lack of ICT aids for communication and for writing means that a small number of pupils have only limited means of self-expression through writing and making their mark. In the Post 16 department students build on the very good work completed in Years 10 and 11 and either submit their work for the GCSE examination or the Certificate of Achievement. Computers are used well in English and support pupils' progress well. The school uses software both in English and mathematics, which constantly assesses the pupils' levels and provides activities which help them practice and develop their skills.
7. Most pupils make good progress in mathematics from Years 7 to 11 as well as in the Post 16 department, and the level of achievement is good for the majority of pupils. A few pupils in Year 9 reach Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests, the expected level for their age and a very good achievement. Pupils' progress is good because of the good quality of teaching in the school and the strong leadership from the co-ordinator for mathematics. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has had a positive effect on pupils' progress.
8. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress and achieve very well in science, helped by the good emphasis on practical work. This is in spite of laboratory accommodation which is unsatisfactory. Teachers compensate well for the deficiencies, but pupils would achieve even more if practical work could be better arranged. A small number of pupils attained Level 5 in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at Year 9, a really good achievement. Most pupils attained grades D to G in GCSE science in 2002. Although most pupils achieve significantly below the nationally expected level, in line with their disabilities, individual pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 in 2002 achieved closer to the level for their age.
9. In ICT, pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. The planning is good, especially for pupils' individual needs, and their skills are well assessed. All this supports their progress well. Staff ensure that the pupils learn well in small steps and are adept at supporting pupils when they need help. ICT is insufficiently used across the curriculum, although this is improving.
10. Pupils achieve well in personal and social education throughout the school; the life skills programme makes a good contribution to their understanding of citizenship. The planning for the subject is being implemented effectively and is helping to raise standards, but the separate parts of the subject could be better linked to help pupils achieve even better. The subject is integral to all areas of school life, and its impact is evident in the good behaviour exhibited by the vast majority of pupils, and in their confidence and self-esteem as they undertake their tasks.
11. In the resistant materials part of design and technology pupils make very good progress. This is because of the excellent facilities, and the very good teaching provided by staff with a very high level of expertise in the subject.
12. Progress in art and design, design and technology (food technology), music and physical education is good. It is satisfactory in geography and religious education and is satisfactory, with some good features, in French. In history, it is unsatisfactory. A lack of staff with specialist knowledge and a well-planned programme of work for the subject limits pupils' progress.

Target setting

13. The school has set challenging targets and has begun to analyse whole-school assessment data in order to improve on its target-setting process. The school's targets are generally exceeded and in 2002 were exceeded by a considerable margin. Good practice is evident through the school's performance review system, although this could usefully be extended to analyse the achievements of pupils from different ethnic groups. In addition, much data is produced, but there is no overall written evaluation to help improve achievement further.
14. The school has secure systems for reviewing the progress made by pupils through termly reviews of IEPs and Annual Reviews of their Statements. Although the school has recently reviewed target-setting, pupils' IEP targets do not consistently inform planning in subject areas. As a result, for instance, some more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged through work appropriately matched to their needs. However, pupils make sound progress towards the targets they do have, although targets for some are too limited.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. This includes that of pupils with additional special educational needs, including autism. Pupils' attitudes are strengths of the school and make a strong contribution towards promoting pupils' achievements and progress. Their relationships with each other and with adults are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the widespread views of parents. The attendance of the pupils is satisfactory.
16. Parents state that their children enjoy school and, on arrival in the morning, they were seen to greet staff happily. Pupils concentrate well and, in the main part of the school, maintain that interest for extended periods. They settle quickly to individual or group work and persevere with tasks, even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. Nevertheless, there is the occasional lesson where work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs or where the organisation and management of the lesson is weak, when pupils become inattentive. In the unit for pupils with autism, the wide variety of appropriate activities in lessons and the encouraging support of the teachers and assistants lead to pupils continuing to work and finishing tasks well.
17. Personal development is strong and supported well by the good opportunities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils' social and moral development is good. They behave well in the classroom, at play and lunch-times. They are open, polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way. Pupils in the specialist unit understand the routines and need little guidance from the adults, accompanying them when they move from one room to another. They show respect for property, for example, when using the computers and take care when playing instruments during music lessons. Lunch-time in the hall has a pleasant, social atmosphere. Sometimes there are minor disagreements between pupils, but the staff know the pupils well and generally these do not develop into anything serious. Pupils reported that the occasional instances of bad behaviour are dealt with effectively. In the last school year there were eight short-term exclusions of pupils showing extremely poor behaviour. The school uses this as a strategy to deal with very difficult challenging behaviour and is effective in dealing with these problems.
18. Older pupils develop their independence well. For example, a Year 11 pupil confidently went on his own to a different part of the school to take a digital photograph as part of his art portfolio. Year 12 and 13 students are starting to be familiar with using an 'A to Z' and a bus map to go between their home and college. They listen attentively to the contributions of others in the classroom. Respect for the ideas of others, was well demonstrated when pupils worked in pairs considering the effects of migration during a geography lesson in Year 10. The younger pupils behave responsibly, carrying out the various jobs they have in the classroom. The sixth form students have set up a common room committee; representatives from each class know how to hold mature discussions in a learners' council. Nevertheless, such opportunities are limited and,

for example, the school is only now considering providing Year 10 and 11 pupils with 'prefect' jobs outside the classroom.

19. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and make a significant contribution to the quality of work in lessons. In lessons and about the school, the adults treat the pupils with sensitivity and respect. The teachers and assistants provide good examples of working co-operatively and they ensure that all pupils are fully included in activities. The result is that pupils relate to others in a positive way. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch-times. In class, Year 8 pupils worked well in groups making up symbols to match cards relating to Elizabeth I during a history lesson. During a Year 7 geography lesson on village life the very good relationships between the teacher and the pupils resulted in their wanting to succeed. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together very well when doing group work in the classroom and when playing at break and lunch-times.

Attendance

20. Attendance is satisfactory and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. At 89.3 per cent last year, it is in line with the level seen in similar schools around the country. Absence is often due to medical reasons. In addition, a number of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term-time. Unauthorised absence has reduced last term to 1.4 per cent, reflecting the success the school has in obtaining reasons from parents. The great majority of pupils arrive by minibus or taxi and are late only occasionally.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, with some very good features. This represents an improvement on the last inspection, despite the difficulties in staffing that have existed and the increasing complexity of pupils' special educational needs. As a result of the good teaching, pupils have a positive attitude to learning and try hard in lessons.

The quality of teaching across the school

22. The teaching in nearly all lessons was satisfactory or better, although a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen, mainly in Years 7 to 9. This was linked to a lack of knowledge by teachers, either of the pupils' special educational needs or of the subject.
23. The teaching of pupils with additional special needs is good, overall. This includes those pupils with autism and the small number with SLD or EBD. Teaching is supported well by joint planning between learning support assistants and subject teachers, in the main school and the special unit. In the special unit for pupils with autism, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and of the range of strategies which will help their personal, social and academic development. However, in some lessons, there is limited match of tasks to challenge more able pupils. The use of alternative communication methods, for example, PECs is, as yet, underdeveloped across the school.
24. The teaching and support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. Resources and tasks are generally well-matched to the needs of pupils with EAL. This is supported by the sound arrangements for the specialist EAL teacher to share good practice and develop teaching strategies and resources with subject departments. Subject teachers use key words and writing guidance (in the form of 'writing frames') which enable EAL students to develop their subject vocabulary and their writing skills, although this work has yet to be developed consistently across the school. They provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and encourage pupils to take an active part in lessons.

The quality of teaching in subjects

25. In English, teaching is very good, overall. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language and for pupils with additional special educational needs matches those of their peers. The teaching of speaking and listening and reading reflects the overall picture across the school. Teachers use interesting resources and stories well to engage the interest and attention of the pupils. Careful questioning and creative use of group work involve the pupils in speaking and listening particularly well. The teaching of writing is, however, less well-developed. The lack of a consistent approach towards the use of communication aids and ICT to help with the physical process of writing prevents pupils from making greater progress in this area. The good use of literacy in all lessons is a major factor in the improvement of teaching throughout the curriculum. Key words are identified in all subject areas and considerable emphasis is placed upon speaking and listening as well as reading, with information being carefully structured and matched to the abilities of the pupils.
26. The teaching of mathematics is good. The skilful use of questioning leads pupils to the answers and the good use of assessment and ICT. There is also effective deployment of the learning support staff to assist pupils. Numeracy, in other subjects, although satisfactory, could be better promoted. The teaching of science is good with specialist teachers giving well-planned lessons. The teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and takes account of pupils' IEP targets. Teachers plan good quality programmes, and use imaginative resources, as in the case of a unit class developing an understanding of how it must feel to be partially sighted. Teaching is good in ICT. However, the accommodation limits the range of ways pupils can be taught; teachers do use technology ('tutor' control) as a way of controlling pupils' computers and this goes some way towards compensating for some accommodation deficiencies. Nevertheless, the computer suite is unsatisfactory and pupils could learn more if all were able to easily see, hear and be comfortable while learning.
27. In Years 10 and 11, teaching in physical education is very good. For example, where the teacher works with a support assistant who provides signing to pupils as necessary. There are also some very good features in the teaching of information and communication technology, where the specialist teachers provide a balance between guiding pupils and encouraging their independence. There is satisfactory teaching of geography, history and religious education in Years 7 to 9 but in all the remaining subjects teaching is good. In Year 10 and 11 teaching is good in all subjects, with pockets of very good teaching in ICT where there is a carefully constructed programme of work allowing steady development.
28. The quality of teaching in the Post 16 department is good, overall, and matches the quality of learning. It is very good in English. In all other areas of sixth form work the teaching is good. Students benefit from teachers who have a high degree of expertise in their subjects and, in these lessons, students are able to discuss issues energetically, as they do, for instance, in PSHE. Teachers have high expectations for the students and challenge them in their acquisition of knowledge. They manage them very well so that they maximise the time spent in learning. Teachers show a willingness to provide additional time and help, which they do during lunch breaks to help students to catch up with their work. Resources are used well. Key skills, such as thinking skills are well-developed and information and communication technology is used satisfactorily.

The features of teaching

29. Apart from the small number of occasions mentioned, overall, teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects and use their skills to make the activities presented interesting and relevant to the needs of the pupils. They structure the lessons well to ensure pupils' continued motivation throughout the lesson. However, staffing difficulties, on rare occasions, prevent a good match of teachers' knowledge to the subject, as in history. In some instances, the lack of expertise encourages too great a reliance upon published materials, which take little account of the abilities of the pupils, and so inhibits progress.

30. Lesson planning is satisfactory, overall. Lessons often form part of a well-structured sequence of learning and pupils are given tasks on the basis of their prior achievements; this motivates and challenges them. For example, in a design and technology lesson, where the teacher was illustrating the use of tools in the manufacturing process, excellent planning for the different abilities of the pupils ensured that all of them gained an understanding of the use of spacers and bearings on axles. However, there are some lessons which do not fit into a well-structured plan for the subject, nor are they based on a thorough assessment of the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding; this results in them not learning as much as they could.
31. Planning does not, however, always identify the outcomes teachers expect different groups or individuals within the class to achieve, and work is not always planned and matched to the needs of some higher-attaining pupils. This limits the progress that these higher-attaining pupils can make. Although pupils have individual action plans about their work and what they are aiming for, the specific use of IEPs in lesson planning is limited.
32. Objectives for the lesson are clearly explained and the material selected is imaginative and inspiring. For instance, the use of a video extract supported by clear information and resource sheets enabled pupils in a religious education lesson to understand about the exploitation of natural resources and the rain forest in biblical times and today.
33. Pupils are well supported within the lessons. Support staff work closely with the teachers to prepare appropriate materials and agree on approaches in class that will extend pupils' learning. For instance, in a PSHE lesson on drugs and the reasons people drink alcohol, support staff worked with groups of pupils on their individual tasks. They encouraged thinking by asking questions and helped pupils to develop independence in arriving at their conclusions.
34. Teachers manage pupils very well. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are very good, with a sense of mutual respect created which results in good behaviour in lessons. Classes are well ordered and harmonious and pupils work well together. There is strong discipline and effective rewards and sanctions used. This means that any potential difficult behaviour is quickly addressed and dealt with.
35. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in many subjects, although it is not always used to its greatest effect in some. It is set regularly and marked well but there is inconsistency in the types of work set and the degree of guidance which pupils and parents receive on its completion.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning

36. The quality and range of the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils, overall, is good in the main school and for Post 16 students.
37. At the time of the last inspection, there were considerable weaknesses in the curriculum. The school has improved the curriculum well. There is now a whole-school curriculum policy. This is clear and outlines well how all the different parts of the total curriculum fit together. In addition, each subject, except for history, has a clear policy and handbook which provide effective guidance to teachers who teach the subject. Strong policies help to build a good curriculum framework and ensure that pupils receive a curriculum which is highly relevant, has a good range of subjects, options and vocational experiences and a reasonable amount of time devoted to each subject. More time is rightly allocated to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The time for studying science is now at a reasonable level, for all classes. However, although pupils make good progress in ICT, they could attain higher levels in award-bearing courses if more time was devoted to the subject in Years 10 and 11.

38. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively and have led to improvements in pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy. Planning, to support literacy and numeracy across the school, does not always take account of what pupils are learning in all subjects and the vocabulary and ideas to be developed in these. In addition, the key skills such as ICT, thinking skills and problem-solving need to be more closely planned for. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are positive features of the school's programme of work and adequate time is allocated to PSHE as a separate subject and within other subjects. Sex education, drugs awareness and health education are covered within the policy and planning for PSHE as well as in science.
39. The school mostly provides all the subjects it should as required by law (including religious education), although some pupils in Year 7 in the special unit for autistic pupils do not study a modern foreign language. The school decided on this course of action due to this group's particular complex communication difficulties; however, the pupils have not been formally disapplied from learning another language. The provision for history is unsatisfactory, largely due to the school not being able to appoint a subject specialist. Although there is some planning in place, staff do not understand how historical ideas can be developed for pupils with a range of needs. They use planning which does not challenge pupils at an appropriate level.
40. A good programme of sex education and drugs awareness is provided through both the science curriculum and personal and social education. There is also a short tutorial time at the end of each day which is used well to discuss the theme of the week, for other reflections and for self-assessment and evaluation.
41. In Years 10 and 11 the school introduces an 'option' system for the pupils and the curriculum offered includes the core National Curriculum subjects of English, mathematics and science, other subjects as required to be taught by law (a modern foreign language, design and technology, physical education and religious education) plus life skills, optional subjects and very strong work-related/vocational options.
42. In the Post 16 department the school offers a good curriculum of 'core', key skills, life skills and vocational studies. There is a good balance between creative/aesthetic, academic and work-related study. The vocational options are varied and offer a diverse choice to the students. Options include French, art and design, catering, motor vehicles, sport and leisure, construction, manufacturing and a new option entitled leisure and tourism. At other times, different options, such as child care, have been offered. Throughout Years 12 and 13 there are good links with college and careers education.
43. The vocational education programme is a significant strength in the school. Careers education begins in Year 9 and continues through Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. Work experience is available to all pupils and students through the 'Trident' provider and there is a good relationship with the 'Connexions' service. The school does not have a dedicated careers library and communication with other agencies is hindered by the lack of direct telephone and Internet links. However, the monitoring of placements, visits to employers and guidance to pupils are good. The programmes are overseen by two learning support assistants and a specialist teacher.
44. The provision for pupils' additional special educational needs is good, overall. The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities which are relevant to the needs of the pupils. This provision is good for pupils with autism and in the Post 16 department. In Years 7 to 11 there is the occasional lack of challenge in the planning for some areas for pupils with higher ability. In addition, a few pupils, such as those with visual impairment, do not always have work suitably modified to take full account of their needs. Pupils with autism receive the majority of their education in the specialist unit and are offered a good curriculum, which is adapted to meet their needs. There is an appropriate emphasis on English, communication and social skills. A highly structured learning environment enables pupils to feel safe and secure and anticipate what they will now do. The school has a strong ethos of support for all with additional special needs in activities and these pupils have equal access to the subject curriculum in the main school.

45. Pupils with English as an additional language have equal access to the curriculum and other school activities. There is additional support and guidance for EAL pupils and their teachers from the specialist EAL teacher and others; a Hebrew-speaking pupil, for example, receives additional support for developing his first language through lessons from the local Rabbi. The specialist teacher for EAL carries out an annual analysis of the needs of EAL pupils and there are sound arrangements for providing in-class support for targeted pupils on a rolling basis.
46. A wide range of accreditation has been introduced or further developed in many subjects and has been a focus for curriculum development. Pupils' achievements have improved, as a result, in many areas of the curriculum.
47. Extra-curricular activities are very good and include various lunch-time clubs, such as music, computers, football, basketball and homework groups. There is also an after-school youth club, which is well attended, well valued and organised by a school governor. The school organises residential trips, including foreign trips, visits to theatres and local amenities such as a Chinese community gallery and churches. These visits and activities have a very positive impact on achievement and have improved well since the last inspection. The school is aware that more activities after school would be beneficial, but such activities are restricted by the logistics of school to home transport.

Links with business and the community and relationships with partner institutions

48. The school has satisfactory links with the wider community, which help to contribute to pupils' learning. Visitors include the police and charity personnel to talk about their work, music groups and representatives of different religions. The pupils benefit academically and culturally from visits to such places of interest as museums and art galleries. Apart from the good opportunities for work experience and the school's 'wider horizons' initiative, connections with businesses are limited; business mentors no longer visit the school. Pupils go to the local college for a variety of courses, but, in general, the links with other educational institutions are unsatisfactory. A lack of contact with mainstream and other special schools prevents the sharing of good practice. Few pupils have any opportunity to benefit socially or academically from links with mainstream school or attendance at any sessions there. To some extent this is hindered by the pattern of school provision locally; the local education authority is reviewing special educational needs provision in order to provide wider opportunities for mainstream school links and for pupils from special schools to be included in mainstream schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

49. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. It has generally improved well since the last inspection.
50. The arrangement to support pupils' spiritual development are satisfactory. A daily assembly held at the end of the school day allows pupils to assess the values and beliefs which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour. Opportunities during tutor periods enable pupils to think about their day, the work they have done and to review their targets. A short act of worship takes place at lunch-time in the school's dining-hall with the pupils sitting at their tables. However, although a short prayer is given by a teacher at the end, the activity observed related more to moral issues than spiritual ones and did little to encourage the pupils to explore questions about meaning, purpose and beliefs and to promote an atmosphere of reverence.
51. The school uses its monthly whole-school assembly well to provide an occasion for people to attend and lead the assembly; for example, the chaplain at a nearby public school with which the school has formed links. People of various and diverse beliefs, such as a Rabbi and a Sikh have also visited the school.
52. The opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. There is a clear moral code in the school and staff, who have a very good relationship with their pupils and students, constantly

reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour. Every opportunity is taken by staff to provide positive role models and pupils are made very aware of what is expected of them in lessons, and during play and lunch-times. In one physical education lesson, for example, a pupil wearing a shirt that had offensive writing on it was told by the teacher to turn it inside out and the pupil received a misconduct mark. All pupils were aware that three misconduct points meant a detention. Class representatives participate in school council meetings. This allows pupils to present their views and has a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem as well as being a forum to debate rules, rewards and sanctions. Pupils also express their feelings through displays on view in the school's main corridor. One such display relates to the school's code of conduct and asks 'What does the school code of conduct say about fighting?' Pupils' feelings on topical work on freedom, asylum seekers, bullying and racism were displayed and showed well-informed opinions. Pupils are also encouraged to help others out of school, for example, through collecting for a charity.

53. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. They learn how to relate to others and to take responsibilities well. Playing games in physical education they work well in pairs, such as when passing a ball to one another, and are encouraged to work as members of a team. In class, when in groups, they work well together and share ideas. In the many clubs that are held each lunch-time pupils are provided with opportunities to pursue their interests and to socialise with members from their own and other classes. Most classes have a residential visit towards the end of the summer term and the school uses these opportunities to further develop pupils' social skills. Some pupils participate in a visit to France, which supports their social and language skills well. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop an understanding of living in the community. They participate in Borough events such as dance festivals, cross-country running and football and cricket tournaments. Although it is difficult to provide after-school functions due to the pupils being transported to school; a popular youth club for pupils aged 13 and above is held each week and is run by a school governor.
54. Although the pupils have a range of special educational needs they are tolerant of each other. In one lesson seen, two pupils with autism joined a class from the main school pupils for physical education. Although one of the autistic pupils was continuously making noises and singing this did not put the pupils off their work and they fully understood and accepted the pupil's presence. The pupils ignored the noises and the autistic pupils were totally included in the lesson.
55. The opportunities pupils' receive for their cultural development are good. It promotes the cultural traditions in its locality well in order to enrich the pupils' learning and experiences. This improvement has been achieved through a range of opportunities other than as was originally intended. One of the main ways for this was meant to be through the teaching of geography, in order to promote pupils' cultural learning. However, this has been ineffective, mainly due to numerous changes in staff. The school has provided a range of educational visits, such as to a Hindu temple, the BBC musical studios and an exhibition of Chinese art. A range of visitors from different faiths and cultures give talks at whole-school assemblies. Pupils' cultural development is also reflected in the school's curriculum by the many displays around the school, including a *Dans ma chambre* displaying the pupils' work on France. In art, pupils have produced their own interpretations of the Cubist paintings of Picasso and in music, 'Elements of Music' displays pictures of instruments used by various cultures. In the provision for pupils with autism, a display shows famous autistic people and pupils in the specialist unit have explored the Chinese New Year through food. Pupils in Year 11 with an interest in music, have used their knowledge and skills in producing a CD of their own compositions and popular music. Pupils are also made aware of their own cultural traditions from their work in history of life in Britain between 1750 and 1900.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare

56. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are good.
57. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The school has a designated person for child protection and the school follows local procedures. All the staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The provision for first aid is good, with several trained staff, records kept of any treatment and letters home to parents as appropriate. An appropriate health and safety policy is in place. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. The policy makes no reference to risk assessment but, recently, all staff carried out one for their area. The health and safety co-ordinator is newly appointed. He has experience of risk assessments, though he intends seeking guidance from the local education authority's safety advisor to ensure that all procedures are fully in place.
58. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development is good. The teachers and the assistants have a good understanding of pupils' individual needs. The Individual Education Plans include references to the pupils' personal qualities, which are discussed and targets reviewed each term with the parents. The pupils themselves negotiate their 'student action plans' with the tutor. In addition to the main National Curriculum subjects, the school has sessions in life skills and personal, social and health education. The school has started to introduce circle-time, which helps pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of other points of view. The staff in the specialist unit successfully encourage the pupils to develop positive attitudes with a variety of strategies.
59. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are very good. The discipline and behaviour policy recognises the needs of the pupils and reflects the philosophy of the school. It sets out the positive strategies to encourage good behaviour. The expectations of behaviour are high and are emphasised by the removal of good conduct marks for any negative behaviour. The lessons seen during the inspection showed that the staff consistently adopt a positive approach. Any instances of poor behaviour are well managed by the use of 'time out.' This can, appropriately, lead to the pupils themselves, when they realise they may be losing their self-control, asking to leave the room to calm down. The pupils highlighted that sometimes other pupils misbehave but are clear that the staff take appropriate action.
60. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and have successfully raised the level of attendance since the last inspection. A recently introduced computerised system enables the headteacher to closely monitor the level during the year. The school telephones pupils' homes on the first day of any unexplained absence, helping to reduce the amount of unauthorised absence. Nevertheless, a significant number of pupils are absent for extended periods. The school has good links with the education welfare service, but not all families with poor attendance are referred. Some pupils have extended absences for medical reasons but the school does not seek advice as to whether the amount is reasonable. Newsletters remind parents of the importance of coming to school regularly, but some parents still insist on taking their children out of school for holidays.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance

61. Satisfactory procedures are in place for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress. In some subjects, such as in English and mathematics, they are very good. In science, assessments and their use are good. This represents a good improvement in relation to the last inspection. Assessment and monitoring systems have been strengthened by the introduction of the use of 'P levels' in all subjects and the introduction of assessment linked to

units of work in subjects. The school has good systems in place for monitoring the provision for pupils with EAL and its impact on the progress made by pupils. The school recognises, however, that assessment and use of the information gained from it could be stronger in some subjects.

62. Targets are set for pupils in all subjects and most teachers plan their work carefully, bearing these in mind. This means that most teachers are clear about the intended learning outcomes for their pupils over time in the subjects they teach. However, there is some confusion as to how all the targets set for pupils, such as Individual Education Plan targets, targets in school reports and pupil action-plan targets are related and how subject teachers should support these through their planning and teaching. In addition, targets set in Individual Education Plans are sometimes too general and lack success criteria; this means that teachers and others do not always interpret them in similar ways. Some teachers lack confidence in assigning pupil work to the P and National Curriculum levels. Some under or over-estimate pupils' levels in a subject and particularly in subjects such as history, physical education and geography and for lower-attaining pupils. However, most teachers have very strong informal knowledge of pupils' levels and use this well to guide their planning. Target-setting for EAL pupils is adequately developed to allow for small steps in language development in line with pupils' learning difficulties.
63. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are satisfactory, overall, although they are not used as effectively as they could be to support pupils' learning. The links between the Annual Review of the pupils' Statement of Special Educational Need and the IEPs need reconsideration, particularly as to how new targets are set following the Annual Review and how progress towards them is reviewed. The IEP does not always identify the most important things a pupil needs to learn. Some teachers do not know the IEP targets of the pupils they teach, although they have set individual targets for pupils' improvement in the subjects they teach. This means that opportunities are missed for reinforcing or supporting IEP targets, because it is not always clear which targets should have priority.
64. There are effective procedures for identifying the additional needs of pupils placed in the main school. For example, base-line tests for Year 7 pupils are used to identify pupils' needs at entry to school. However, not all subjects have sufficiently detailed whole-school assessment procedures to enable pupils' progress over time to be documented, although there has been some good development in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In history, PSHE and religious education assessment procedures and their use are unsatisfactory and this restricts the school's ability to plan effectively to meet individual pupils' needs in these subjects. Profiles of pupils' work in subjects are now kept and targets are set in all subjects for all pupils. These, plus the records that are kept for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and for Post 16 students in relation to the units of work studied, which count towards awards, mean that the monitoring of pupils' progress is an improving aspect of the school's work.
65. The quality of the reports prepared for pupils' Annual Reviews is generally good and they generally set out pupils' achievements well. The review process meets statutory requirements. The school has worked hard to involve pupils in target-setting and the student action plans are good examples of this. Parents are appropriately involved in Annual Reviews and procedures in relation to these meetings are sound.
66. The assessment co-ordinator and the senior management team are beginning to look carefully at the data now accumulating on pupils' attainments and progress, both for whole-school targets and individual pupil target-setting with staff, but recognise the need to develop this further and for it to inform subject improvement more. Samples of pupils' work and their achievements are kept, including photographs in pupil profile files. Not all are annotated with details of when and how the work was obtained, how much support was given, and so on. However, these are very useful files, particularly for autistic pupils, where they exemplify progress well.
67. Statutory requirements of pupils' Statements are not fully met for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Not all pupils whose Statements indicate that they need regular review and updated speech and language therapy programmes currently have them. Sound use is made of available support from the therapists, although there is too little speech and language therapy

available to meet the current needs of pupils. There is no common agreement between the staff and the speech and language therapy personnel as to the most effective use of the time available for individual work and advisory support. Nor is there clarity over how speech and language therapy assessments should influence Individual Education Plan targets and programmes and teachers' planning.

68. The new speech and language therapist is temporary and is trying hard to identify ways forward for individual pupils, groups and teachers. The school is rightly concerned as to the current levels available and is trying to recruit additional therapy time from its own budget. There has been some good development work using PECs in the special unit for autistic pupils, but there is currently limited support from therapists to advise about this work or the use of ICT to support pupils' communication.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

69. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments, which show an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make good progress from the level of support they receive. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions; they are kept well-informed about how their child is getting on. Some parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considers that the provision of activities at lunch-time and other times is very good. Doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors conclude that the work the pupils are encouraged to do at home is appropriate, though this is an area that parents could usefully be consulted on.

70. The school has established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends newsletters home once or twice a term providing general administrative information as well as outlining the homework policy and the need for good attendance. Other letters refer to more specific matters. The school arranges a consultation evening for parents every term: in the autumn to see the tutors, in the spring for the formal Annual Review and in the summer to meet the subject teachers. On each occasion, the staff provide written reports. The one in the summer term provides a good summary for each subject on what the pupil knows, understands and can do. There are good arrangements for parents to be involved in reviewing the progress of pupils with additional special needs. The school has plans to provide a parents room; however, this has not been implemented yet due to constraints on accommodation.
71. While the school tries to establish good contacts, the overall lack of parental involvement is having an unsatisfactory impact on the work of the school. Often, less than three-quarters of parents come to the consultation evenings. Despite the good efforts of the school there is no parents' association and only a few parents come to school-arranged fund-raising events. While the school diaries contain notes about the homework that is set, they are rarely used as a means of two-way communication between school and home. The school does not send home details of what is to be taught during the term, though it is considering providing this information. The school does not provide any leaflets for parents, for example, to provide fuller information on how they can help at home or as to the importance of good attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

72. Oak Lodge is a good school, with a number of very good features. This is because the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff have high standards and all staff have a very strong commitment to the school. Although many staff are new, the management guidance provided and strong curriculum guidance enable staff to be generally clear about what is expected of them. Although there are a few weaknesses in subjects, related to the recruitment of specialist staff, the school is clear about its strengths and weaknesses and knows what it needs to do next. There is some future uncertainty, however, due to the LEA review of provision which has not yet been completed. The inspectors agree with the overwhelming majority of parents that the school is well led and managed.
73. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is good and some aspects are very good. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had only been recently appointed. Since then, she has worked very hard, together with senior colleagues in the school leadership group and senior management team, to address the considerable weaknesses highlighted in that inspection. Improvement, since then, has been good. Work on the nine key issues has been delegated to senior staff effectively. There is now a system in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the various classes throughout the school, although it still requires further development.
74. The role and responsibilities of senior managers and subject co-ordinators have been reviewed to improve the leadership and management of the school's subjects. Many staff in the management group are new to their roles; they, and some subject leaders, need support to undertake their roles more fully, to become even more effective and to enable greater consistency in subject quality. Formal appraisal of all staff is taking place and the way the school reports to parents is in line with government requirements.
75. The teacher-in-charge of the special unit provides very good co-ordination in reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching through appraisal for staff and teaching assistants. The current action plan, for example, provides an appropriate focus on further development of training for unit staff and main school staff on autism and strategies for developing communication skills. There are good arrangements in place for information sharing with the EAL specialist teacher to

improve access for EAL pupils in the unit. Staff are well qualified and the unit provides good opportunities for professional development.

76. The school has a good system for improvement planning. The current long-term plan is shortly coming to an end. The headteacher has attended a number of meetings with senior officers in Barnet LEA to discuss the LEA's plans for the future education provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) within the borough. Governors have been appraised of these discussions, and the headteacher and the governors, as a consequence, are in the process of identifying those aspects of the school's provision requiring development or improvement.
77. There has been a clear focus by the headteacher and deputy headteacher on improving the quality of the teaching and learning. Lessons are now regularly observed by members of the school leadership group, other key staff and, at times, by LEA advisers. As a result of close scrutiny and effective advice and support, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils and students have improved significantly. Annual performance review meetings of the headteacher and all teaching staff take place at which performance objectives are agreed and training needs determined. This framework is being extended to all staff throughout the school. Although the support assistants do not have a clear career structure as yet, this is something the school wishes to support and develop.
78. Regular meetings of the school leadership group, management team and teaching staff take place where day-to-day and more strategic issues are discussed. These meetings ensure that effective communication takes place across the school and provide very good opportunities for the management and staff to discuss the work of the school and to share areas giving any causes for concern.
79. The contribution of staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory, as is the work of subject leaders. At present, because many staff are new to their posts, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken on many areas of responsibility while waiting for staff to be appointed. It is intended that once staff become established in their position, greater responsibility will pass to them.
80. Major responsibilities for the school subjects are delegated to members of the teaching staff, and overseen by the deputy headteacher, who meets termly with subject leaders. Responsibilities are comprehensive and well defined. Management of the funding for the subject and the purchase of resources is also part of the subject leaders' responsibilities. Although there is some good or very good practice, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT, there are a few subjects (geography, history and PSHE) where this needs further development.
81. The work of governors is satisfactory, overall. Governors meet regularly and the governing body's committee structure, comprising finance and staffing, curriculum and premises committees, ensures that the work of the school is discussed and decisions are made where appropriate. The headteacher's reports to the governing body and other reports, including updates on the school improvement plan, are very detailed and thorough and enable governors to monitor the work of the school. A few governors visit the school, and one of the governors helps in the weekly youth club. The school has a set of guidelines for governor visits, and more regular and focused visits by members of the governing body would enable more effective monitoring of the work of the school to take place. Governors undertake training provided by the LEA and the chair has recently completed an advanced course in school governance. However, the main way they are aware of the school's work and any issues arising is through communication with the headteacher. Governors need to undertake a wider range of ways to find out about the work of the school in order to increase their knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and to support its improvement more effectively.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

82. The school has a good number of teachers to support the pupils and there is a reasonable balance of very experienced teachers with those who are relatively new to teaching and working with pupils with special educational needs.
83. The school now has subject specialist teachers for most subjects of the curriculum except for religious education and humanities. The majority of the staff are secondary mainstream trained and experienced, but some new staff in the main school have limited experience of autistic pupils and complex learning difficulties. The school has sound plans to develop training opportunities to develop teachers' skills in meeting the needs of the increasing proportion of pupils with autism and complex needs in the main school. Teachers of autistic pupils in the specialist unit are well experienced in the different ways of teaching and supporting pupils with autism.
84. Teaching staff are well supported by the good number of support assistants who are attached to subject departments and play a significant role in supporting pupils' learning in the specific subject as well as their behaviour and personal development. The way the school has approached the deployment of these staff is very good and has a significant positive effect on pupils' learning. Although some staff still need to improve their subject knowledge further, joint planning with teachers and the guidance they are given help them to make a very effective contribution in lessons.
85. Procedures for the induction of new staff are sound. Arrangements for induction of new staff are informal, although they have opportunities to observe other teachers and become familiar with school systems and procedures. Good personal support is provided for new staff; the school could strengthen induction by having written procedures and a checklist of areas to cover. The school provides a good range of training opportunities that are open to all staff. Staff from the specialist unit have access to specialist training and have recently developed systems related to the use of alternative communication systems, for example, PECS. Recent training for all staff has focused appropriately on the development of a common system for assessment across the school. A very good range of training opportunities is offered to support staff; for example, all teaching assistants have access to whole-school training days, subject specialist training and can gain national awards. The school is currently supporting some assistants on the employment-based routes to become qualified teachers.
86. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, overall. It is well maintained by the school keeper. Most classrooms are of an adequate size, although a few are too small and restrict the movement of pupils. There is excellent workshop provision for design and technology (resistant materials and engineering). There is a separate ICT suite and sixth formers have their own common room. The buildings are currently being adapted for wheelchair access for pupils with physical disability. There is a good range of play areas and a quiet seating area has been established in the playground.
87. The sporting facilities are unsatisfactory. The use of the field is limited by drainage problems and this inhibits outdoor play and games for much of the year. The multiple use of the hall as a dining and sports hall inhibits the school's ability to teach all parts of the physical education programme and to provide lunch-time sports clubs. There is insufficient space for older pupils to play games such as badminton and volleyball. The use of the hall for lunch also cuts into the amount of lesson time that can be devoted to physical education. Accommodation for science is unsatisfactory, as there is insufficient space for all pupils to carry out practical work safely. The food technology room is badly laid out and affects pupils' safe working practice and their ability to produce written work in such a small area. There is no ventilation and the room steams up very quickly when pupils are cooking. Storage space across the school is very limited and there is no sound-proofing of the music room, which poses a problem for the adjacent classroom. The ICT suite is long and narrow; it gets far too hot and lacks ventilation. It is difficult for pupils to see and hear from the rear of the room and demonstrations are problematic. Pupils gain access to the library by going through a classroom or externally around the outside of the building. This disturbs classes being taught in that room. There are no facilities for private study or for using a computer for research.

88. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory. There is now a greater range of resources available for ICT and physical education. Software to meet the additional special educational needs of pupils is limited. Storage space for resources is also limited. The library now has a wider range of attractive and accessible books that promote diversity. The specialist teacher for EAL pupils makes a strong contribution to the development of resources for diversity, for example, by sharing resources on world religions for religious education lessons, and through the purchase of dual language books for the library.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning

89. The school's long-term financial planning and the efficiency with which it uses its resources have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. At that time, there was not always effective use of financial resources, a very large budget surplus, staff not well deployed, and time for lessons not used well. The school has rectified all these deficiencies and Oak Lodge is an efficient establishment which uses its staff and other resources well, overall. For example, changes in the school's procedures mean that most teaching assistants are now linked to subject areas and this has resulted in a more equitable distribution of assistant time. Some assistants with specialist knowledge of autism remain with individual classes in the special unit for autistic pupils and this ensures their effective use.
90. Governors are kept well-informed with regard to what the school needs to spend its money on and on the priorities of the school improvement plan, which are well costed. The school has clear plans for future spending and uses specific grants properly, for example, standards fund monies are used to support school improvement through training. Although there was a large underspend at the end of the last financial year this was due, in part, to monies for specific projects (such as major external refurbishment of windows and doors) which had not yet been paid for at the end of the financial year. Subject department plans clearly identify the resources needed for maintenance and development. Post 16 provision relies mainly on funding from the design and technology department. A more effective arrangement might enable more creative thinking and development of the provision.
91. The headteacher and governors use the principles of best value satisfactorily, overall, and these are strongest with regard to financial matters. They explore varying methods of ordering, take advice and put large projects out to tender. There is some comparison with similar schools, in looking at test results relating to national special school data. Assessment and other information about pupils' performance in individual subjects are used by the senior staff to challenge themselves to improve. Consultation occasionally takes place with pupils and parents and their ideas are considered when major changes to school practice are under discussion.
92. The school's spending is checked regularly and the budget monitored well to assess the need to adjust allocations to budget headings. The school uses new technology well to support administrative procedures but there remains a need for further development in the use of ICT to support the curriculum. The software used for financial management is linked to the LEA, which provides day-to-day financial administration and accounting, and this leads to improved efficiency.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

93. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should improve:
- (1) **the role that governors play in checking on the school's work and supporting improvement;**
(Paragraph 81)
 - (2) **the role that Individual Education Plans* (IEPs) play in supporting pupils' progress by**
 - ensuring that these contain targets for pupils which are distinct and different to that which they would normally learn; that these identify the most important things a pupil now needs to learn, how progress towards the targets will be supported and success measured;
 - having a simple system so that all teachers who need to be are informed of the pupils' targets and include these in their own planning;(Paragraphs 62,63)
 - (3) **the support for pupils' additional needs, including communication, though the use of information and communication technology* and provide sufficiently challenging work for the highest attaining pupils;**

(Paragraph 23)

(4) the accommodation, especially for

- food technology
- ICT
- physical education
- science
- gaining access to the library

(Paragraph 86)

(5) the links with mainstream schools and the opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream activities as well as the involvement of parents in the work of the school and in their children's education at home and school.

(Paragraph 48)

(6) the provision for history by

- improving staffs' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject;
- ensuring that a detailed and meaningful programme of work and resources to support it are in place to support teaching, learning and pupils' progress throughout the school;

(Paragraphs 149-151)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- Continue to strengthen the work of co-ordinators, especially in the monitoring of teaching in their subjects*.
- Ensure that pupils in specialist provision have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language.
- Ensure that there is more reading material appropriate to the age of pupils in in Year 10 and 11 for those who have more limited reading skills.

(Paragraphs 74,159,98)

* identified in the current school improvement plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	127
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	35	53	31	4	0	0
Percentage	3	28	42	24	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	44

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.6

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)

National test results - Twenty four pupils took the tests

Percentage of pupils

Subject	Below Level 3/4	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
English	96	0	4	0
Mathematics	71	21	4	4
Science	58	29	8	4

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

Y11 GCSE examination results

Numbers of pupils

Subject	Entries	No										
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	N/A	
EN	1											1
MA	4					1		1	1			1
SC	16					1	3	7	4			1
ICT	4						2		2			
AR	9				1	1	4	2	1			
RE	0											

Y11 Entry Level GCSE (formerly Certificate of Achievement)

Numbers of pupils

Subject	Entries	Entry3	Entry2	Entry1	Un-graded
EN	21	7	10	4	
MA	19	8	7	4	
SC	20	18	2	0	
DT	18	4	10	3	1
ICT	19	15	3	1	
FR	11	9	2	0	
GG	9	2	5	2	
HI	0		0	0	
PE	19		9	10	
AR	11		7	4	
MU	10	7	3	0	
RE	19		13	6	

Attainment at the end the Post 16 phase (Year 13)

Post 16 GCSE results:

Number of pupils

Subject	Entries	No										
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	N/A	
EN	5					2		2				1
MA	3					1			1			1
AR TX	2				1		1					
AR	1					1						

Post 16 Entry Level awards (formerly Certificate of Achievement)

Number of pupils

Subject	Entries	Entry3	Entry2	Entry1	Un-graded	Absent

EN	7	1	3	2	1	0
MA	5	3	2	0	0	0
Drama	5	1	0	3	0	1
ChildC	4	0	0	2	2	0

P16 Vocational results:

21 pupils OCR NSP Entry level Vocational modules

6 pupils entered for EDEXCEL Skills for Working (Barnet College) – 3 completed qualifications.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	84	5	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	18	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	1	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.76
Average class size	9

Financial year	2001-02
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Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	26
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	£
Total income	1,515,856
Total expenditure	1,432,618
Expenditure per pupil	9,812

Total aggregate hours worked per week	695
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance brought forward from previous year	75,969
Balance carried forward to next year	159,207

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.4
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	154
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	31	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	49	8	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	48	10	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	34	19	15	0
The teaching is good.	63	29	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	32	6	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	31	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	30	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	52	34	8	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	23	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	31	16	5	10

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.

Strengths

- Well planned programme and the appropriateness of courses for students.
- Pupils' progress is very good, overall.
- Quality of teaching is very good, overall; it is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 13.
- The very good use of assessment procedures.
- Staff's knowledge of pupils and relationships with them.

Areas for improvement

- The use of communication aids and ICT for writing for lower-attaining pupils.
- A joined writing style is not consistently used across the school.
- Support for new teachers so that they have better knowledge of their pupils' needs.

94. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress, overall, in English. Since the last inspection considerable changes have been made in the provision for English, and there have been many developments in planning, assessment and the monitoring of teaching which have had a good effect on progress. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is very good. An increased use of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly in the use of the reading and spelling program *Successmaker*, has contributed well to pupils' progress, particularly in reading and spelling. The good use of the literacy strategy throughout the school produces additional benefits in English where pupils develop increased understanding of reading and writing as they concentrate on the sounds and meanings of words. Pupils with additional special educational needs make progress comparable with their main school peer group. Although boys tend to outnumber the girls in any class, there are always positive attempts made to involve the girls in answering questions and drawing them into activities, so that their progress is similar to that of the boys. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and play an active part of any lesson. They, too, make very good progress overall.
95. Between Years 7 and 9 pupils make good progress, overall. They make good progress in speaking and listening. Many pupils, including those who have autism, enter Year 7 with very limited communication skills. Pupils' work is generally appropriately structured and organised. Signs and symbols are used to help pupils to understand and express themselves. They develop their speaking and listening skills through listening to stories, finding out about themselves and their families and sharing opinions so that by the end of Year 9 they speculate together about the images seen in a photograph. While the 'average' pupil can describe the picture shown and guess at what the principal characters in the photographs are doing, the higher-attaining pupils argue together about whether the picture itself provides enough evidence to make categorical assertions about what is going on in it. Lower-attaining pupils find single words to label the main images contained, Pupils all learn how to communicate socially and how to recognise what others mean. For example, they identify that the voice rises at the end of a question and that an exclamation carries a particular emphasis.
96. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening through Years 10 and 11 and by the end of Year 11 they develop the confidence to converse with adults they have never met. In lessons they listen well, whether to instructions, debate or stories. After listening to Jamaican and Norwegian *'Creation' myths*, pupils recalled details in order to make comparisons. The most able pupils answered questions showing a very good level of thinking skills and a mature understanding of the stories, while others were able to identify characters and events accurately either through single words or short sentences.

97. In reading, pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9 is good. Using a 'sounds' (phonemic) approach, pupils learn to recognise letters, blend sounds and build up words and sentences progressively. They read a wide variety of texts both fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry with increasing fluency and clearly enjoy literature. They read contemporary stories from the Harry Potter stories, and stories such as *The Great Kapok Tree*, which encourage them to consider environmental issues.
98. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress as they build on earlier success. Pupils read individually with increasing fluency and the most able students like books and read aloud with expression and understanding. In class they look at George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in relation to education. Pupils of average and lower abilities read *The Deserted House* by Mary Coleridge and can understand and describe the atmosphere which pervades the ruins. However, there needs to be more reading material appropriate to the age of pupils in Years 10 and 11, for those who have more limited reading skills, in order to engage their interest and motivate these pupils.
99. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in writing. While the most able pupils write a page of well-constructed sentences about how they spent the day when the snow fell and they had an unexpected holiday, pupils with average ability can complete sentences using a written guidance ('a writing frame') to structure their work. They also use a 'frame' to write their own 'magic spells'. Those pupils with severe difficulties trace or copy individual names or words. The pupils write for a range of purposes including formal letters, thanking sponsors for a visit to *The Lion King*, to creating advertisements and specifications for a new trainer or children's toy. Although pupils are taught handwriting, there is no consistent use of cursive script so that many pupils still tend to resort to printing.
100. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress in their writing. There is a great emphasis on step-by-step work so that pupils gradually build up a lengthy essay on a variety of topics which they can submit for the GCSE examination. There is a very good use of drafting and re-drafting to improve stories and essays, done both by hand and on the computer. In this manner, the highest achieving pupils build a portfolio of excellent work with a range of essays, which often reach national standards. Pupils with severe and complex difficulties write individual words and simple sentences using up to four words. However, there could be greater use made of symbols, ICT and other communication aids to enable pupils to express their ideas more easily than by pen and paper. This is demonstrated most clearly when pupils are enabled to use the computer.
101. The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers establish very good relationships of trust with their pupils and the pupils respond with very good behaviour and a very positive approach to their work. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject. Marking of classwork and homework is thorough and their very good use of assessment enables them to plan lessons based upon the pupils' prior knowledge. This is then further refined by the very good use of on-going assessment to ensure that pupils know and understand what is being taught. Some newly appointed teachers still lack a knowledge of their pupils and so learning is not so effective. Teaching assistants are generally very well deployed. They frequently work very effectively, often with pupils who have autism, liaising closely with the English teachers and supporting pupils very well. They plan together and form excellent relationships with the pupils. In one lesson during the inspection the teaching was unsatisfactory due to a teacher's lack of understanding of how to promote English-speaking sound in words.
102. Teachers generate an enthusiasm and excitement for the work. Activities are fast moving and pupils have a range of experiences during the lesson – clapping rhythms, listening to a story tape, answering questions, working in groups to write a play script then acting it out in front of an audience. Resources are imaginative and widely chosen to appeal to a range of learning styles, so that pupils are motivated and engaged, as in the case of a range of photographs to stimulate discussion and writing. Homework is set regularly but the amount set and the expectation of completion is inconsistent between teachers.

103. The leadership of English is very good. There is an very clear view of how the subject needs to improve further. Curriculum planning provides a solid structure against which the work can monitored. There is a very useful handbook, though the co-ordinator intends to provide additional guidance on teaching to ensure greater conformity between the classes. Lesson plans are well monitored, but there is a need for more regular lesson observation, particularly in order to support new staff. The very close curricular links established with the special unit for autistic pupils have enabled pupils to move freely into different groups as their needs dictate. Since the last inspection the understandable focus on reading, speaking and listening has enabled considerable progress to be made. The co-ordinator accepts that less progress has been made with writing and that the increased use of communication aids could be explored further.
104. The accommodation is now good and the resources are adequate. The library now has a wider range of attractive and accessible books which promote diversity. The specialist teacher for EAL pupils makes a strong contribution to the development of resources for diversity, for example, by sharing resources on world religions for religious education lessons, and through the purchase of dual language books for the library. However, pupils gain access to the library by going through a classroom or externally around the outside of the building. This disturbs lessons taught in that room. There are no facilities for private study or for using a computer for research.

English in the Post 16 department

105. Post 16 students make very good progress in English. They build on the very good work done in Years 10 and 11 and either submit their work for the GCSE examination or the Adult Literacy and National Skills Profile. Recent changes in the GCSE examination, loading the marking in favour of examination rather than coursework, has encouraged the school to look at alternative awards including the Certificate of Achievement and Entry Level GCSE. Both girls and boys make progress in line with their main school peers as do those students with additional special educational needs. Information and communication technology is well used by students.
106. Post 16 students make very good progress in speaking and listening, building on their previous achievements. They talk about their likes and dislikes and aspirations for the future. They listen well in class and respond to discussions and questions. They listen to readings from Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* and are able to talk about the pressures Macbeth felt which led to him killing Duncan and the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.
107. In Years 12 and 13 students' communication is increasingly related to their needs in the wider world and although they read stories such as Hardy's *The Withered Arm*, they also read increasingly for information such as college prospectus' or leaflets on health issues.
108. Students make good progress in writing. With help, they can all write their names and address on the Driving Licence Application Form, and answer the relevant questions about their state of health. They write for a variety of purposes, including narrative, letters, instructions and comprehension. However, as in Years 7 to 11, a wider range of communication aids and ICT could be used to support the writing for all students. There could also be a greater emphasis on getting students to use cursive script when writing at this level.
109. From observation of lessons, an examination of pupils' work seen in portfolios, on display and together with the work in class, the quality of teaching is very good. The mature way in which students are treated and the assumption of a high level of personal responsibility encourages students to respond positively. They work hard in class and are happy to take work home to finish or research further. Teachers show very good subject knowledge, as in the exploration of Shakespeare's use of language. Students are encouraged to know their learning styles and select the most appropriate for the tasks set, which are challenging and demand high standards. Marking of students' work is good, with students knowing what they need to do to improve.
110. The quality of leadership is very good and provides a very strong model for the students. There is a clear vision for the department and high expectations as well as a willingness to work hard for the good of the students. The department is 'reflective', evaluating what it has done and how it

can improve – it always tries to improve on its previous best. There are adequate resources, with the exception of the need for more age-appropriate material. The level of staffing is good with subject-trained specialists teaching all students. Appropriate targets are set and evaluated regularly, and students respond positively to the care taken of them by the staff. The provision for English has been enhanced by a visiting poet, but a greater number of visits to outside drama workshops or the opportunity for students to participate in visiting workshops would bring additional benefits. There is good use made of the very pleasant accommodation and of information and computer technology generally, but the resources for older students could well be extended by greater use of the Internet in the learning process.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- The very good leadership and management of mathematics.
- The good quality of teaching.
- The pupils' and students' achievements and the range of accreditation.
- The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in raising standards in teaching and learning across the school.
- The strong assessment procedures.
- The widening use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- The training of all staff who teach mathematics in order to ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the school.
- The promotion of numeracy in all subjects.

111. Good progress has been made in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection and the weaknesses have been eradicated. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are now good, overall.
112. The achievement of pupils in mathematics by the end of Year 9, taking into account the pupils' special educational needs, is good. Year 7 pupils complete the missing numbers in problem-solving activities, continue a sequence of patterns using colours, and begin to understand about the properties of common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. More able pupils carry out additions of thousands, hundreds, tens and units and measure in centimetres and millimetres. Year 8 pupils develop their understanding of 2D shapes further, and many pupils tell the time to the quarter and half hour. They subtract units from tens and units in simple number activities. More able pupils can weigh themselves in kilograms and write their findings. Multiplication by 10 and 100, and division by 10 and 100 is undertaken by more able pupils in Year 9, and they also know that there are 90 degrees in a right angle.
113. By the end of Year 11 pupils' achievements in mathematics are good, with eight pupils receiving a distinction in Certificate of Achievement in mathematics and three pupils attaining a GCSE in mathematics in 2002. Less able pupils during Year 10 are beginning to add money using decimal points, subtracting tens and units from tens and units and multiplying units by tens. More able pupils begin to multiply with decimal numbers and can read a line graph. In Year 11, pupils understand simple reflective symmetry and undertake homework activities on rotational symmetry. Less able pupils can follow a number sequence and can read a simple graph using pictures, and one pupil with autism can understand place value using money and a calculator.
114. In the Post 16 department, the students' achievements at the end of Year 13 continue to be good. Less able students follow the National Skills Profile scheme. Twenty-one students were entered for the accreditation and 21 students completed the programmes of work in 2002. Four students were entered for GCSE and three received an award. Boys' achievements were higher than girls' achievements last year.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Nearly all teachers use the three-part lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) as a framework for organising and planning the teaching and learning effectively. They plan their lessons well and identify what they expect pupils to learn, the support required for individual pupils, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and resources. Teaching and learning objectives link well with the NNS programmes and these in turn are linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Teachers are clear on how to manage any difficult behaviour which might arise. There are good pupil/teacher relationships and these are also used to good effect to manage the class effectively. The three-part lesson is generally well paced and ICT is often included in the middle session, when pupils work in groups or individually on highly motivating computer-based programs (for 'programmed learning'). On rare occasions teachers do not use the NNS fully, it is not always clear what different groups of pupils are to learn and little use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning. Little account, overall, is taken of pupils' personal targets in their IEPs in lessons.
116. Good support is provided for individual pupils in these situations by the learning support staff and, as a consequence, these pupils and students make good progress. In most lessons resources are used very effectively, enabling effective teaching and learning to take place.
117. The leadership and management of mathematics is very good. The subject leader skilfully uses her very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the pupils' and students' needs to ensure that good quality teaching and learning takes place and that standards of attainment are maintained and improved upon. There are many strengths to the provision. A wide range of accreditation is offered to the pupils and students, taking into account their range of abilities. Assessment is a strong feature. 'Student Mathematics Profile' show pupils' attainments in number and algebra and other mathematical areas. These profiles provide good assessment data to track pupil progress. Other strengths include the quality of the department's learning resources and the support provided by the support staff. The use of ICT, to motivate the pupils and to promote high quality teaching and learning, is also a very positive feature of the school's provision in mathematics. However, on occasion, there could be much more use of this to support pupils' learning in the different aspects of mathematics and not mainly for their 'programmed learning' work. Some of the displays in the science and modern foreign language rooms promote pupils' mathematical development and the displays inside and outside the mathematics rooms strongly support teaching and learning.
118. There is also a very professional subject handbook which all teachers who teach mathematics have. The department has a good quality 2002-03 action plan with clear aims, targets, resources, funding requirements and success criteria. One particularly positive aspect of the mathematics provision is the way the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced into the department and the sense of team spirit it has engendered. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved by pupils and students across the school. Adaptations have already been made to the NNS programmes to include appropriate aspects of the government's 'Key Stage 3 strategy'.
119. Areas for improvement include the need for the department to review the training needs of staff new to the department and those who are not specialist teachers of mathematics. The subject action plan identifies those students with complex needs and puts in place appropriate and consistent provision to meet their needs. More systematic monitoring of teaching and learning within the department should help raise standards of achievement even higher. Evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that the use of number in other subjects is largely satisfactory; this is an aspect, however, which requires further development to enable a more consistent approach.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- The range of accreditation introduced.
- Pupils' results in the GCSE and in the Entry Level tests in Year 11.
- The written planning for the subject and the planning between the teacher and support staff.
- The good teaching of science.
- Strong assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

- The unsatisfactory laboratory accommodation.
- The regular marking of work.

120. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Although the science laboratory has been refurbished since the last inspection, there is still restricted space. The lack of improved facilities has a negative impact on learning that is good but which could be even better.
121. Since the last inspection a great deal of work has been carried out in order to extend external accreditation. A GCSE course has been introduced and 16 pupils were entered for the examination in 2002. The highest grade attained was a 'D'. All pupils in Year 11 were entered for Certificate of Achievement awards with good results. The school aims to further improve these results, but the lack of adequate laboratory facilities is an increasingly limiting factor. The subject is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11 only.
122. Standards have improved and the results in the end of Year 9 National tests are also improving and students make good progress, overall. In Years 7 to 9 pupils recognise sound waves and identify wave patterns of loud and soft noises. They also follow genetic trails and identify human organs and understand reproductive and digestive systems. Pupils worked well together to build a model of the digestive system during a lesson seen and this helped their understanding. Pupils with autism were involved in similar lessons and were able to achieve good results. In Years 10 and 11 pupils distinguish between arteries, veins and capillaries. They understand the process of neutralisation and the use of indicators to show the pH scale. They can carry out simple experiments and predict and record results.
123. Teaching in science is good with some very good features. Science is taught by specialist teachers who have good subject knowledge and who are enthusiastic about the subject. A subject specialist also teaches science to some classes in the special unit for autistic pupils. The very high level of knowledge of the pupils' needs and how to make science relevant and challenging means that the Year 7 to 9 learn excellently at times. All science lessons are well planned, have clear objectives and have good pace. Lessons in which the teaching is very good or excellent have work very well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and a good level of challenge for the more able pupils. The quality of learning reflects the quality of teaching. In very good lessons teachers allow pupils to explore ideas and support them to discover facts rather than giving information. By use of adapted practical exercises the teachers allow the pupils to develop their understanding. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were asked to build the digestive system. Groups were asked to build parts (mouth and gullet/stomach/intestine and anus). The pupils in the groups worked well together and when completed the parts were put together to create the system. The pupils saw how it fitted together and shared understanding.
124. In a Year 10 lesson two pupils linked with the teacher as part of a demonstration. One was acidic, the other alkaline. They moved the teacher, the indicator, up and down a scale which was drawn on the board behind them. During the neutralisation experiment the pupils showed a clear understanding of how the indicator scale worked. Pupils were encouraged to work together and discuss what was happening. The attitudes and behaviour were good and pupils enjoyed their lessons which challenged them well.

125. Pupils' work is not marked regularly, but when marked it is annotated and helps the pupils. Planning for pupils' differing needs is evident in worksheets, which are in larger print for pupils with visual impairment, and are presented differently for less and more able pupils. There was little evidence of free writing in the files. Some work showed the use of ICT in graphs, but no use of ICT was seen during the inspection. Insufficient use is made of pupils' IEPs in science.
126. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The planning of the programme of work is thorough, there is a very good department handbook and with good quality assessments made at the end of each unit of work. Subject meetings and monitoring of teachers within the department are informal and irregular. There is a regular planning meeting between the subject leader and the specialist learning support assistant. These have a positive effect on the smooth running of lessons and staff being clear about their roles. The support given by the assistant in all lessons seen was good. The school have supported her in attending training for her rôle. The subject leader is a budget holder who plans the use of the funding soundly.
127. The majority of lessons take place in the science room, which has a teaching area and a practical area. This is too small and means that some practical lessons are cramped. This has a negative impact on learning. There is a small locked preparation room within the room and all chemicals and science materials are stored correctly.
128. The good improvement since the last inspection, the effective teaching and learning of pupils and their good achievement make science a strength of the school.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art is **good**.

Strengths

- The range of accreditation and pupils' results in the Year GCSE and Certificate of Achievement examinations.
- The quality of teaching.
- The use of assessment to inform planning.

Areas for improvement

- There are no suggested areas for improvement.

129. Standards since the last inspection have been improved and pupils are regularly entered for GCSEs. Some pupils attain standards which are near those expected for their age and some pupils and students attained C grade passes in GCSE in 2002. In the Post 16 department students work to improve their grade or are entered for additional art exams, such as textiles. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.
130. Pupils achieve well and make good progress across Years 7 to 11. The oldest pupils in Year 11, use a variety of art media, work in clay, use digital cameras and use ICT to create patterns and effects. Pupils study the work of other artists and reflect on their own ideas. Pupils with autism follow similar programmes and achieve well. Over time, all pupils learn to represent what they see in a range of styles and older pupils interpret and modify images well. They develop their ideas for still life or their imagination.
131. Pupils make good progress in the Post 16 department. Evidence of pupils' work in Years 12 and 13 shows them working in lino cuts and printing, collage, embroidery and use of ICT to design covers. They use digital photography to create interesting effects. Pupils with autism are able to work with clay and follow the shape of fishes of different sizes. They were able to count the number of fishes and identify which were big and which were small. They have developed a technique where they represent the texture of the skin and the scales, by using material on the clay. Pupils use a variety of materials and are able to select the correct resource for a specific

purpose. Students explain why they need a particular type of brush when working with a specific medium.

132. The quality of teaching in art is always good and is sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned, make reference to IEP targets and use assessments to plan the next stage of the programme. There is good use of praise and encouragement and the pace of lessons is good. The quality of learning is good and pupils work hard in all sessions. Relationships are very good and pupils want to do well. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and is enthusiastic. The teacher is unqualified, but about to complete the Graduate Training Programme and hopes soon to gain qualified teacher status.
133. The co-ordinator provides good leadership of the department. She ensures that all staff supporting in lessons are fully aware and involved in planning, and that they respond appropriately to the needs of pupils and are confident in their skills in the art room. There is a good department handbook, and a clear development plan. Assessment procedures are good and inform future planning. Pupil portfolios are being developed. Good use is made of local facilities and trips to galleries and museums; these are planned regularly. The department offers art to all pupils in the school. There is a good range of resources and good quality accommodation. Time allocation is satisfactory for all pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The workshop for resistant materials work.
- The range of work-related courses provided and the curriculum for resistant material work.
- The high level of expertise among teaching staff and knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.
- The quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.
- The leadership of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation for food technology.
- Detailed tracking of pupils' progress.

134. There are now a number of facets to the work of the department. Food technology continues as an important subject in its own right. Resistant materials work has been significantly enhanced by the development of a workshop with excellent machine tool resources and staff with high levels of expertise. In addition, construction and manufacturing are now part of the 'options' pupils take in Years 10 and 11 and which also continue in the Post 16 department. Although no overall judgement was made on the quality of provision in the last inspection, the teaching was less than satisfactory in half of the lessons seen, a narrow curriculum existed with weak long-term planning and there was no co-ordinator to lead and manage the subject.
135. The subject has improved significantly since then and there has been very good improvement in provision, overall. Teaching and learning are now good, overall. These are good for food technology and very good for resistant material (RM) work. A co-ordinator has been appointed and the accommodation for the resistant materials/engineering part of design technology is now excellent. The accommodation for food technology, despite being modified since the last report, is still unsatisfactory. Teaching assistants support teachers well in all lessons. Planning is good and the curriculum is adequately broad-based.
136. The achievements of pupils are good for all ages and also for those with additional special needs, including autism. They make good progress in acquiring knowledge and in developing their design and technology skills throughout the school.

137. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand the need for design to precede manufacture, for example, in the making of candle holders in Year 7 or in the design and making of sandwiches in Year 9. Pupils in Year 9 also evaluate structures for their strength and identify that the more triangles in a lattice structure the stronger it is. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 understand the need for choosing the correct tools and materials to meet design criteria, for example, when picking the correct type of file, to smooth the curves in the manufacture of metal artefacts, or in selecting spices when producing Italian or Indian foods in Year 10. Pupils with autism also achieve well, for example, when using knives to make fruit salad they select ingredients to use. Pupils' skills in shaping and joining in RM work progress very well. This is because of the very careful attention given to them by the teacher and assistant and the step-by-step approach taken to ensure their success. In Post 16 the students in construction and manufacturing learn how to design and make a bottle opener. They recap on the files that could be used to finish the shaping of the metal in the process and the purpose of a prototype model.
138. The well qualified and experienced teachers plan their lessons well with clear objectives which they share with pupils. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this results in high achievement by pupils. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that each pupil receives adequate support and that their work is valued. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to be closely supported and guided are effective. Teachers provide a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and encourage independent learning and decision-making as the pupils become older.
139. The curriculum is good, overall, with a wide range of activities and materials including the good use of information and communication technology. The opportunities to extend RM work into other aspects of the work-related curriculum are very good. There are well-structured programmes of work that satisfy both the needs of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the external accreditation for older pupils. Marking and annotation of pupils' work is covered well and the curriculum places clear emphasis on the design process of planning, prototype and production in the two areas of food and design technology
140. The accommodation and resources for design and technology involving resistant materials are excellent with a very high quality fitted workshop, an outdoor vehicle maintenance bay and associated study rooms. The workshop is also used for workshop and machine tool training for local and nearby Borough staff. It is undertaken by one of the workshop staff and brings in much needed revenue for the school. The accommodation for food technology is unsatisfactory. Although the health and safety issues highlighted during the last inspection have been addressed, the floor area of the room has become smaller, ventilation is inadequate and external doors have to be opened to prevent condensation. Cookers protrude into other work areas and there are no separate areas or tables for theory and practical work.
141. The leadership of the co-ordinator is very good. He offers good support for his colleagues and is very clear about what needs to be done to improve the subject. Management is good and the monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory and linked to the level descriptors of the National Curriculum, but these need to be developed to encompass more specific achievements.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The way the subject has improved since being managed by the deputy headteacher.
- Pupils' interest and motivation in lessons.
- Good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- The ways in which geography and numeracy are linked.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' awareness of pupils' numeracy levels when, in the programme of work for geography,

certain numeracy skills are required.

- Staffing by a subject specialist teacher.
- Completion of the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and planning.

142. Pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory overall. They are sound in Years 7 to 9 and good in Year 10 and Year 11, mostly because of the award bearing course which support pupils' learning well. This is an improvement compared with the previous inspection for Years 7 to 9

when progress was judged to be less than satisfactory. No judgement was made at that time for pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 so it is, therefore, not possible to make any judgement on improvement of provision for those year groups.

143. The school has found it difficult to recruit teachers with subject expertise in geography and pupils in Year 7 to Year 9 have had five different teachers since 1999. This has had an adverse effect on pupils' motivation to learn and a number of pupils became dissatisfied with the subject. Provision has shown a good improvement recently, as evidenced in lesson observations, since the deputy headteacher assumed responsibility for the subject in September last year and a temporary subject specialist has recently been appointed.

144. In Years 7 to 9 pupils identify the different stages in a volcano erupting. The majority of pupils show this by drawing the different stages. The less able cut out pictures of the four stages and stick them into their work books in the correct sequences supported well by a teaching assistant. Most pupils show a great interest in this topic; one pupil was able to recall television footage of an eruption in Italy and gave an informed opinion of the damage it caused. In their study of village life the pupils learn the differing life style of villagers compared with their counterparts in city life. They state the differences in occupations and living in a smaller community. They identify how soil erosion in the Rain Forest is caused by the cutting down of trees and, by the teacher's good questioning to guide pupils' learning, the way people can improve or damage the environment and how related decisions affect people's future quality of life. Pupils have a sound knowledge about the rivers of Britain and their sources and outflows. They have studied the Channel Tunnel, and from their map work, recognise compass directions and plan a route using these.

145. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 are able to interpret primary data and to draw bar charts to represent it and, later, to enter the data into a prepared spreadsheet and to recognise the data in graphical form. The less able pupils stick stars to represent a unit of data into a Venn diagram. The teacher's good clear introduction to the lessons and expectations of the pupils' abilities left the pupils with a clear idea of the objectives of the lesson. In their studies of localities within the United Kingdom pupils study reasons why people would come to or leave London – they identify the 'push and pull' factors. In this study the teacher's good use of questioning, appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils, enables them to give measured and thoughtful reasons, why people leave London ('push'), such as it being too noisy and the threat of terrorism, and reasons for people coming to London ('pull'), such as for work or promotion.

146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Good use of questioning is made to guide pupils' learning and explanations and expectations given at the start of the lesson are clear. The very good rapport between teacher and pupils make them want to succeed and age-appropriate language is used to explain teaching points to the older pupils. Teaching is less than good (but still satisfactory) when difficulties with class management, insufficient planning for the differing needs of pupils and especially of work sheets used and limited questioning techniques occur. Occasionally, weaknesses occur when the teacher is unaware of the mathematical skills of the pupils and attempts work which they have not covered or uses skills they are not confident with. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are mainly good and they are generally motivated by the activities set by their teachers. They settle down to work individually and in groups. Teachers' and pupils' relationships are generally good and pupils show an interest in their learning and in wanting to succeed. Where they are satisfactory there is a slow pace to the lesson and learning objects are not clearly given.

147. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. The deputy headteacher took over co-ordination of the subject in September, when a geography specialist teacher could not be recruited. There is an adequate subject policy, which has recently been produced. The two teachers of geography in the specialist provision for autistic pupils were also appointed in September last year, but are not subject specialists. A specialist teacher has been recruited but is only temporary.
148. No complete programme of work is presently available for the subject in Years 7 to 9, although this is currently being developed. The old scheme of work was failing to meet the diverse needs of the pupils and the co-ordinator is currently producing a new document that has long-term planning which covers the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Not all medium-term planning is yet in place. The school hopes to complete it by the end of the summer term. The new scheme of work consists of the national scheme of work and a published scheme for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Assessment procedures are sound and National Curriculum and P scale level descriptors are used for recording pupils' progress. With the greater majority of geography teachers being non-specialist staff, subject knowledge is uneven and monitoring of both lesson planning and subject teaching is absolutely essential to ensure consistency of practice. The use of ICT to support the subject teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' literacy skills are generally supported well.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' progress
- Teachers' specialist knowledge/expertise and how history can be made relevant to the needs of all pupils.
- Resources.
- The programme of work and assessment arrangements.
- Leadership and management of the subject.

149. The school has had considerable difficulty recruiting and retaining history teachers and, although staff have stepped in to teach the subject, they have had inadequate resources, training and support for doing this. There is no detailed curriculum to support their work and to ensure that pupils experiences are built on systematically. A few staff lack confidence in their teaching of the subject. Consequently, in some lessons there is too little historical content. In others, although historical subject matter is covered, such as the 'slave trade', the teaching style and materials used are not appropriate to the needs of many of the pupils. Progress since the last inspection in history is unsatisfactory. The school knows that its provision for history is weak and has identified its development as important. However, even given its recruitment difficulties it has not made use of other means of strengthening history teaching, for example, through the use of outside support, links with other schools and development of resources upon which teachers can draw.
150. The school teaches history to pupils from Years 7 to 9 and there is currently no provision for pupils to take awards in the subject in Year 11, should they have the ability. Generally in the lessons taught during the inspection the quality of teaching and pupils' learning was satisfactory, although there were many missed opportunities for making the work more relevant to both higher and lower attainers. Pupils' progress over the time they study history is, however, unsatisfactory, because of the lack of a consistent approach and programme of work and some teachers' limited understanding of how the subject can be used not only to promote historical understanding, but also to support key skills. Very limited pupil work was available for some year groups. However, observation of lessons, discussions with pupils and staff, examination of work and teacher planning supports the judgement that pupil achievement and progress in history is unsatisfactory

and needs addressing urgently. Individual teachers work hard to deliver a subject in which they often lack confidence and know that at times they are not meeting their own and the school's high standards for.

151. The subject is not yet sufficiently co-ordinated and managed and development plans are inadequate. The senior management team recognise this but have felt overwhelmed by the staffing difficulties of history and other subjects. The curriculum is unsatisfactory; it is insufficiently detailed, although it is appropriately guided by national schemes. Assessment arrangements are limited. Teaching would be strengthened by more resources linked to units of work, including more multimedia work and use of ICT to enable the range of pupils to be even better catered for. Literacy is supported well in most history lessons. This is sometimes at the expense of the historical elements and some teachers do not prepare a sufficient range of materials to involve all pupils, whatever their reading level. Although history makes a limited contribution to pupils' cultural and moral awareness and citizenship, such as when they think about peasant life or aspects of the slave trade in Year 9, there are opportunities lost for developing pupils' understanding in these areas, because staff do not always recognise them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **good**.

Strengths

- The consistent and regular support that pupils with autism and lower-attaining pupils now receive in ICT.
- Good teaching and checking that pupils have learned what was intended throughout lessons.
- The support for the differing needs of pupils in lessons.
- The commitment and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator.
- The leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation, which is unsatisfactory.
- The age and speed of computers.
- The use of ICT in other subjects and for pupils with additional special educational needs.

152. The provision for ICT has improved well since the last inspection. At that time, the subject was beginning to develop and pupils' work was limited in content. Computers were beginning to be used in some subjects. Although the accommodation is limited, the computer suite has been developed further and specific teaching of ICT takes place there each day. The number of computers has increased throughout the school, although most equipment is old and quite slow. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in English and mathematics and pupils regularly use software (*Successmaker* in English and *RM Maths*) which assesses their performance and sets them activities to complete. Occasionally, there is a lack of use in mathematics for supporting aspects of the subject pupils are learning and in English for those pupils with additional needs, to support their communication, including writing. Pupils really enjoy this and rise well to the challenge. Elsewhere, the use of ICT to support learning is variable but is generally limited and co-ordinators and teachers do not sufficiently identify the opportunities for the use of ICT in their planning. Pupils' work now shows a wide range of aspects studied although there is little work on the control aspects of the subject. In the work seen (which was mostly from last year) there was little variation in the work for average and high attaining pupils, although work for lower-attaining pupils is modified. More recently, work shows that teachers have given good attention to pupils of differing abilities and there is more consistent support for pupils with autism.
153. Across the school, pupils and students make good progress in developing their ICT skills and achieve well. This includes pupils with additional special educational needs, including those with autism as well as pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils in Year 11 and in Year 13 take GCSE and Entry Level courses. They also achieve well with their examination results. Some pupils in the past have also undertaken computer literacy and

information technology (CLAIT) courses in Years 10 and 13, although there are none this year. Although there is a good range of award bearing courses on offer, the new co-ordinator is considering broadening the range of accreditation in the light of the widening needs of pupils who are now entering the school in Year 7.

154. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 use the basic functions of word processor software well through the good opportunities provided to link this with English work on speech marks. Pupils identify what imaginary characters are saying and produce suitable text, using tools to enlarge it and to choose an appropriate font style. Older pupils insert text and graphics into a frame in desktop publishing software to create a simple design. They focus on the attributes of posters and use the ideas gained in their own designs. Pupils identify the key features of a database and use commands to search for information, such as the longest animal from records which provide animal details. Spreadsheet work is undertaken and pupils complete simple 'holiday' tables on the cost of renting a villa abroad, flights and the price of food. Pupils draw simple pictures and create these using shapes from a toolbar in a painting program.
155. In Years 10 and 11 pupils choose clip art graphics to include in their designs and manipulate these well to re-size them. Most pupils are familiar with the window 'slider' tool to move the graphic up and down and side to side and they know that they must drag the corner of the frame to keep the graphic in proportion when they alter the size. Post 16 students collect evidence for their National Skills Profile, showing that they are capable of altering the contents of a spreadsheet. Through very good teaching they are very clear on its function and begin to realise that data can be sorted and added automatically. The Post 16 lower-attaining pupils from one of the special unit classes now have consistent support and regular lessons in ICT; these make good progress, but are at the early stages of learning to use ICT. They complete simple scenes using 'flood fill' techniques and use a 'stamp' technique to produce shapes and patterns on the screen.
156. The quality of teaching is good and the way that teachers identify activities for the differing needs of pupils is strong. This was particularly well done in a lesson for Post 16 department lower-attaining pupils. Here, the carefully planned work matched pupils' needs extremely well resulting in pupils identifying the use of ICT in retailing and recording their results, some on a tape recorder. Teachers' knowledge is mostly very good, especially that of the co-ordinator who does much of the teaching. Occasionally, support staff do not have sufficient skills to help pupils and have to ask the teacher for help themselves. The assistant who supports there mainly, however, demonstrates good understanding and uses her initiative well, knowing when to stand back and when to intervene. Lessons are planned thoroughly, pupils are clear on what they are expected to learn and staff work conscientiously during lessons to ensure that pupils have understood and to assess how they are learning. There is very good use of 'tutor control' where demonstrations by the teacher can be seen on each pupils' monitor. Demonstrations to the whole group have been relatively unsuccessful because of the size and shape of the room – some pupils are unable to see and the acoustics prevent those far away from hearing easily. Some pupils complain about this and about the heat – there is very poor ventilation and the room can become excessively hot.
157. At the time of the inspection, pupils were just getting used to the modified computer network and new procedures for logging onto the system. The procedures are not as 'user-friendly' as previously and some pupils needed help to get their passwords correct. However, good support was given for this. Not all software was fully working and there was still software to add to the system.
158. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject and great enthusiasm to make things happen. Resources are adequate; many computers are old and slow though, and there is insufficient software or use of ICT in general for pupils with additional needs. Assessment in lessons is good, but is just developing over time through new checking and monitoring procedures introduced by the co-ordinator.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

Overall, the quality of provision in French is **satisfactory** with good features.

Strengths

- Leadership and management.
- Good teaching.
- The contribution made to pupils' cultural understanding.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' progress in writing.

159. There has been a sound improvement in French since the last inspection. This is because it is well led and managed, carefully taught and planned and supports pupils' key skills well. However, a small group of the youngest pupils with autism do not have French lessons and have not been disapplied from the subject. The school recognises that although it has discussed this with parents, it must comply with statutory guidance in this area. Older pupils with autism who are taught French make similarly sound and sometimes good progress in line with other pupils in the school. Pupils' achievement in French is satisfactory, overall, and has some good features. Lessons follow on from each other well and build well on pupils' prior learning. This means that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and some pupils make good progress, particularly in their speaking and listening. There is a strong and appropriate emphasis on oral work, songs and listening activities, but more could be done through the use of symbols and the written word to support pupils' broader French skills, especially for those pupils with autism. Similarly, ICT is used insufficiently, particularly to support pupils' reading and written work. This somewhat reduces the impact of the otherwise good teaching on pupils' progress.
160. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 recognise and respond to simple questions about the date, their age and the names of everyday items in school and at home. They try very hard with their pronunciation and some imitate their teacher's expression very well. Older, and more able pupils, reconstruct a simple story and can write and complete simple sentences. They ask for items in a shop and make speedier and more independent replies to questions related to their course work, such as giving and acting out directions.
161. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have opted to study French make good progress in their units of work and all gain an award. Pupils are proud of the French that they know and some who are reluctant contributors in other subjects often contribute well in French lessons. More able pupils are not, however, always as stretched by the written follow-up activities as they could be.
162. The quality of the teaching is good, overall. The teacher is a knowledgeable and very competent linguist who aims to motivate and encourage the pupils as much as possible. The use of pupil demonstration is very good and supports their self-esteem well. There is strong careful support given so that pupils develop their skills in small steps. The teacher's use of routine and careful involvement of each pupil in the lesson ensures that pupils learn to greet each other effectively, identify foods, colours and numbers and answer questions as to their likes and dislikes. The carefully prepared activities generally hold pupils' interest and involvement well and includes all pupils. Occasionally, opportunities to reinforce the language are lost; for example, there could be more use of support staff to model answers. In addition, although the support for spoken language and listening is strong, there is less systematic support for reading and writing in French and opportunities to support pupils' progress through using these are missed. Pupils are very responsive in French, which makes a very strong contribution to their listening skills and to their self image. They try very hard to imitate and remember French constructions, words and phrases, are always interested and often ask the teacher for new words or 'what does that mean?'
163. French also make a good contribution to pupils' understandings of other cultures and of each other. It also supports pupils' understanding of other cultures through themes and the use of music and through residential visits.

164. French is led and managed well by a subject specialist who is enthusiastic and ambitious for the subject and recognises the very strong support the subject provides for pupils' self-esteem, listening, speaking and general language skills. She currently teaches French to all pupils in the school; this allows her to have a strong oversight of standards. The curriculum taught is satisfactory and covers all elements – it is appropriately guided by published schemes and by national guidance, although the co-ordinator recognises the need for it to be supported by more multimedia work and use of ICT to enable the range of pupils' needs to be even better catered for. A good system for assessment has been developed that records each pupil's response and achievements in units of work. Resources in French are satisfactory.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- The introduction of accredited courses and the good progress of pupils and students in performing and appraising.
- The quality of teaching of music and the support for pupils with additional needs.
- The opportunities provided for pupils and students to perform in the school and in the community.
- The way the subject supports pupils' and students' spiritual and social development.
- The lunch-time clubs and the enthusiasm which many pupils and students have about music.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment in Years 7 to 9.
- The range of musical instruments in order to promote pupils' and students' cultural and multi-cultural awareness.
- To extend the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in music, especially composition.

165. Improvement since the last inspection is very good when standards and provision were mainly poor. The pupils' achievement in music is now good, overall. All classes have weekly music lessons, with a sufficient time in the lower school and in the specialist provision for pupils with autism. The accommodation is now good and resources to support teaching and learning are also good. However, improvements need to be made in the provision of instruments to promote cultural and multicultural awareness. Pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual and social development, is strongly promoted by the musical opportunities provided by the school.
166. Pupils' achieve soundly in Years 7 to 9. Weaknesses in assessment in the subject in these years limit pupils' progress despite good teaching, overall. By the end of Year 9, pupils gain in confidence in the use of sound and in responding to music. Pupils sing and use a range of instruments, including glockenspiels, xylophones and other assorted percussion instruments as well as electronic keyboards. Pupils click their fingers in common time and repeat the rhythms using woodblocks, claves and scrapers. Pupils with autism listen to recorded music in order to develop a sense of rhythm. They play simple repeated notes on the xylophone and use a scraper to pick out the 'tick-tock' rhythm in the song.
167. The accredited courses the pupils' follow in Years 10 and 11, together with the good teaching, result in those pupils who study music making good progress. Pupils continue to practise and improve on the skills they have acquired throughout the upper school. By the end of Year 11, most pupils can play simple television theme tunes. They rehearse together as a small 'orchestra', comprising piano, electronic keyboards, bass guitar, drum kit and glockenspiels. Pupils listen to the *'New World' Symphony* by Dvorak. They play simple accompaniments on the glockenspiels and other instruments, and one pupil could sequence three chords on the electronic keyboard in perfect time. Throughout Years 10 and 11 and at Post16 pupils and students use graphic and staff notation at times, although this is insufficiently developed. Students follow Certificate of Achievement and GCSE courses in music at a level appropriate to their individual needs. In 2002, seven pupils attained the Certificate of Achievement in music at distinction level.
168. The quality of the teaching is good. The teacher has a very secure knowledge and understanding of music and performs well on the piano when accompanying the singing or performances. He has high expectations in performance and a strong sense of what sounds 'right'. The classroom performances, as a consequence, are at times beautiful and moving, and pupils experience a sense of the beauty of the music. Planning is satisfactory and is linked to the department's programmes of work or the accredited courses in Years 10 to 13. Pupils and students, including those with additional special educational needs, such as behaviour or autism, are well managed, enabling good teaching and learning to take place. There is clear evidence of listening to music, composing or improvising, appraising or reflecting on what is being listened to in every lesson, and ample opportunities are provided for pupils and students

to perform. At present, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning, especially where it relates to composing, is underdeveloped. Lessons are well paced, and the support provided by the learning support staff enables good or very good teaching and learning to take place.

169. The leadership and management of music by the subject leader is good, overall, with some management aspects still requiring improvement. The department, for example, has a programme of work in place, but this, together with the audit of music in Years 7 to 9 still needs to be finalised and assessment arrangements planned. The subject leader has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject, and a clear action plan is in place. Strategies to use information and communication technology to support musical composition have been identified, although they are still at an early stage. The music lunch-time clubs are a positive feature of the school's music provision, and the expertise provided by the peripatetic keyboard teacher and the music therapist enhances the range of musical opportunities for those pupils involved. All pupils take part in performances, within school or elsewhere, and excellent opportunities are provided to promote pupils' and students' musical development through visits to the Barbican and to the Finchley Carnival. Although the school has had visiting musicians and workshops, for example, 'Jazz FM', 'Live Music Now' and the 'Aurora Wind Quintet', opportunities to develop wider multicultural musical awareness are limited. Likewise, although the resources to support teaching and learning in music are good, the range of instruments to promote pupils' and students' awareness of a wider culture are insufficient.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION INCLUDING CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in PSHE is **good**.

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and the progress pupils' make.
- The contribution it makes to pupils' social use of language.
- Personal development of pupils and the contribution to citizenship.

Areas for improvement

- Co-ordination of the subject and the clarity of the role of the subject leader.
- The monitoring of teaching and planning.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress.

170. There was no reporting on this subject or aspects of this subject in the last inspection report. The school has identified the importance of this provision, especially in the light of the vocational work it undertakes and the need to develop a formal programme of citizenship. Aspects of the work are taught in specific PSHE/life skills lessons, as well as in 'tutor' time at the end of the day.
171. Pupils' achievements are good. In Year 7, pupils think about themselves and their position in their own family and discuss the roles they take and the 'pressures' on them. They discuss the personalities of characters in the film the BFG, the values they portray and their own feelings in relation to these. Pupils in Year 8 discuss what they would take on a desert island and negotiate these with their partners. Pupils with autism, in an excellently taught lesson, simulated what it was like to have a visual impairment and how they would feel. They also considered the practical implications for moving around in school and outside. Year 9 pupils role-play bullying and how they would respond to a bribe. They also discussed positively the most common reasons for drinking alcohol. In a unit of work on 'what makes a leader', the pupils discussed leadership qualities and identified these in the British Prime Minister and the President of the United States as well as some religious leaders. In Year 10, the pupils analyse advertisements and consider the types of ideas presented and the impact on consumers. The theme of the week, 'rubbish' was considered by Year 11 pupils, who were able to identify what constituted actual rubbish and the use of the word in everyday language. The theme is considered by each class at the end of each day, and pupils take part in role-play during an assembly devoted to the theme.

172. Students in the Post 16 department develop skills which can be transferred from one situation to another – they develop their social communication skills well and take part in activities which involve discussion, questioning/answering, and negotiating, which leads into the promotion of interview techniques.
173. The quality of teaching in the subject is good. The subject is taught by a large number of staff and all lessons observed showed good planning and subject knowledge. The teachers were prepared to develop ideas and to involve older students in difficult decision-making and problem-solving. This was very evident during a lesson on job skills and interview work, when the teacher created a situation where students were talking and listening to others who they may not normally have chosen to work with in pairs. This emphasised to the students that they had to be able to talk to whoever they were interviewed by and that they would not have the choice of interviewer. The use of a common theme for all classes in tutorial time and assembly helped to focus the whole school on one topic.
174. There is a lack of co-ordination to the subject, and the subject leader, who has many other responsibilities, has difficulty in monitoring the work of the team of teachers. There is a good life skills handbook circulated to all staff, which includes policies on religious education, drug education, sex education and work experience. There are few formal meetings to discuss themes or schemes of work, although each module is self-contained and planned well. Teachers, however, adopt their own interpretations on a theme, and although lessons are well planned and taught there is a lack of overview by the leader. There is a lack of rigour to assessment within the subject and a monitoring of the progress of pupils.
175. Vocational education and pupils' opportunities are very well planned and are a strength of the school. They contribute very well to pupils' personal development and enhance their understanding of citizenship. A well-planned programme of careers education starts in Year 9. Work experience begins in Year 10, when all pupils have a one week placement. In Year 11, placements are for two weeks. The placements are organised through the *Trident* provider. Students in Years 12 and 13 are encouraged to find their own placements, which are organised through Trident's 'own find' system. All placements are well supported and visited during the period and the visits are carried out by learning support assistants or relevant staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- The very good teaching, overall.
- The teachers' expertise and enthusiasm.
- The subject leadership.

Areas for improvement

- The co-ordination of planning so that it enables all aspects of the programme of work to be taught and pupils to build on what they have learned previously.
- The indoor and outdoor facilities.

176. Pupils' achievement and progress in physical education are good, overall, and are very good in Years 10 and 11. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where progress in only Years 7 to 9 was judged to be good. This is mainly due to the very good teaching and enthusiasm which the subject specialist provides, and the positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning. However, pupils' progress could be further improved through adequate gymnasium facilities; these are currently unsatisfactory. They limit the range of activities pupils undertake and there is some impact on time for learning as the staff need to use lesson time to clear the floor after lunch. This limits the impact of the very good teaching on the younger pupils, in particular. Older pupils have wide opportunity for sport activities, including the use of off-site facilities.

177. By Year 9 pupils know the basic rules of rugby. They demonstrate skills in rolling back the ball for the support partner to pick up and run forward with the ball, and know that passing the ball forward to a partner is a foul. They develop the basic skills in playing hockey. They know the importance of marking an opponent and to play as a member of a team. Pupils practice backhand and forehand in short tennis. Their rapport with their teacher motivates the pupils in learning these skills. In one lesson where pupils were learning to serve underhand to the receiving area, pupils of all abilities endeavoured to achieve this. There were broad grins of achievement from those who were successful and those pupils who did not do so well were still praised by their teacher for their efforts.
178. By Year 11, pupils improve their basic ball control in football with the more able pupils thinking about positioning for marking opponents. Very good class management and lesson planning was a feature in the great majority of observed lessons. This was shown in a lesson where pupils were creating two sequences of movements, both of which took a count of eight to perform. In this lesson, the teacher set a scenario where the pupils were secret agents and their movements were performed in time with the *James Bond* theme. This highly motivated the pupils who stood, rolled and crawled to enact their sequences and who clearly enjoyed their learning.
179. In swimming lessons, in the school's small heated pool, pupils with autism enjoy walking and running in the water and the freedom of movement that they experience. They are learning to put their heads into the water with confidence and clearly enjoy blowing bubbles. These lessons are led by an experienced teaching assistant who is an ASA instructor, whose good lesson planning and management optimise the learning experiences of the pupils.
180. The quality of the teaching is very good, overall. Apart from one occurrence of unsatisfactory teaching, all the teaching observed was very good. The teacher's enthusiasm increases as great satisfaction is gained through seeing the pupils learning very effectively. Lessons have very good pace, activities are performed rigorously, are well planned and managed. The very good relationships between teacher and pupils creates a really positive working atmosphere. The teacher ensures that pupils are aware of and observe the school's rules of conduct and applies appropriate sanctions if these are not followed. Very good support and advice is given when the teacher sees a pupil in difficulty. In one lesson, the teacher's very good demonstration and explanation of marking an opponent in hockey enabled the pupils' to develop this skill. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred when the teachers' objectives for what the pupils are to learn were unclear and not enough attention was given to the disruption in the autistic pupils' routine; pupils were not prepared for the lesson because of the late arrival of the transport they were travelling on.
181. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their lessons, as a result of the very strong teaching. They co-operate well when working in pairs or as members of small groups. In a lesson which included two autistic pupils, the continuous singing of one of the autistic pupils was ignored by the other pupils and the autistic pupils were totally included in the learning. The pupils enjoy learning and show smiles of achievement when successful.
182. The leadership for the subject is good. The co-ordinator, a subject specialist in his second year of teaching, has been in post since September and brings expertise and enthusiasm to the subject. Management is satisfactory, but planning needs to improve. The scheme of work for the subject is based upon national guidance and adapted by using modules from other schemes to meet pupils' 'needs. However, planning in this way does not entirely ensure that all aspects of the Programme of Study are being taught or that learning builds on what pupils have studied previously. Teachers in the provision for pupils with autism are using a different scheme of work, which makes whole-school planning for the subject very difficult. Assessment is satisfactory. There is an assessment sheet for each pupil, with pupils' progress being recorded against the P level and/or National Curriculum level descriptors.
183. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. In addition to the problems with the gymnasium space and its low ceiling, the ceiling tiles, together with their metal frames, are insecure. Changing

areas are inadequate. The poorly drained playing-field limits its use for a large part of the year. A bid has been submitted for an all-weather playing-field.

POST 16

Overall, the quality of provision in Post 16 is strong. Provision for work related studies and vocational education is **very good**.

Strengths

- The school's very strong commitment to the work-related curriculum and to its further development.
- The achievements of pupils.
- The good quality of teaching.
- The very wide range of courses on offer.

Areas for improvement

- The financial arrangements for the whole of the Post 16 department.
- A written action plan for the development of the department.

184. There has been a marked improvement in the provision of education for students who are over 16 since the last inspection. Students can undertake a very wide variety of courses leading to external accreditation and the Post 16 department benefits from an excellent range of provision for creative work.
185. All students achieve well during their time in the sixth form. In English and mathematics students follow a wide range of courses leading to GCSE or entry level National Skill Profile (NSP) and this is also the case in information and communication technology where students can achieve an award in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) recognition. In addition, students are also able to study vocational courses leading to entry level NSP in a wide range of subjects, such as leisure and tourism, catering, horticulture, construction, motor vehicle studies and performing arts. Other accredited courses include City and Guilds 'Skillpower' certificate and the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme (YAS). Some students undertake courses at Barnet College in media studies. Non-accredited courses include physical education and French, as well as religious education within life skills courses.
186. In English, students follow a scheme of work linked to the National Literacy Strategy, Basic Literacy Entry Level or to the GCSE course. They make very good progress in their skills. Students listen well to staff and each other and understand the need for "taking turns" in conversation and in acknowledging the contribution and opinions of others. In mathematics, students make good progress and have a good understanding of mathematical ideas such as symmetry. They develop their problem-solving skills, related to real life situations, well.
187. Students make good progress in vocational studies due to the good and often very good teaching in various locations as well as the excellent facilities the school offers from within its design and technology department. They plan their individual work well and can amend and modify their designs in the light of their experience. Students work well together with "buddies" helping less able members of the group. Relationships between students and with staff are of a high order. Vocational work is very strong and consists of options relating to manufacturing, construction, horticulture, catering and child care.
188. The quality of teaching in Post 16 classes is good, overall, and is frequently very good. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to ensure that each student has a series of positive learning experiences. The department generates an 'adult ethos' where students are respected as individuals and can make a positive contribution to departmental life. An example of this is the recent election of a sixth form committee with a chair, secretary and membership which oversees the use of the students' common room. This mature setting provides a purposeful atmosphere and is a positive contribution to achievement. Homework is well used to support teaching within the department. As a result of the high quality of teaching, relationships in classes and the social settings are very good. Students react positively, are keen to participate and work hard.

189. The sixth form is located in its own building next to the school, with a classroom and a common room for students. Most of the teaching, however, especially that of vocational studies, is carried out in the departmental areas of the main school. Resources for Post 16 education are good, with the design and technology department providing excellent accommodation for some vocational courses.
190. The co-ordinator, who has only been in post this academic year, leads the department well, although she has not yet fully crystallised her plans for future developments into a formal development plan. The department does not have an independent budget and relies on funding from the budget of the design and technology department. Although planning for individual courses is generally good, this, and teaching in the department, is undertaken by subject teachers under the sixth form or vocational umbrella and this in turn ensures strong links with the main school. The co-ordinator is a member of the senior management team ensuring that the department is an integral part of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The way pupils' work and teachers' planning is supported by the Agreed Syllabus and award bearing courses.
- The good use of visual aids, including authentic artefacts.
- Teachers' approaches to the subject in Years 10 and 11 and the way they treat pupils' and mature and growing young adults in relation to their discussions.

Areas for improvement

- The challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- The tracking and recording of pupils' progress and experiences.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and knowledge of ways to help pupils with a wide range of needs to learn effectively.

191. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. The best achievement is made by pupils in Years 10 and 11 because teachers' planning and pupils' work is supported by a programme of work and accreditation which also form part of the life skills programme.
192. In Years 7 to 9 pupils make satisfactory progress in learning from and about religion. This is helped by the scheme of work, based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, which aims to cover a range of the major world religions thematically. Pupils learn about key aspects of some of the main religions. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on symbols, they showed good awareness of the meanings of some of the five Sikh symbols. They have good opportunities to discuss universal ideas, such as the celebrations and special days and to relate these ideas to their own experiences. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils discussed the Chinese New Year celebrations, which included colourful and authentic artefacts, making the lesson engaging for pupils. However, in some lessons, written work was too difficult and pupils had little support, for example, in the form of 'writing frames' and other strategies for guided writing. The progress of more able pupils is sometimes limited by the lack of extension materials and tasks that are insufficiently challenging.
193. Years 10 and 11 students learn about moral and spiritual issues as a part of their work for the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN), which includes current and appropriate modules on beliefs and values and on the community. These allow a wider exploration of moral values related to social life; for example, ideas of conflict and inequality, and explorations of the themes of racism and discrimination. This extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the connections between spiritual, moral and social reality and diversity. Students in Post 16 cover religious education as a part of their life skills programme. Most pupils achieve accreditation for their work, which involves independent study of a religion of their choice.

194. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. In one lesson the teaching was unsatisfactory, however. This was generally due to a lack of specialist knowledge and ways of helping pupils to produce their ideas either in spoken form or in writing. No Post 16 lessons could be observed due to the modular nature of the programme. Teaching and learning activities are well-paced in most of the lessons observed and teachers plan well for pupils to learn about religions; however, in some lessons, they have limited opportunities to fully explore spiritual and moral ideas. Teachers use sound strategies to involve pupils in learning, for example, in a Year 11 lesson the teacher enabled students to explore Muslim law with very good exposition and use of resources, so that most pupils were able to grasp the moral points being introduced. In a lesson for pupils in the specialist unit for autistic pupils, the teacher made good use of video resources to “bring alive” to pupils the benefits and problems arising from the exploitation of rain forests. Pupils’ attitudes are positive and they generally show a willingness to contribute to discussions, which are led sensitively by teachers who manage discussions effectively while allowing all pupils to contribute. This is especially good in Years 10 and 11, where the teacher’s accepting attitude to the diversity of opinions in the classroom provides a good role model for pupils.
195. The recently established programme of work provides a secure framework for developing pupils’ skills, knowledge and understanding in a continuous and progressive way across the years. Although there is no specialist teacher in the subject, the newly appointed co-ordinator has sound plans for developing resources, which are supplemented by those provided by the specialist teacher for English as an additional language. There are now improved plans for supporting the development of teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the subject and the strategies for teaching and learning. There are, however, limited procedures to identify areas of the curriculum covered or pupils’ progress in learning. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory.