

ERRATUM

Page 3: Please change the following:

Age range should read **2 – 11**

Appropriate authority should read **Woodcroft School Ltd**

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODCROFT SCHOOL

LOUGHTON

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115425

Acting Headteacher: Ms. Farzana Khan

Reporting inspector: Mr. C. Tombs
3055

Dates of inspection: July 3 – 6 2000

Inspection number: 186072

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:	Independent Special School, Approved
Age range of pupils:	5 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitakers Way Loughton Essex
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Fax number:	020 8502 4855
Appropriate authority:	The proprietors Woodcroft School Ltd
Date of previous inspection:	16 - 18 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr. C. Tombs	Registered inspector	Art	Context and overview
		Design and Technology	School's results and pupils' achievements
		Mathematics	Teaching
		Physical Education	How well the school is led and managed
			What should the school do to improve?
Dr. B Rance	Lay inspector		Equality of opportunities
			Links with the community
			Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
			Partnership with parents
Mrs. C. Gribble	Team inspector	English	The curriculum
		Geography	Staffing accommodation and learning resources
		History	
		Music	
Mr. M Kell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Special educational needs
		Personal and social education	Efficiency
		Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Science	Assessment

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodcroft is a small, independent special school for primary aged pupils with a wide range of special educational needs - severe and multiple learning difficulties, autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are 24 pupils on roll - 4 girls and 20 boys. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils are grouped, in mixed age/mixed key stage classes. Attainment on entry is well below the national average.

Pupils are drawn from a wide area on the north-east edge of London and from a number of Local Educational Authorities. Pupils' homes are in inner city, urban, green belt and rural areas and their backgrounds reflect a range of socio-economic circumstances. Many of the pupils have previously been withdrawn from former schools by their parents or have been excluded from their previous schools. Over half the pupils are from ethnic minority groups and six come from homes where the first language is not English.

The school aims to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum through a child-centred, individual, educational and therapeutic approach. It places great importance in working in partnership with parents. At the time of the inspection there was no headteacher or deputy headteacher in post. The acting headteacher, has only recently been promoted from within the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodcroft School is offering the majority of its pupils an acceptable standard of education and has many positive features. However, there are significant weaknesses in aspects of leadership and in the curriculum. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and although unit costs are very high, provision for the majority of pupils is very good. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The ethos of the school is very good.
- Therapy treatment is well planned and effective.
- Pupils with additional special needs, make good and often very good progress.
- Provision for social and moral development is good
- The partnership with parents is very good.
- Financial administration is very good.

What could be improved

- The quality of leadership and management by the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The induction of teachers and the monitoring, evaluating and development of teaching.
- The quality, breadth, balance and planning of the curriculum.
- Whole school assessment procedures.
- The achievement and progress of higher attaining pupils.
- Safety aspects of the pupils' playground.

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

Due to severe disruption of staffing at senior management level, the school has made unsatisfactory progress in addressing the key issues and in maintaining high standards since the last inspection. Curriculum breadth and balance is still a weakness. There is no teaching of religious education; minimal teaching of history, geography and information and communication technology and insufficient time is allocated to science, mathematics, art and design technology. Assessment procedures and short term planning are still underdeveloped. However, despite the lack of quality leadership the school remains an orderly community with good relationships and a positive ethos. Attention to pupil welfare is a particular strength. There have been other improvements in the areas of administration and financial management.

STANDARDS

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

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

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed throughout the school.
- Progress in reading, for higher attaining pupils, is satisfactory.
- Progress in writing, for higher attaining pupils, is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for extended writing in English and other subjects are very limited.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory and are slowly developed as pupils move up through the school.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) permeates the whole curriculum and pupils' time in school and is very good.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in meeting their targets outlined in their individual education plans. Pupils with additional special needs make good and often very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupil's attitudes to school are good. They are enthusiastic in lessons and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good. It is particularly good on trips out of school.
Personal development and relationships	Higher attaining pupils are often helpful and caring to those less able. Some older pupils show initiative and independence in their own learning. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are real strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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.

In English, the teaching of communication skills/speaking and listening, is very good and pupils make very good progress as they move up through the school. The teaching of reading is satisfactory and some higher attaining pupils read in line with their chronological age. The teaching of writing lacks rigour in Key Stage 2 and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. The teaching of mathematics and pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory and as a result, higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

The work of all the therapists is consistently good and very good. The positive management of pupils' behaviour is a particular strength of all teaching, as well as the very good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants. The inconsistent planning and use of assessment are weaknesses. The teaching of communication skills, physical education, music, and the one lesson seen in geography, is good. The contribution of other subjects to literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently well planned. The teaching of pupils with additional special needs is good and often very good, and the teaching of those for whom English is a second language is satisfactory.

The teaching provision at Woodcroft, consists of lessons delivered by teachers, therapists, instructors and classroom assistants working directly to a teacher. Eighty six per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better, eighteen per cent is very good and fourteen per cent is unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is insufficiently broad, balanced and coherent to meet the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision overall. Social and moral development are particular strengths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a high standard of care for all pupils. Assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' academic progress is confused and inconsistent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils involved is satisfactory.

The school works very well in partnership with parents; all possible efforts are made. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visits, and good links are being established in the community. Opportunities are taken to provide the experience of social integration for a few pupils with the mainstream nursery on site. The school offers very little in the way of extra-curricular activities because of transport arrangements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is a lack of a suitably qualified headteacher and deputy headteacher and an absence of strong, professional leadership and guidance.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The proprietors are very supportive and in close contact with the school. They manage the budget effectively and efficiently but have little impact on curriculum issues, relying heavily on the headteacher for guidance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching is not monitored adequately and educational outcomes are not analysed. The school relies upon market forces and the views of parents as indicators of success.

The strategic use of resources	With the exception of the insufficient use of information and communication technology, resources are used satisfactorily to meet educational needs. However they could be better targeted.
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The majority of the teachers are inexperienced and unfamiliar with the English educational system and the National Curriculum. The quality and number of classroom assistants and therapists is good. The provision of learning resources overall is adequate, as is the accommodation. The school is aware of the principles of best value and applies them well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The quality of information provided for parents • The approachability of staff • The expectation that pupils will work hard 	

The inspectors agree with all the positive comments above. However, the inspectors feel that teachers have low expectations of higher attaining pupils. There are no areas where parents feel improvements are necessary

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The majority of pupils are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. A few pupils with higher levels of attainment are working within Levels 1-3 of the National Curriculum. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests.
2. Overall, the majority of pupils achieve and progress at least satisfactorily in both key stages, and in most subjects. But within this overall judgement there are significant variations. Pupils with additional special educational needs (SEN) - those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and severe autistic disorders - make good and often very good progress over time, in both key stages and in most subjects. A small number of higher attaining pupils- mainly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) - in both key stages make satisfactory progress in most lessons but unsatisfactory progress overtime. This is due to the narrowness of the curriculum and the lack of challenge in the work set.
3. The school does not teach religious education and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about achievement and progress in history and information and communication technology (ICT)
4. In English, pupils' communication/speaking and listening skills are very well developed as they move up through the school. Reading progress for higher attaining pupils is satisfactory and some read in line with their chronological age. However, the same group of pupils make unsatisfactory progress in writing because of insufficient opportunities for extended writing experiences. The school has no literacy strategy and though, all subjects contribute to literacy by promoting speaking and listening, and to a lesser extent reading and writing, this is incidental and not deliberately planned.
5. In mathematics, pupils' progress is satisfactory in both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils can count, order, add and subtract numbers when working up to ten objects. Pupils with additional SEN, can track objects in the environment and explore the properties of objects and materials by touch. They recognise cause and effect relationships. At the end of Key Stage 2, PMLD pupils join in with number songs, counting games and mathematical activities. Higher attaining pupils use mental recall of the 2,5 and 10 multiplication tables when solving problems. The school has no numeracy strategy and not all subjects make a consistent contribution to reinforcing numeracy.
6. In science, pupils with additional SEN make very good progress at both key stages. Higher attainers in both key stages make unsatisfactory progress. During Key Stage 1, pupils consider aspects of living things and the characteristics and properties of different materials. At the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils can classify living things using a simple key, make simple predictions and understand the requirements of a fair test. Higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because of the narrow range of topics covered, which restricts their understanding of scientific concepts.
7. In art, design and technology and geography pupils make satisfactory progress in a narrow range of work. For example, design and technology consists almost entirely of

food technology with no evidence of work with resistant materials. Pupils with additional SEN achieve good standards and make good progress in art. Higher attaining pupils achieve low standards in art because they are not sufficiently challenged.

8. Pupils' progress in physical education and music is good in both key stages. Pupils with additional SEN tolerate and enjoy physiotherapy treatment. They show response to stimuli and anticipation of the next event. They are developing normal patterns of physical development. Higher attaining pupils can ride a pony with confidence, demonstrate good basic drops in trampolining and swim 25 yards or more. In music, pupils make very good progress in musical composition, listening and appreciation and satisfactory progress in performance in both key stages. Pupils take turns in class singing lessons and express themselves through rhythm and a variety of instruments. A pupil, who elects not to speak in class, will sing with a microphone.
9. Pupils make very good progress as they move up through the school in personal, social and health education. Although there is no formal planned programme a range of visits provides valuable opportunities for pupils to practise and develop personal and social skills. These include, road safety and an awareness of the environment and local culture. Table games encourage pupils to interact, take turns and win and lose gracefully. At meal times, pupils' independent skills, good manners and consideration for others are emphasised.
10. There is no significant difference in the progress made by girls and boys, pupils from different backgrounds or ethnic minority groups, or pupils for whom English is not the first language.
11. The school does not set whole school and pupil targets with a view to raising standards and measuring progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have a good attitude towards school. They attend school willingly and show a good interest in the range of activities available both within and out of school. Groups approach making pizzas in a food technology lesson with great enthusiasm, and pupils are equally keen to participate in trampolining at a local sports centre. Pupils have a very positive attitude to the range of therapies available in the school.
13. Although there are examples of disruptive behaviour, which, at times, was extremely challenging and confrontational, pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. A pupil is seen working, conscientiously and independently, on a computer-based reading program and there are a number of examples of good behaviour during what the school calls 'treats', which are refreshment periods. These 15-30 minute sessions generally occur twice a day in each class and they provide very good opportunities for social development and interaction. Similarly, lunch is a social occasion free from disruption and unruly behaviour as pupils sit quietly, with a number chatting to staff. When accidents occur, such as knocking over a glass of water, pupils are encouraged to clear up the mess and are able to do so.
14. This good behaviour is also evident when pupils are off site. Small groups visit the local shops and go horse riding, and a much larger group use the facilities at the East London Handicapped Adventure Playground. On all occasions pupils behave in a responsible manner. There have been no exclusions.

15. Pupils generally appear to be at ease within the school community. The school does not have an anti-bullying policy but its central philosophy is focused on equality of opportunity for all and pupils do generally respect each other and adults. The high number of adults around is a feature of the school, but on occasions during break times their presence in such numbers may be too restrictive. They intervene quickly to make suggestions, prevent disputes and to involve children but these interventions eliminated opportunities for pupils to sort out their own problems and to show initiative. It would be appropriate on occasions for staff to stand back, giving pupils the chance to develop initiative and decision-making, but making themselves ready to assist if required.
16. Overall pupils' attendance at school is satisfactory, which is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Nevertheless pupils are keen to come to school so unauthorised absences are very rare. The level of authorised absence is high; this is due in part to sickness, to which some of the pupils are very prone, and sometimes pupils not being ready to leave home when their transport arrives in the morning and is unable to wait. The great majority of pupils are brought to school on time, but on occasion they can be late because of difficulties for their transport in travelling long distances in busy outer London traffic.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in both key stages and in all subjects being taught, the exceptions being in science. There is no history or religious education on the timetable and there is insufficient teaching of ICT for a judgement to be made. Teaching and learning in music, physical education, and in some aspects of English is good and often very good.
18. Fourteen per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory, far more than in the previous inspection and forty three per cent of teaching is good or very good. This represents a decline since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory in nearly all lessons and good in nearly a half. Teaching in Woodcroft School, includes a considerable number of lessons taken or led by therapists and instructors and most of the good or very good teaching can be attributed to them. All the unsatisfactory lessons are attributed to the teachers or classroom assistants working directly to them.
19. Several aspects of teaching and learning are good, but the very good subject expertise of therapists and instructors, the positive management of pupils' behaviour and the effective use of support staff are particular strengths. The inconsistent planning and the quality and use of ongoing assessment are weaknesses.
20. Teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs enables them to give good demonstrations and evaluative comments in trampolining, music and horse riding. As a result pupils make good progress in these activities. Good support from classroom assistants ensures safety. As a consequence, pupils' performance and self-esteem is enhanced. A clear link between the physiotherapist and teachers ensures that high quality exercises for PMLD pupils are continued in the classroom and good progress, though slow and over time, is maintained. By contrast, the teachers' poor subject knowledge of science resulted in poor progress for pupils in a lesson on water.

21. Teachers generally have high expectations that pupils will work hard and behave sensibly but higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some subjects. Most lessons start promptly and proceed at pace. Teachers' and classroom assistants' ability to sustain learning in adverse circumstances is clearly displayed in a mathematics lesson when a very distraught pupil is removed with minimal disruption to the class. Good use is made of the 'lights' room and soft music to calm excited or disturbed pupils.
22. Examples of the effectiveness of teachers' planning are in evidence in a number, but not all, lessons. Clear planning, organisation and teamwork ensure that good learning takes place in a food technology lesson. Good planning to meet individual needs, and a focus on skills, enhances learning in a science lesson for pupils with additional SEN. A well-structured speech and language lesson reinforce 'turn' taking and the prepositions of 'by', 'under' and 'in front of'. Good planning in English, helps pupils interpret a range of signs, symbols gestures, words and phrases. However, there are many lessons where there is no or minimal planning. In English, for example, in a lesson identifying body parts and taken by classroom assistants, the plan is not followed at all and abandoned after twenty-five minutes for a 'breath of fresh air'. In a mathematics lesson, there is no plan for the activities of two lower attaining pupils, and in a lesson named 'table top' activities and carried out by a classroom assistant there is no plan and no learning objectives for a pupil tracing over her name. Lack of clear planning adversely affects pupils' progress.
23. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods most of which are effective. There are good examples of first hand experience, when for example, pupils go to the shops to buy ingredients they will use later. A visit in the immediate community helps pupils make sense of their environment. Skilful questioning in geography and a well-run discussion confirms pupils' learning and understanding. Appropriate physical prompts and guidance maintains pupils on task in a physiotherapy session. The good use of rewards ensures pupils' attention and co-operation in a speech and language session, and the good use of musical instruments helps pupils make progress in listening and communication. Throughout, good relationships encourage pupils to take part and to work hard. However, in some subjects there is an over reliance on worksheets and across the school there is an under-use of information and communication technology. Many lessons lack a clear introduction so pupils know what to expect and a plenary at the end when progress and behaviour is reviewed.
24. The extent to which pupils show initiative and the ability to learn independently varies between the pupils and their range of special needs. During the daily personal and social education lesson, known as 'Treats', a calm descends on the group and there are many examples of pupils displaying good social skills, making choices and preparing their toast independently. In these lessons classroom assistants make good judgements about how much individual help is necessary. However, higher attaining pupils are heavily reliant on the classroom assistants for support in academic subjects and are reluctant to sustain learning independently.
25. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well below average on entry to school and a barrier to learning. The school has been slow to implement literacy and numeracy strategies for higher attaining pupils or indeed to agree whole school schemes of work. Without these reference points teachers plan in isolation and literacy and numeracy is not accepted as a whole school, every subject, responsibility.
26. Assessment practices are confused and inconsistent. The school does not have an

effective assessment policy. Marking is variable and there are only recent examples of annotated work which shows what pupils know, understand and can do. By contrast, the assessment practices of the therapists are detailed and thorough and pupils' progress can be measured and evaluated.

27. There is no formal homework set. However, the therapists send training programmes home, so parents are well informed and can continue some training at home. This is very much appreciated by the parents and carers. The school should consider setting homework for higher attaining pupils in order to extend their learning opportunities,
28. The teaching of pupils with additional SEN is consistently good. Their curriculum is highly influenced by the work of the therapists and is well planned, of consistently good quality and well integrated into the work of the school. A feature of all teaching with this group of pupils is the high standard of care and attention. Teachers show a satisfactory awareness of, and planning for, pupils for whom English is not the first language.
29. Classroom assistants provide one-to-one support for every pupil. They are well led by senior classroom assistants, who are skilled and experienced and whose principle role is to organise the large number of adults in a classroom. The teamwork of classroom assistants with teachers is a strong feature of the school and enhances the learning opportunities of all pupils. However, the majority of teachers are trained and qualified in countries other than England and are unfamiliar with the English educational system and the National Curriculum. While they possess good basic skills, this lack of knowledge has an overall negative impact on pupils' learning and progress.

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

30. The school's curriculum is unsatisfactory, lacking breadth and balance. The school is not required to follow the National Curriculum but the previous inspection recommended that there should be an increase in history, geography and religious education and a greater breadth to the curriculum in science, mathematics and technology. The school has made unsatisfactory progress in addressing these issues.
31. No religious education is taught and there is minimal history and geography; the time allocated to mathematics, science, art and design and technology and ICT, is insufficient to ensure coverage of the Programmes of Study in any depth or balance. All the pupils' statements of special educational need outline more curricular opportunities to be provided than are available at this moment in time. The current curriculum fails to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and will disadvantage them when they move on to other schools. It has not taken sufficient account of National Strategies for literacy and numeracy.
32. The school current curriculum focuses on early years practice. There is a heavy emphasis on communication (English), life and social skills (PSHE), physical development (PE) and music, and as such it is more appropriate for pupils with complex and profound special needs. A major influence on the curriculum is the high quality and well planned work of a range of therapists - physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech and music therapists. They work mainly with individuals but occasionally with groups and their work is well integrated into the whole school curriculum. However, withdrawing pupils from lessons at the same time each week,

results in interrupted progress for pupils in that subject.

33. Another weakness in the curriculum is the lack of long-term plans for each subject. Planning for individual needs takes priority over the establishment of a clear curriculum framework, with the consequent loss of planned progression for pupils, within and between key stages. Without long-term plans or schemes of work, teachers are planning in isolation and this has a negative impact on pupils' learning. Recently introduced medium-term plans are a step forward but are unsatisfactory without reference to an agreed long-term plan. The school is currently examining the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Equals curriculum materials with a view to adapting them into the school curriculum. The absence of a permanent management team, or an overall curriculum co-ordinator, has delayed evaluation, decision making and implementation.
34. A wide range of weekly trips that make good use of community and partner institutional resources considerably enhances the curriculum. Visits to places, which offer pony riding, swimming (at a college pool and a hydrotherapy pool) and trampolining, give the pupils access to skilled instructors so that their skills, knowledge, co-ordination and confidence steadily improve. Other trips to shops, the church, library and special needs adventure playground improves their social skills and helps them make sense of their environment. These experiences have a positive influence on pupils' learning, although they are expensive in terms of curriculum time and not all activities are clearly planned or evaluated. Similarly, 'Treats' and 'Terrace' sessions are daily routines aimed at improving communication, social and personal skills. While popular with the pupils and successful in terms of meeting its basic aims these activities take a disproportionate amount of curriculum time when compared to that spent on science, mathematics, history, geography or religious education.
35. Provision for extra-curricular activities, that is, activities organised outside of the normal school day, is unsatisfactory. Distance, and transport arrangements, prohibits activities after school. Consideration should be given to offering extra-curricular activities at lunchtime.
36. Curriculum provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good. They have regular access to a range of therapists and skilled and experienced one-to-one support from classroom assistants. Parents spoke movingly about the progress pupils in this group had made since starting the school.
37. Provision for pupils for whom English is not the first language is satisfactory. The school has access to interpreters for formal or annual review meetings and families have agreed that English will be the first language used when working on alternative methods of communication in school. Good opportunities are taken to socially integrate a few pupils with the mainstream nursery on site.
38. The school makes good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but this represents a decline since the last inspection, when it was judged to be very good. This is due to the smaller number and range of opportunities now available for promoting spiritual and cultural development, and the lack of curricular planning to ensure that all aspects are promoted formally as well as through the school's ethos.
39. School-based and off-site activities that encourage social development are good. Lunchtime was a quiet and pleasant occasion, with pupils encouraged to show good

manners and to behave appropriately. They were courteous during 'treats' times, serving guests and developing social skills such as sharing and consideration for the needs of others. They were able to co-operate with each other whilst making pizzas and were taught simple, but important, practices such as how to pass a sharp knife to each other. They were able to co-operate with each other whilst making pizzas and were taught simple, but important, practices such as how to pass a sharp knife to each other. Off-site visits to places such as the adventure playground presented opportunities to reinforce behaviour, such as taking turns and queuing for rides, and the visit to the coffee shop at the local church enabled staff to encourage an understanding of living in a community.

40. Pupils' moral development is encouraged throughout the day through pupils' interactions with adults. Staff provide good role models. The school's overall ethos and the on-going contributions of staff mean that the school provides good opportunities for moral development. Many patient, one-to-one explanation of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and language are observed.
41. The school's provision for pupils' with spiritual development is satisfactory, although the lack of religious education as a taught subject reduces opportunities to do this. However, the weekly act of collective worship did provide a time for reflection on the meaning of saying goodbye to friends and this took place in an atmosphere of clam, encouraged by the lighting of a candle and switching off all lights. Some pupils experienced a feeling of awe and wonder at this time, as they did in a lesson when they were able to see how seeds that they had planted had grown into small plants and during an individual light stimulation session.
42. Pupils' cultural development is promoted satisfactorily, although the school does not use opportunities that could be presented through subjects such as history, music and art to do this. The weekly act of collective worship considered the land that Jesus came from and there was a song about Shalom and its meaning.
43. The school's use of the local community to enhance pupils' learning is good. Pupils regularly make trips into town to use the public playground, to use the library, to shop in the supermarket and take refreshments in the Methodist Church hall. Pupils also visit and use the North East London Handicapped Adventure Playground, the local swimming pool, tennis courts and pony riding facilities. In all these places staff take the opportunity to help pupils to observe the world around them. For example, looking at a robin on a fence, to socialise, to take turns to say please and thank you, to use numbers at the supermarket till, and practise the Highway Code road crossing procedure. Furthermore the staffs at these various venues co-operate fully and try to help the pupils as well.
44. The school has good links with partner institutions. First, there is an obvious link with the nursery school on the same site as the school, where they share the use of the playground, but also and more importantly the nursery willingly allows some of the pupils to join the nursery pupils for short periods of time as part of their planned integration programme. Secondly the school works very hard with parents to find the most suitable school for pupils to transfer to in Year 7, and then works with that school to make the transfer as smooth and well informed as possible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. A formal and up to date Health and Safety policy is in place and a formal risk assessment has been carried out within the last year and progress monitored and reviewed. Checks on the electrical wiring and potentially dangerous equipment are carried out regularly. Practice emergency evacuations of the premises are carried out every half term with their success, time taken and problems encountered recorded in a logbook. The procedures for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are well established. Child protection procedures are adequate for the time being, following the recent departure of the designated person and deputy, and the school recognises the need for refresher training in the near future for all the staff, particularly because there are a significant number of staff new to the school.
46. There is however one aspect of the school, which gives considerable cause for concern for the safety of everyone on the school site, both pupils and staff, and that is the playground (known in this school as the Terrace). For the number of pupils using the playground at the same time, together with their adult helpers, there is simply insufficient room for them to run, to play ball or catching games, or to ride the cycles without being a danger to one another. There are a number of raised flowerbeds, which are additional obstacles and also a pair of tree stumps/ branches waiting to trip up anyone. It is not without significance that the greatest proportion of accidents recorded in the accident register relates to incidents in the playground.
47. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good. Parents co-operation fully with the school by notifying the reasons for pupils' absence, and on the rare occasion that pupils do not arrive when expected the school contacts the parents soon after 9.30 a.m. in order to be sure that the pupils' whereabouts are understood. Both parents and the school are anxious that the school day starts promptly but they are subject to the uncertainties of the pupils' transport arrangements that can be seriously affected by traffic congestion.
48. The school is a caring community, with a very supportive ethos, and pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. There are many opportunities for staff to encourage good attitudes and personal development in different settings, and these opportunities are generally well used. Lunchtime provided examples of high levels of care and pupils behaving sociably, prompting and supporting each other, and at break times staff generally made use of the opportunities presented on the terrace to develop pupils' personal and social skills.
49. At the initiative of the acting headteacher, the school is only now putting in place effective policies, procedures and training for the systematic and planned monitoring and management of pupils' behaviour. At the moment, individual classes operate their own token economy system to encourage good behaviour but there is no whole school approach to ensure consistency.
50. Staff deal with classroom disturbances calmly and well but the school does not have effective procedures for recording unacceptable behaviour. There is an incident/accident book but this is not always completed correctly so that it is difficult to identify which entries are genuine accidents and which are as a result of another pupil's poor behaviour. The entries are not monitored on a regular basis and so the information is not used in a positive way to manage pupils' behaviour. Similarly, the restraint book is not complete and nor are entries monitored.
51. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan and from that two separate documents

are produced - termly National Curriculum priorities and wider curriculum priorities, which include therapeutic intervention and self-help. These two documents are incorporated to produce individual timetables. The procedure is unwieldy and the documents are unsatisfactory in a number of ways. The current system does not show sufficiently clear links between longer-term aims, the Individual Education Plan and the termly priorities. There is a need for more cross-referencing to show how the termly programme is designed and structured to meet the pupil's needs and the longer-term aims of the placement. This includes the need to monitor and evaluate how activities, such as the different therapies, contribute to pupils' personal and academic progress.

52. The school's procedures for monitoring, assessing and recording academic progress are generally unsatisfactory, with some significant weaknesses. Some important policies and systems are missing. All staff do not understand current practice, and procedures are inconsistently applied and are therefore ineffective. Effective planning is deficient at all levels. There are no agreed schemes of work to promote continuity and coherence and, in the absence of such long-term planning medium-term plans are produced in isolation. Lesson plans are variable in quality, with many not showing any intended learning outcomes. In addition, the school does not have an effective assessment policy and the current system has no organisation, as no one is responsible for co-ordinating the planning and assessment processes. This is something that the school should address.
53. Monitoring and recording pupils' academic performance is the responsibility of individual class teachers, or delegated to learning support assistants. As planning is poor and assessment guidelines unsatisfactory and inconsistently applied, teachers do not assess and record pupils' achievements efficiently. As a result teachers have insecure assessment information and cannot use it satisfactorily in curriculum planning or to measure pupils' progress over time. Teachers rarely make reference to National Curriculum levels and descriptors when assessing or reporting on pupils' work and the school does not retain sufficient annotated and dated work that shows what pupils can do and understand.
54. The physiotherapist, speech therapist and occupational therapist in the school maintain detailed assessment information based on clear criteria. They use this information effectively to plan future sessions and to measure the small steps in progress made by pupils with additional special needs.
55. The school could do more to celebrate individual pupils' success and to encourage other pupils to achieve. There is some recognition at a class level when pupils achieve a set of number tokens but this is fairly low key, and certificates are given to pupils, for a variety of reasons, at the end-of-term fete. It would be helpful to use a weekly assembly session of the whole school to celebrate such achievement. This would provide a wider audience than class-based celebrations and be much more immediate than termly events at which parents are present.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The views of parents about the school are very positive. Ten parents returned the questionnaire, seven attended a meeting with the Registered inspector and several attended an end of term 'open day', to which all inspectors were invited. The high degree of satisfaction reported in the previous inspection report has been maintained. Many of the parents have had a long and hard struggle with their local education and

health authorities to get the best possible provision for their children and are delighted when they manage to get a place at Woodcroft. All the parents greatly appreciate what the school does for their children and often report great strides in their development and progress once they attend the school.

57. The information provided by the school to parents is good. Parents' relationship with the school is open and friendly. They always feel welcome to telephone or visit the school. They maintain a daily dialogue with the school through the pupils' Red Book, which is used as a means of two-way communication, for example to report what has happened at school today or, conversely, significant things that may have happened at home. Parents attend the annual review for each pupil, on the anniversary of their first Statement, along with representatives of their local education authority, and this meeting is based on a full and detailed review of pupils' progress during the past year in both academic and personal development.
58. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Where it is appropriate they continue at home with work started in school as mentioned in the Red Book. In other cases where a pupil has been undertaking some therapy parents are instructed how to continue with this at home, particularly during school vacations. Parents enjoy supporting the children and the school as a whole by attending the termly family occasions, such as the Christmas production and the summer fete.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. At the time of the inspection neither a headteacher or deputy headteacher were in post, both having left in the last school year. An acting head, recently promoted from within the school manages the school well on a day-to-day basis. She enjoys the confidence of the proprietors, all staff and the parents. She is doing her best to promote high standards and to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning but has little management or curriculum experience. Staffing difficulties, particularly but not solely at senior management level since the last inspection, have resulted in unsatisfactory progress in addressing the key issues.
60. There is a clear statement of aims and objectives for the school included in the school brochure. They include a flexible child-centred approach, the delivery of a broad and balanced individual curriculum both educational and therapeutic, and working in partnership with parents. To some extent the school fulfils its aims. But without a professional leader and other key staff, a largely inexperienced group of teachers, cannot improve the quality and coherence of the curriculum or develop whole school assessment procedures to meet the wide range of pupils' need. The school currently has the will but not the capacity to improve at this present time..
61. The directors are closely involved in the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. There is good communication with staff and relationships at all levels, including pupils, are good. This maintains staff morale, helps to promote learning and contributes to the school's positive ethos. The directors rely on the professional leadership of a headteacher for developments in school and are seeking to appoint a new senior management team. An education advisory panel is available to offer advice but not to get involved in the running of the school. The managing director meets weekly with staff and the headteacher to monitor the school development plan. The school has identified a number of areas for development but not in a priority order for

effective action. The school development plan should be refocused as a result of this inspection.

62. The acting headteacher has recently initiated teacher observations but these lack evaluative comment and do not lead on to target setting or training to secure improvements. There is no formal structure for supporting or monitoring curriculum development and assessment and no co-ordinators to lead and manage subjects. The school has not inducted new staff well and the use of staff appraisal and professional development interviews to determine priorities for staff development is under-developed. The provision for professional development is good but is not sufficiently targeted and has had no an impact on raising standards in curriculum areas. The school does not collect or analyse data on pupils' performance from attainment on entry and throughout their time in school or use the information to set targets or monitor progress. There are no strategies for evaluating the effects of developments or initiatives on standards achieved, other than market forces and the views of parents.
63. Management of the school's finances is the responsibility of the Finance Director, working with the Managing Director and administrative staff. Accounts are prepared termly and discussed with the headteacher. Financial administration is very good and financial systems operate satisfactorily using new technology, although the school does not use electronic mailing or Internet applications. The auditor's report for the year September 1998 - August 1999 noted that the accounts had been prepared in accordance with current standards. The school is committed to the principle of obtaining best value.
64. The Managing Director produces the school's development plan, which identifies a range of activities. These are regularly reviewed, but are not sufficiently well prioritised. As a result, spending is not always prioritised in terms of the school's overall needs and nor is there a clear procedure for determining the allocation of funds on learning resources. Spending is not evaluated sufficiently well in terms of raising standards. For example, new technology has been introduced in to classrooms but there are no plans to evaluate its use and assess its impact.
65. At the time of the last inspection the school offered good value for money. Since then the school has not made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues of assessment and planning. In addition there are some significant weaknesses in aspects of leadership, and there is unsatisfactory rigour in identifying educational priorities and evaluating the impact of spending. The unit cost is high because of the one-to-one staffing ratio and the regular contribution of therapists - full-time speech and occupational therapists, half-time music and physiotherapists. This is the provision, which parents value and appreciate and which is unique to the school. However, there is much that can be improved and the school now offers only satisfactory value for money.
66. There are good levels of staffing in the school to ensure that pupils receive adequate one-to-one support and tuition. However, three out of five teachers are inexperienced and unfamiliar with the English educational system and the National Curriculum. None has received proper induction training to the school. One teacher has an additional qualification in special education but again this is not recognised in this country. The teaching complement overall, without experienced leadership and relevant training, is unsatisfactory. Other staff include highly qualified, experienced and specialist therapists who provide individual and group sessions for pupils, and trained nursery nurses and classroom assistants. There is a reasonable balance of male to female

staff. All have job descriptions and demonstrate a strong commitment to their work.

67. The unique accommodation is satisfactory but has the limitations of a converted house. There is no hall for pupils to meet together or to take part in physical education lessons and no library to extend pupils' interest and experience of books. Classrooms are small when all pupils and adults in a class are present. The lack of a 'time out' room for disruptive pupils restricts access to the soft playroom, which is used for this purpose instead. The top classroom is in need of a ventilation system. However, the buildings are well maintained and attractive. Outside there is a 'secret garden' and an allotment but not a level hard core or grass area for pupils to play ball or team games. The small playground is a health and safety risk and already plans are in hand to remedy this. Toilet facilities for a large number of adult staff are limited. Parents like the accommodation, because it is so unlike a school, while recognising its limitations.
68. Resources for pupils with severe and complex special needs are good, and resources overall, are satisfactory. However, more books, fiction and non-fiction are required for English. Resources are not always well stored or easily accessible and ICT was underused during the week of the inspection. The school needs to establish clear procedures for allocating funds to subject areas and these should be based on an agreed overall curriculum, priorities established in the school development plan and subject action plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the proprietors, with the support and advice of the education advisory panel should: -

- **Improve the quality of the leadership and management by:**
 - appointing a suitably qualified and experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher; (Paras: 29 and 59)
 - inducting new teachers; (Para:66)
 - monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching, including setting performance targets. (Paras: 62 and 92)
- **Improve the quality of the curriculum by:**
 - ensuring that the curriculum is planned to develop pupils' progress within and between key stages and to meet their wide range of special needs; (Paras: 4,34,72,78 and 88)
 - ensuring that the curriculum is broad and balanced and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum with appropriate time allocated to each subject; (Paras: 33, 60 and 92)
 - implementing whole-school assessment procedures and improving pupils' individual education plans. (Paras: 19, 26, 52, 53, 60, 65, 78 and 92)
- **Improve the achievement and progress of higher attaining pupils by**
 - providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum; (Paras: 33, 60 and 92)
 - establishing accurate and appropriate assessment procedures; (Paras: 52, 53, 60 and 65)
 - presenting them with work that is challenging and differentiated. (Paras: 80, 85 and 89)
- **Improve the health and safety concerns of the playground area.** (Paras: 46 and 69)
- **Other management and curriculum issues for improvement:**
 - ensure a closer link between educational and financial planning so that financial decisions are based on an audit of all school needs; (Para: 64)
 - collect and analyse data to set school and pupil targets and to measure progress; (Para: 62)
 - develop systems for supporting teachers in the development of the curriculum; (Para: 61)
 - develop the role of co-ordinators to manage, monitor and lead subjects. (Para: 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	18	25	43	14		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	24
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	11.4	School data	0.08

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	
White	11
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.9
Total number of unqualified teachers (FTE)	3.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Average class size	6

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	510

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	814,455
Total expenditure	819,228
Expenditure per pupil	34,135
Balance brought forward from previous year	72,683
Balance carried forward to next year	67,910

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	24
Number of questionnaires returned	10

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30			
My child is making good progress in school.	40	50		10	
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	70			10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.		70		10	20
The teaching is good.	70	20			10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	20			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	10			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30			
The school works closely with parents.	70	20	10		
The school is well led and managed.	60	30			10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	30			20
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	10	10		10

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Forty-two per cent of parents returned questionnaires and twenty nine per cent of parents attended the meeting held with the registered inspector before the inspection.

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents made additional positive comments about the school and were full of praise for the work of the therapists. They were pleased with the transport arrangements from the LEAs.

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

ENGLISH

69. Pupils' achievements in English in Key Stages 1 and 2 are satisfactory overall. In both key stages, pupils from all categories of SEN make good progress in communication skills. The school has a strong ethos in terms of providing many opportunities for pupils to improve language skills. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with well-planned contributions from the speech and occupational therapists. This represents a decline in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be very good.
70. Speaking and communication skills are encouraged for pupils with speech and communication difficulties in Key Stage 1 through lessons such as 'communication' and 'living language' as well as English. Pupils in both key stages who require alternative means of communication use rebus pictures and the 'Big Mack' in order to improve responses to the spoken word. A good range of systems, which provide alternative forms of communication are available in school. Technological aids, which can reproduce speech if pressed, and symbols and signing are used extensively and effectively throughout the school. Teachers are secure in subject and technical knowledge, are patient and supportive and expect pupils to work hard.
71. In both key stages, there are a range of lessons aimed at improving English skills, which are timetabled as English, communication therapy and socialisation. There are also 'treats' sessions when toast and rice cakes and various spreads and are prepared and pupils are involved in a range of English skills as they communicate, discuss and relate events as they eat and drink. Examples of good language and improved verbal responses were noted in several of these lessons. The teacher and classroom assistants provide good models throughout. Effective speech therapy support extends into an English lesson and pupils are given additional adult support in understanding the use of prepositions. Teachers use a variety of toys, pictures, words and gestures to show what pupils have learned and can do and understand. This group are a complex needs group of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Their behaviour improves in this highly structured lesson and later in the day, pupils are still using or demonstrating understanding of the new vocabulary when they have a 'Treats' session. Pupils with PMLD in both key stages are also provided with stimuli for improved communication in the light sensitive area and have modern alternative communication aids and use ICT during individual English support lessons. Progress in communicating, speaking and listening is good and occasionally very good.
72. However, less emphasis and rigour is placed on regular literacy work in both key stages. Only one class has a reading corner, and there is no school library, where pupils can choose real books as well as read from schemes. There is an unsatisfactory range of reading material available and there is not yet a book culture in the school. Pupils are not observe having books read to them or having peer tutoring or paired reading sessions, although several pupils in Key Stage 2 with EBD are reading at their chronological age. The make satisfactory progress reading within a scheme. Teaching is not planned sufficiently well to ensure a range of reading experiences is readily available. There is little opportunity available in short thirty-minute lessons to ensure

that all pupils are monitored for reading development and assessment. There is not enough importance placed upon reading for pleasure and information using a range of books. When pupils read aloud, no effort is made to encourage expression or modulation. No use of poetry or plays was seen. By contrast, individual therapy sessions encourage self-expression and creativity.

73. Handwriting skills are not regularly practised other than in occupational therapy as a preliminary to improve dexterity and grip in readiness for letter formation. There were no lessons observed where higher attaining pupils were challenged to extend their writing skills into creative or expressive writing or to use ICT to improve their presentation. Progress in writing, for higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
74. There is no overall agreed curriculum framework for English to meet the needs of all pupils and no scheme of work to ensure that all pupils progress steadily within and between the key stages and build on prior knowledge. Some teachers have attended literacy training but this has had no noticeable effect on the organisation, lesson structure or teaching of English. The school should appoint a co-ordinator to lead, manage and monitor the subject. Developments since the previous inspection are unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

75. Overall pupils' achievements and progress in mathematics are satisfactory in both key stages. This is as a result of satisfactory teaching, good one-to-one adult support and pupils' positive attitudes to the subject. Good features of all lessons are the very good teamwork between the teacher and the classroom assistants and the positive management of pupils' behaviour, both of which sustain the activities and keep pupils involved. Weaknesses are in the minimal planning in some lessons, the over reliance on worksheets from a published scheme, and the under-use of information communication technology to support and enhance learning. Sometimes as well, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual therapy and this has a negative effect on their progress in mathematics.
76. During Key Stage 1, some pupils with complex and severe special needs are beginning to track objects in the classroom and explore and identify them in terms of their function, colour, size and texture. They make steady progress over time in small steps. They know the routine of the day and whose turn is next in a game or group activity. Some can count familiar objects using one-to-one correspondence up to ten. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through singing a variety of number songs and rhymes. Pupils understand, use and respond to the simple mathematical language of number and comparatives, like for example, 'bigger than' and 'smaller than', and basic colours and shapes.
77. During Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils apply mathematical skills to solve problems and puzzles. They are beginning to explain patterns and relationships generalise and predict. They can find the missing digits in puzzles given certain variables. They can count the number of triangles in a diagram and make hexagons out of rectangular sheets of paper by folding them and making one straight cut. They are well supported in their work by classroom assistants but their presence curtails opportunities for whole class, whole group teaching.
78. There is no co-ordinator for mathematics to lead, manage and monitor the subject. A

limited range of mathematical experiences is offered, because of the lack of an agreed framework and insufficient curriculum time devoted to the subject. Not enough attention is paid to the deliberately planned development of numeracy across the curriculum. There is no whole school numeracy strategy and though two teachers have attended numeracy training, this has made no obvious impact on school practice or organisation. The lack of a planned curriculum leads to fragmented experiences for some pupils, particularly for higher attainers, and does not ensure planned progress within and between key stages. Assessment does not place pupils accurately at National Curriculum attainment levels so that some pupils are insufficiently challenged. The subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Similar issues were raised and have not been addressed

SCIENCE

79. Very few lessons were observed during the inspection but the sample of pupils' work showed that whilst most pupils are achieving at a level appropriate to their ability, those with higher levels of attainment make unsatisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with additional special needs make very good progress at both key stages.
80. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory as lessons are not always well planned and teacher expectations are too low. Some lessons, such as the consideration of the requirements of a fair test for examining plant growth, are structured, with introductory and summing up sessions. Other lessons are not properly begun or concluded. Work is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils with an over emphasis on undifferentiated worksheets.
81. The standard of teaching of pupils with additional special needs is very good. Lessons are very well planned and managed and so pupils make very good progress. Appropriate teaching strategies are used and attention is paid to the needs of this particular group of pupils, as demonstrated by the lesson focused on making a healthy lunch involving fruit and salad. This involved sensory stimulation (touch, texture, taste, and smell) and the development of motor skills (manipulation and cutting). All pupils had individual plans and their progress was evaluated and recorded.
82. During Key Stage 1, pupils' programme of study is limited. They consider some aspects of living things and some of the characteristics and properties of different materials. At the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils are able to compare the properties of some materials in simple ways (rough/smooth, hard/soft, heavy/light); understand that some objects can roll because of their shape, and know that some materials float and others sink. Lower attaining pupils have limited knowledge of materials, which is broadly restricted to water 'play' - pouring, tipping, filling, squeezing containers filled with water.
83. Pupils' experiences during Key Stage 2 are also limited, with an emphasis on living things although there is some work on investigative science. At the end of the key stage some pupils can classify living things using a simple key, make simple predictions (e.g. what will happen to seeds/plants with no water), and understand the requirements of a fair test. They know that living things reproduce and can recognise and name the major external parts of the human body and flowering plants. However, the narrow range of topics covered restricts their understanding of scientific concepts.
84. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as the school has

made little progress in implementing the recommendation to broaden experiences in science. There is insufficient timetable space devoted to science, with some pupils receiving as little as thirty minutes a week. In addition, some pupils do not have this experience as they are withdrawn for therapy during these sessions and there can be no guarantee that the work is provided at a later date. The school does not have a science co-ordinator and therefore there is no long term planning in place to ensure broad coverage of the subject, so limiting pupils' experiences. The needs of more able pupils must also be addressed.

ART

85. Pupils with complex and profound multiple difficulties and those with autism achieve good standards and make good progress. This is because teaching is good, work is carefully planned and learning outcomes are clear. No teaching of art to higher attaining pupils was seen. A scrutiny of the art work on display, suggests that higher attaining pupils achieve less well and make unsatisfactory progress because the work is insufficiently challenging and unrelated to the National Curriculum Programme of Study.
86. During Key Stage 1, pupils improve their fine motor skills in cutting, folding, and in using glue and paintbrushes. They become familiar with the order in which activities take place and in the language of instruction - 'We are now going to cut out the shape'. They begin to understand the concept of symmetry while making butterfly prints. The pupils are sustained in their work by patient and skilled one-to-one support, consistent signing and positive behaviour management. One pupil who becomes very disturbed is led out and calmed by a visit to the 'light' room, causing minimal disruption to the lesson. However, lesson planning is minimal and unsupported by an overall scheme of work.
87. During Key Stage 2, pupils and explored and experience a variety of objects and improve their visual, tactile/taste perception and manipulative skills while printing with fruit. They are learning to use a range of tools, materials and techniques with care and safety. They make good progress because the lesson is well planned by the occupational therapist and makes clear reference to the Equals physical and creative development programmes with appropriate assessment levels. Resources are appropriate and well used. Adults provide the appropriate amount of support in the form of physical prompts to enable pupils to work as independently as possible and to make choices for themselves. They give regular and positive encouragement to keep them on task. Pupils are co-operative, accept adult guidance and tolerate the media. A calm purposeful ethos enhances learning opportunities. The finished products are of good quality and include pupils' individual work and a large class print on a linen sheet.
88. The subject has not developed since the previous inspection. The co-ordination of art is fragmented, with no one responsible for whole school co-ordination. Planning for individual needs takes priority over the establishment of a clear curriculum framework, with a consequent loss of planned progression through and between key stages. Older, higher attaining pupils do not have their needs consistently met; much of the work seen in lessons and on display offers little challenge or interest. While the subject supports the work of other curriculum areas such as literacy and mathematics, this is not deliberately planned for and opportunities for pupils to be introduced to the work of other artists and a variety of cultures, Western and non-Western, are missed. The lack of specialist accommodation for art inhibits curriculum opportunities for pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Overall pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory, as a result of satisfactory teaching in a narrow range of work. The emphasis in this subject is on developing social and life skills rather than developing pupils' design and technology capability. While this is appropriate for pupils with severe and complex special needs it is insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. There are no opportunities for example, for pupils to develop skills in making and designing in resistant materials.
90. During Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress while making a pizza. With support they improve in their practical skills - cutting, grating and placing, and increase their knowledge in identifying and naming ingredients. There were good examples of them sharing, waiting their turn, and joining in a discussion, for example about the meaning of 'hollow'. Social skills are encouraged throughout and pupils are polite and co-operative - 'Please pass the sauce' and 'May I borrow the knife'. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. They all work with interest fully involved in the activity. The lesson is well organised and preparation beforehand thorough. The teacher and classroom assistants make positive contributions and maintain the pace of the lesson. However, there is no follow up activity to reinforce learning objectives and some missed opportunities to refer to written instructions.
91. During Key Stage 2, the same activity is repeated. The ingredients had been bought that morning on a shopping trip. Pupils are able to build on previous knowledge and are more competent in practical skills and in the order and routine of the activity. Their social skills are well developed. Clear planning, organisation and the teamwork of all the adults contribute to the success of the lesson. Good signing and the use of Rebus pictures aid communication. Again there is no plenary session to review progress. The lesson finishes when the pizzas are ready for cooking.
92. There is no formalised, overall plan or scheme of work for design and technology, which covers both key stages and which addresses the wide range of learning needs of the pupils in the school. Planning and assessment are therefore in isolation and do not ensure pupils' steady progress as they move through the school. The subject has no co-ordinator, the staff have received no recent INSET and there is no evidence of formalised monitoring. Teachers do not have specialist knowledge of the subject and this, along with, the lack of an overall plan affects their confidence. The lack of specialist facilities and resources, affects pupils' access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Progress since the previous has been unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

93. Following the last Inspection, geography and history were to be introduced into the curriculum in order to provide pupils with a wide a range of educational experiences as possible.
94. In fact, only one complete lesson of geography was observed during the Inspection in a class of Key Stage 2 pupils. This lesson was of a good standard and involved a discussion about the pupils' immediate environment. The pupils were clearly informed and interested and produced a questionnaire for circulation around school.

95. This lesson provided a good basis for further development and was informed by good planning and appropriate levels of support and encouragement. All pupils were given work, which could be differentiated and extended. The searching questions and responses regarding the pupils' knowledge and understanding about the local area demonstrated their interest and aptitude at various levels. Their positive attitudes to local geography in terms of location, planning and local environment were encouraged and praised by the teacher and support staff.
96. Two pupils with complex communication and behavioural difficulties in this class were supported out of the classroom during this session by support staff that used a map of the school in order to orientate the pupils with their immediate surroundings. This enabled the other pupils to gain maximum benefit from this lesson.
97. No other sessions of geography were sampled and the timetables for other classes do not cover geography as a discrete subject. It is therefore evident that further effort is needed to develop geography in the school.

HISTORY

98. No sessions of history were timetabled during the inspection. The teaching of history is rotated with geography on a termly basis for one class and integrated into other activities for other class groups. The school should make history more explicit so it can be monitored and evaluated.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

99. At the time of the last inspection the school was advised to review its use of information and communications technology and to develop its use in the curriculum. It has invested in information and communications technology hardware and software since then but there was limited evidence of its use during the inspection. In the absence of sufficient previous work it is not possible to make a judgement on pupils' achievements and progress.
100. The school makes good use but infrequent use of ICT to improve access to the curriculum for individual pupils with additional special needs. A wheelchair-bound child was able to use a Touch Games 2 program to develop fine motor control by pressing a button to make animals on the screen disappear and to promote observation and communication skills. Another pupil was able to use a switch to control a beater that struck a cymbal and this arrangement enabled him to participate in a music therapy session.
101. Observation of other pupils using ICT was limited to two pupils in one class using a software program linked to the reading scheme being used. This program involved sequencing words and selecting responses to questions on the basis of 'what happened next?' and was an appropriate use of technology to improve literacy skills.
102. ICT offers a number of opportunities for innovative and creative access to learning for a number of pupils but these opportunities are not being exploited fully. The school should consider producing an ICT Development Plan that incorporates audits of hardware and software and of staff skills and training needs and to appoint a subject co-ordinator to oversee its implementation.

MUSIC

103. Achievements in music in both key stages are satisfactory in performance and very good in musical composition, listening and appreciation.
104. Music sessions in the school are held for both key stages in the form of group singing lessons, music therapy and musical development lessons from two highly qualified and experienced members of staff. There is a good standard of teaching in the school in both group and individual sessions and a satisfactory standard of teaching support in school singing sessions.
105. Pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 take turns in class singing lessons to choose songs already learned and a range of objects have been collected to help non-verbal or elective mute pupils to take part in choosing. For example, a pupil given the choice for a song may choose a toy robin for 'Red Red Robin' or a silver star for 'When I wish upon a star'. It is very obvious that music plays a positive part in improving communication for pupils in the complex range of categories, such as communication disorders, EBD and other conduct disordered children. A pupil who elects not to speak in class will sing with a microphone. A school 'sing song' by pupils for their parents was also seen during a parents' afternoon fete and it was evident that music is a strong feature in the school in terms of fellowship, improved self-esteem and confidence building.
106. Music also helps pupils with their signing as each song in the singing sessions is signed as far as possible. All pupils are given opportunities to take part and do so willingly. Good examples of spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences occur in these lessons as pupils relate, enjoy, gaze in wonder and experience a range of compositions from around the world as they take part.
107. All pupils benefit from the expertise available in the school and music therapy sessions are provided for very disturbed and non-verbal pupils as well as the more able. These sessions give very good opportunities for self-expression, release of anger, joy and fear and also provide pupils with a range of instruments to use for composition and performance. The specialist skills available ensure that all pupils benefit from a good range of musical activities and experiences.
108. At both key stages, music plays a very important part in the school and planning is of good quality and effectiveness. Overall, the range of musical experiences in the school for both key stages is good and all pupils benefit from the expertise available, regardless of disability or level of behaviour difficulty.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Pupils, in both key stages, achieve good standards in physical education. They make good progress throughout the school because the quality of teaching, mostly by the physiotherapist and instructors, is consistently good and very good. As a result, pupils show a genuine enjoyment and real commitment to learning.
110. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils improve their posture, co-ordination, balance and confidence through challenging activities provided by an adventure playground or pony

riding. Pupils, with great physical difficulties, allow and co-operate as their limbs are moved and manipulated by the physiotherapist or classroom assistants. Pupils over time improve their muscle tone and gross motor skills. They respond with smiles, by lifting their head or moving their hand as requested. The physiotherapist maintains communication throughout - 'I want you to think about your knees. I'm going to bend both your knees up. Well done, good boy!' Physiotherapy programmes are continued daily in the classroom and extend to home. The physiotherapy provision is highly valued by the parents and a real strength of the school.

111. At the end of Key Stage 2, more physically able pupils are competent in tennis and trampolining. The school has the use of the facilities of a local tennis club and some pupils are able to play a tennis match, show an understanding of the rules of the game and display good hand eye co-ordination in the basic forehand and backhand strokes. In trampolining one pupil has obtained the preliminary British Trampolining Federation proficiency award and other are able to display efficient tuck jumps and seat drops. In swimming, pupils with physical difficulties continue their exercises in a hydrotherapy pool, while four more able pupils reach national expectations by swimming 25 metres or more in a community pool.
112. Pupils' total trust in the teachers, instructors and classroom assistants considerably enhances learning. Full access to aspects of physical education is ensured for every pupil. The great care taken, in moving and handling pupils with physical difficulties and the positive behaviour management of more able pupils, is a consistent and good feature of teaching in this subject. Instructors and therapists have very good subject knowledge. They are able to give good demonstrations and provide regular evaluations of pupils' progress. They are assisted in their work by the valuable support of classroom assistants and by pupils' own positive attitude to the subject. Health and safety are given appropriate emphasis in all activities.
113. There is no subject co-ordinator for physical education and or any policy or scheme of work, which links the different activities to a whole school curriculum programme. Planning, resourcing and assessment are therefore done in isolation. The inadequate facilities at the school are compensated by good use of the community. However, these are not sufficient for a properly taught programme of activities in line and balance with the National Curriculum Programme of Study. This is to the disadvantage of the more physically able pupils, particularly when they move on to other schools. Physical education makes a consistent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development and to other areas of the curriculum. The subject has maintained the good standards reported in the last inspection. However, developments are unsatisfactory, as the school has not addressed the issue of whole school planning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of their learning in this subject.
115. The school's prospectus states that religious education is delivered emphasising an awareness of 'me' and others; the needs of 'myself and others'; the world around; celebrating and reflecting on life. However, it is not taught as a subject on the school timetable, and there is no planning to show how it might be delivered in a cross-curricular way.

116. The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection because, in the absence of planning, religious education only occurs incidentally. This happens during grace at mealtimes, via some music sessions and the weekly act of collective worship. The school should formalise its position on religious education, either by adopting the locally Agreed Syllabus or by constructing its own. It should then introduce planning that shows the key areas to be taught and how the subject is to be delivered.