

INSPECTION REPORT

FITZWARYN SPECIAL SCHOOL

Wantage

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 123342

Headteacher: Mrs M Tighe

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 1st November – 11th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708363

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Batchelor
Date of previous inspection:	November 1995

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Catherine Fish, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Leadership and management Attendance Partnership with parents and the community
Robert Arnold	Science Art	Efficiency
Glyn Essex	Physical education Special educational needs	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Elizabeth Mildner Graham Todd	French Geography History Mathematics Information technology	The curriculum and assessment Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Christine Richardson	Religious education Design and technology Provision for under fives English	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Whether pupils are making enough progress
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 4
- Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 5 - 15
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 16 - 19
- Attendance 20

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 21 - 29
- The curriculum and assessment 30 - 39
- Integration 40
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 41 - 45
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 46 - 51
- Partnership with parents and the community 52 - 55

The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 56 - 62
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 63 - 67
- The efficiency of the school 68 - 72

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five	73 - 81
English, mathematics and science	82 - 107
Other subjects	108 - 158

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence	159
Data and indicators	

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Many pupils make good progress, and as a result, all leave school with nationally recognised qualifications;
- The headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction with a strong emphasis upon standards and the pupils' progress;
- Teachers work as an effective team in the planning and delivery of the curriculum and consequently, there is a high degree of consistency and continuity in what the pupils learn as they move through the school;
- There is a very good ethos with a collective determination for continued improvement;
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and relationships between themselves and with adults are very positive;
- The Nursery gives very high quality provision, ensuring all pupils have a very good start to their school life;
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, making a strong contribution to the pupils' understanding of good citizenship;
- The partnership with parents and links with the wider community are very good and further increase the pupils' educational opportunities.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The range of information technology equipment is limited, and its use, particularly for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, is underdeveloped;
- II. A few staff lack specific expertise in teaching pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties and the teaching strategies used are sometimes too narrow, thus impacting upon the pupils' progress; provision for pupils spending time in the unit has weaknesses, particularly in the procedures for assessment;
- III. There are restrictions in the curriculum which prevent pupils with more severe learning difficulties studying French;
- IV. The senior managers for the lower and upper school lack opportunities for monitoring the curriculum planning, standards and the pupils' progress;
- V. Some aspects of the accommodation are not suitable for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, with classes for these pupils, sited outside the main building, lacking covered walkways, and limited specialist facilities. Specialist facilities for art and science are underused. The transport arrangements for leaving and collecting the pupils are congested and unsatisfactory.

The school has significantly more strengths than weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The standards of attainment and pupils' progress, hindered at the time by the lack of a broad and balanced curriculum, have improved. All pupils leave school with nationally agreed qualifications, amidst a changing and more diverse school population with additional special needs. Strengths have been sustained effectively in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and there are now more opportunities for their personal development and independence than previously. The quality of teaching has improved from being mostly sound or better at the time of the previous inspection to the present time, where teaching was judged to be good overall, with a significant amount of very good teaching. Weaknesses in the planning and use of individual education plans have been addressed effectively. There have been very good improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. Schemes of work are complete and there is a secure framework for the curriculum. Assessment procedures, that were seen to have weaknesses in the past, are now accurate and well integrated with the planning for the curriculum, with the exception of assessment arrangements for pupils attending for specific sessions in the class known as the unit, and these are unsatisfactory. In addition, there has been good improvement in the leadership and management, previously judged as sound, and more recently seen to be good, with the governing body continuing to make a positive and strategic contribution to the life of Fitzwaryn school. As a result of the many improvements, the school has also improved by providing good value for money, previously only judged to be satisfactory. The school has continued to make strenuous efforts to resolve the congestion and unsafe transport arrangements in the car park when pupils arrive and depart, but without success.

The school has good capacity for further improvements. There is a wide range of policies, procedures and strategies, that have proven to bring about the changes and improvements required over time. The headteacher has established and developed a cohesive team, who share a commitment to bring about further improvements across the school.

· **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16		
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	B	B		Key
English:					y
Listening and speaking	A	B	B	<i>very good</i>	A
Reading	A	B	B	<i>good</i>	B
Writing	A	B	B	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Mathematics	A	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Science	A	B	B	<i>poor</i>	E
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	B	B		

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

Best progress takes place in :

English: Many pupils develop skills in reading and writing effectively and by the time they leave school, express clearly their opinions and preferences.

· **Mathematics:** By the end of Key Stage 4, many pupils use a range of mathematical skills efficiently to cope with everyday life, for example their knowledge of time, handling money and growing confidence with numbers. Furthermore, some pupils are well prepared for the Certificate of Educational Achievement and gain sound results.

The Nursery: Children in the Nursery make very good progress working towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes and individual education plans.

· **Not enough progress is made in:**

· Information technology by pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties as the opportunities are underdeveloped and equipment is limited. Pupils' lack of progress is mainly in the area of communications due to the lack of teachers' expertise and relevant information technology to support the pupils' development.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years	Very good	Personal and social education.	
5 – 11 years	Good	English and mathematics.	Communications through information technology for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties.
11 – 16 years	Good	English, mathematics and personal, social and health education.	Communications through information technology for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties.
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good		

The teaching was good overall throughout the school and very good in the Nursery. One third of the teaching was satisfactory and well over one third was good. In one in every three lessons, teaching was very good and there was a small amount of excellent teaching seen at the end of Key Stage 4. The majority of the satisfactory teaching observed was by those teachers responsible for pupils with additional and more complex learning difficulties due to the more narrow range of teaching strategies used and limited opportunities provided for the pupils to communicate, through for example, technology.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The pupils' behaviour is very good. They are courteous and considerate towards one another and adults, showing genuine thoughtfulness and care.
Attendance	Attendance is good and makes a positive impact on the pupils' progress.
Ethos*	There is a very good ethos; the school is purposeful and productive, relationships between pupils and with adults are good. All adults have a collective determination for continued improvement.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is already making a valuable contribution. The senior management team is newly appointed and some aspects of their work, including monitoring, are underdeveloped. The governing body is well organised and led efficiently.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and well balanced to meet the range of pupils' needs.
Assessment	Assessment procedures and the use of assessment to inform future planning are good.
Special educational needs	The provision for pupils with additional special needs is satisfactory. The range of expertise is more limited for the increasingly complex needs of a significant minority of the pupils.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, enabling pupils to develop a genuine understanding of the meaning of good citizenship.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is a suitable number of well-qualified staff for the demands of the curriculum. The resources are satisfactory overall and the accommodation adequate, apart from resources for pupils with complex learning difficulties, where specialist facilities are lacking and accommodation not wholly adapted to their needs. Transport arrangements remain unsatisfactory and congested.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- VI. The attitudes and values which the school promotes.
- VII. The good behaviour of pupils, with staff setting high standards.
- VIII. A strong emphasis upon individual pupil's needs.
- IX. The opportunity for pupils to start afresh every day.
- X. The good information, including details about the curriculum.
- XI. The regular formal and informal meetings between staff and parents.
- XII. The encouragement to take part actively in the life of the school.

What some parents are not happy about

- XIII. The amount of time spent in one class being
- XIV. The congestion in the school car park.
- XV. Not enough homework is set.

The inspection team confirms all the strengths identified by the parents. Inspectors agree that some pupils do spend a long time in one class and consider the future organisation should aim for as much movement upward through the school as possible. The headteacher tries to mitigate the situation with other staff being involved wherever possible. The school prospectus states that homework is not set unless requested, although reading books go home nightly. Inspectors found that homework is set for some pupils, either by request, if necessary, as part of an accredited course for topic work. Inspectors consider that the school should make further clarification

of its position on setting homework. It is agreed that the car park is congested and arrangements for leaving and collecting pupils remain unsatisfactory.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

1. Improve the provision for pupils with severe and complex difficulties by:

- Further developing the staff's confidence and expertise in the use of augmentative communication so that signs, symbols and communication aids are used consistently to promote communications and assist pupils' access to the curriculum;
- Developing staff expertise, including a broader range of teaching strategies for pupils;
- Improving the provision for pupils attending the unit, including the use of rigorous assessment procedures;
- Providing more specialist facilities and sensory equipment for the increasing complex needs of some pupils;
- Providing equality of access to the curriculum so that pupils with more severe and complex learning difficulties are enabled to study French.

As referred to in paragraphs 11, 12, 28, 33, 37, 38, 50, 63, 65, 69, 82, 83, 88, 100, 104, 109, 111, 114, 125, 130.

1. Improve the use of information technology throughout the school by:

- Extending the range and use of facilities, equipment and programmes for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties;
- Increasing the level of information technology skills for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, including data handling and monitoring;
- Increasing staff confidence in the use of information technology.

As referred to in paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 24, 28, 66, 82, 83, 88, 100, 109, 111, 113, 114, 125, 129.

1. The school, working together with the local education authority should continue to strive towards improving traffic congestion as pupils arrive and depart.

As referred to in paragraphs 51, 61

4. Make better use of the specialist facilities for science and art.

As referred to in paragraphs 69, 123, 129.

In addition, the following less important weaknesses could be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Further develop the senior managers' roles in monitoring the curriculum planning, standards and pupils' progress. As referred to in paragraph 59
- Provide formal training for staff in child protection procedures. As referred to in paragraph 49.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Fitzwaryn School is a special school for pupils between the ages of three and sixteen whose special needs range from moderate, to severe with complex learning difficulties and associated language and communication problems. The majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties, however there is a growing number with increasingly complex needs. There are currently 67 pupils; 49 boys and 18 girls and all have statements of special educational needs. The school is situated in Wantage, a small market town outside Oxford. Pupils come from a wide catchment area, both urban and rural, and equally diverse backgrounds socially and economically. The majority of pupils have transport provided. The school is situated on a site surrounded by open countryside and the accommodation includes three mobile classrooms, along with specialist rooms for technology, music and science. The outside facilities include hard playgrounds, games pitches, a large playing field and an enclosed environmental garden. There are eight classes, and a Nursery that is integrated as part of a local primary school. The Nursery accommodates six children. The school is organised into three departments with a lower, middle and secondary emphasis. Approximately one third of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils come from a white ethnic background. On leaving school, all pupils move on to higher education. The characteristics of pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age related national expectations or averages. Since the last inspection, there is a growing and diverse population of pupils referred to Fitzwaryn school with increasingly complex learning difficulties. The local education authority is now in its third year of consultations in relation to the future of special education and specialist provision and this has had a direct impact on the school's ability to make realistic plans for the future and further allocate resources.
2. The school's mission statement is to give each pupil the richest and most appropriate education, aiming to enhance positive attributes, minimise difficulties and encourage the pupils' independence.
3. **The aims of the school are to provide:**
 - a secure learning environment;
 - a structure which will enable staff to meet individual needs of the pupils;
 - a positive atmosphere in which pupils can gain self-confidence through their own emotional and social development;
 - a broad and balanced curriculum including the National Curriculum and for the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development;
 - small teaching groups to facilitate the implementation of individual programmes;
 - progression through the school using close departmental links;
 - appropriate resources to the best of the school's ability;
 - outside activities: swimming; field trips; horse riding and residential courses to enable a broader outlook;
 - the facility for closer co-operation with parents and governors;
 - a positive working relationship between the school staff and other professional agencies;
 - integration into mainstream school or within Fitzwaryn whenever it is in the best interests of the child;
1. **The school's current priorities are:**
 - in English, for every child to make measurable and recorded progress in writing by 2000;
 - in information technology, for every child to make measurable and recorded progress in the information and communications technology strand 'handling information' by July 2000;
 - to increase the percentage of pupils experiencing an integrated setting at some stage of their school life.

· **KEY INDICATORS**

· **1999**

Key Stage 4:

· **Certificate of Education results**

English- 1 pass and 3 merits;

Mathematics- 2 passes and 2 distinctions;

Science- 2 passes and 2 distinctions;

Life skills- 2 passes. 1 merit and 1 distinction.

ASDAN Bronze/silver awards:

1 bronze/silver

1 bronze plus one unit;

2 bronze

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete Reporting year:	Authorised	School	6
	Absence	National comparative data	8
	Unauthorised	School	0.9
	Absence	National comparative data	3

·

· **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

· **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	29
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age related national expectations or averages. Comments about the pupils' attainment refer to examples of what they know, understand and can do within each key stage. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take into account information contained in the pupils' statements of special educational needs and in their annual reviews and individual education plans.
2. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and many pupils now make good progress. All pupils leave school having attained recognition of their achievement with national qualifications. Children under five make very good progress towards achieving the targets linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The majority of pupils make good progress towards their individual education targets in English, mathematics and science in all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 4, a significant proportion of pupils attain Certificates in Education in English, mathematics, science and life skills and a few achieve distinction. Pupils on leaving school also achieve bronze and silver awards through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).
3. Pupils make good progress in English overall throughout the school. They make good progress in developing skills in reading and writing, and progress for the majority of pupils in speaking and listening is good. Children under five learn to listen and speak with growing confidence and, as they move through the school, these skills are built on effectively for many pupils. By the end of Key Stage 4, some pupils discuss a range of issues around current affairs and express their opinions and preferences clearly and with growing maturity.
4. Pupils make good progress in mathematics in all key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils are becoming confident in counting up to ten using real money and in Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils are working with place value of hundreds, tens and units and can use standard measures. Pupils with more complex needs make satisfactory progress as they work with two-dimensional shapes and learn number rhymes to assist their understanding of numbers one to ten. By the end of Key Stage 3, some pupils are sufficiently confident to solve problems encountered when shopping and understand the significance of correct change. By the end of Key Stage 4, some pupils are prepared for the Certificate of Educational Achievement and have grasped a wide range of mathematical skills necessary for the examination.
5. Pupils make good progress in the wide variety of well-planned opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. They use these skills in many daily routines as well as opportunities in personal and social education, for example reading notices around the school, including achievement boards and areas given over to a wide variety of awards.
6. The majority of pupils make good progress in science overall in all key stages. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils make good progress as they observe and describe observations from simple experiments with light. Their observational skills are developed effectively through Key Stage 2 as they compare different materials and their properties, using simple scientific vocabulary in the process. In Key Stage 3, pupils increase their scientific knowledge further as they study the physical features of the earth whilst looking at pictures taken from space. They know that the earth is a sphere and are beginning to understand about night and day in relation to the earth's rotation. By the end of Key Stage 4, some pupils understand the function of major body organs such as the heart and lungs in fair detail and use these skills and knowledge to gain very good results in nationally recognised qualifications. They make useful links between scientific knowledge about health and their own personal and social habits such as diet and exercise.
7. Pupils with more severe and complex learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. This is because they do not have sufficient access to the range of communication resources or teaching strategies yet that would promote good progress.

8. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology in Key Stages 1,2 and 3. They make good progress at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties make unsatisfactory progress. This is because the resources and use of technology to suit their particular needs is underdeveloped throughout the school.
 9. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education in all key stages. They learn to develop an awareness of Christian beliefs as well as faiths from across the world. Many understand the idea of parables and their purpose and pupils show consideration and respect for one another's own ideas,
 10. The majority of pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, art, French, history, music and physical education in all key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology in Key Stages 1,2, and 3, and good progress in Key Stage 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and geography in all key stages. In design and technology, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, and good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties make unsatisfactory progress in information technology. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
 11. Pupils make good progress in their personal and social development throughout the school. They learn to show respect for themselves and one another and the meaning of good citizenship from an early age. Pupils make very good progress in demonstrating self-control and this is borne out by their very good behaviour and attitudes towards work. Pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties show sensitivity, tolerance and understanding towards one another. Pupils with mobility problems persevere and show delight in their hard-earned achievements. Many pupils make good progress in their individual targets both during the term and over longer periods of time. A significant proportion of pupils attend classes in local mainstream schools as a result of their good progress personally and socially and as a consequence, they are very well integrated with other pupils.
15. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
12. The pupils' attitudes to work are very good and a strength of the school. Children under five learn to develop very good attitudes towards work from an early age. They follow well-established routines and this makes a clear and positive impact on their personal development. Pupils settle quickly to their lessons and show consideration and respect to one another and adults alike. They show positive attitudes to their work and are keen to answer questions. Pupils work well together in small groups and sustain their concentration for unusually long periods of time. They show sensitivity towards each other and examples were seen of older pupils helping the younger ones during lunchtime activities. Parents were very positive about the values and attitudes taught by the school and the inspection substantiates their view.
 13. The pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school at break and lunch-times was judged positively in the last inspection and is still very good. It is underpinned by an effective policy and the 'code of conduct tree'. This was drawn up by pupils and staff and consequently, is clearly understood and followed by all. It is used very effectively to reinforce the aims and values of the school. A code of conduct badge, awarded by the headteacher, is something to be valued and worn with pride. Pupils know the rules and follow them. The majority feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. They are courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Relationships in the school are very good. There is a mutual respect between pupils and staff which is part of the school's ethos and helps pupils to work with confidence.
 14. The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were observed taking registers to the office. More able pupils help with duties in the dining room and senior pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal development in the last two years of school. This was a relative weakness in the last inspection report but has now improved significantly. They are involved in work experience and integrate well at college, they have the opportunity to gain external certification and to participate in residential courses at Hill End, Atlantic College and Yenworthy. Older pupils exercise their responsibilities very effectively.
 15. The last inspection found that the school functioned as an orderly community. Pupils' attitudes to learning were good and their behaviour was very good. However, it was felt pupils should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their personal development as they prepare for the next stage of their education. The good attitudes and behaviour displayed by pupils during the last inspection have been

improved upon and make a significant contribution to their achievements.

19. **Attendance**

16. Attendance at school is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The level of attendance is better than that of similar schools. The level of both unauthorised and authorised absences are below the national figures. The small amount of unauthorised absences last year was vested in three pupils, two of whom have now left. There are no current concerns over the attendance of the third. School transport generally arrives well before the start of the school day. Pupils are happy to come to school. They arrive on time and lessons start promptly throughout the day.

20.

20. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

20.

Teaching

17. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching observed was at least satisfactory and more often good or very good in all lessons. One third of the teaching was satisfactory and well over one third of teaching was good. In just under one in every three lessons, teaching was very good and there was a small amount of teaching that was excellent at the end of Key Stage 4. The good quality teaching has a very positive impact on the attainment and progress made by the majority of pupils throughout the school.

18. At all key stages, teaching is good for the majority of pupils in English, mathematics, science, art, history and music. In the very small sample of teaching in information technology, it is very good. Teaching in French is similarly very good. Teaching in religious education and geography is satisfactory throughout the school. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. In physical education, teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3.

19. Teaching for children under five is never less than good and often very good. The teacher's planning is very well organised and closely linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. There are suitably high expectations for individuals. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. At all key stages, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and music for the majority of pupils. Teaching in physical education is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3.

20. Teachers have good subject knowledge across the curriculum, apart from information technology where overall, it is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of French is very good and has a very positive impact on the pupils' use of the French language. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented effectively. Numeracy teaching is good throughout the school and linked closely to practical and social situations ensuring its relevance is seen and understood by pupils. The wide age and ability range of the pupils requires a very broad knowledge base for teachers and they maintain a breadth of curriculum knowledge effectively.

21. Teachers have suitably high expectations and this is demonstrated well by the good quality individual education plans for pupils' academic progress as well as behaviour plans where necessary. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to become as independent as possible and look for situations where they can make as many decisions as possible during the day. Targets for the majority of pupils are clearly focused, for example for children under five, there are individual targets linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes that are specific and relevant to their individual needs. This is built upon systematically as they move through the school.

22. Teachers' planning is good and ensures that pupils move steadily through the curriculum and make good progress. Teachers are well organised and prepared thoroughly. They plan the activities and resources carefully and ensure support staff are clear about their contribution to the lessons. This makes for an effective staff team.

23. The teachers' management of the pupils is good. They manage their time efficiently and lessons start promptly and productively. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good overall and this is further supported by the teachers' thorough knowledge of the pupils. Targets are regularly shared with parents in order for them to further consolidate the learning at home wherever possible.
24. Teaching is never less than satisfactory for pupils with more complex learning difficulties, however the teachers' experience and expertise are more limited and they draw from a narrow range of teaching strategies with the pupils. There are too few ways in which teachers communicate with the pupils using tried and tested methods for pupils with complex learning difficulties such as symbols, signs and objects that they may use for their own reference. This consequently limits the pupils' own repertoire of making themselves understood. Teachers' knowledge and expectations for pupils with more complex learning difficulties are satisfactory though there is a lack of expertise, particularly in areas of communication and with pupils on the autistic spectrum. Teachers' expectations for pupils with more severe and complex difficulties are satisfactory, although they are often heavily directed by the teacher's own instructions during the lesson and are not always treated in a more mature and adult way. The small group of pupils with more complex learning difficulties are organised to attend a daily session for approximately one hour in a classroom known for those purposes as the 'unit'. Day-to-day assessment for those pupils is unsatisfactory as it is not formalised, and unsystematic in recording their responses and this is a weakness.
25. There have been good improvements in teaching since the last inspection. There is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than before and weaknesses identified at that time, for example in the teachers' planning, have been addressed. The use and influence of individual education plans have been integrated fully into the teachers' own plans and daily activities. In some cases, teachers that had previous weaknesses highlighted, have now improved so significantly as to be judged with very good and occasionally excellent teaching. The strengths identified previously have been sustained effectively.
29. **The curriculum and assessment**
26. The school is successful in meeting its aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. It has created, through consistent and whole-school curricular practice, a very positive ethos where there is a real commitment to raising standards and preparing pupils for life out of and after school. The curriculum for children under five is relevant, very well planned and closely linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
27. There has been a very good level of improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection. There is now a clear and secure curriculum framework which provides consistent delivery of each subject throughout the school. Schemes of work are in place and the balance of the curriculum is now satisfactory. Assessment procedures are now accurate, consistent and securely integrated with planning.
28. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum at all key stages are good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are provided, plus a well-planned and comprehensive personal, health and social education programme (PSHE). The school is successfully committed to the National Curriculum and its potential to give enriching and relevant educational experiences for all pupils. The school has very effectively implemented both the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. There is a sensible and appropriate priority given to literacy and numeracy which gives pupils a secure foundation for work in other subjects and for accreditation in Key Stage 4. The school offers the Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate of Educational Achievement in English, mathematics, science, life skills and textiles. All pupils leave with nationally recognised qualifications, including the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network, (ASDAN) and the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL). In the past, individual pupils have successfully studied for GCSE in a neighbouring school and one pupil is studying for GCSE design and technology at this time. This range of accreditations ensures that all pupils gain a qualification in their final year of school. Each pupil leaves with a comprehensive National Record of Achievement. Younger pupils also have the chance to widen their experience through integration into a local primary school on a regular basis.
29. The school fully meets statutory requirements in teaching all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, sex education and drugs awareness. The school effectively ensures that there is equality of access for all pupils to all elements of the curriculum, apart from the restricted access for pupils with more severe learning difficulties to French in Key Stages 3 and 4. The curriculum is well planned and challenges higher attaining pupils successfully. There is careful thought, and provision has been made to

group pupils to give them social and academic support.

30. Provision for PSHE is good and well integrated into many aspects of a pupil's school life. Careers education and guidance are good and carefully planned. The school makes good use of the careers service. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have good opportunities for work experience and they attend an ongoing course in information technology as well as link courses at the local college of further education. This gives pupils a through preparation for the next stage in their lives, which for the majority, is further education.
31. The staff provide a good range of extra curricular activities for the pupils. Residential trips are organised and are especially popular with older pupils. Despite the wide catchment area of the school, theatre visits and participation in musical and sports events are arranged frequently. There are two regular youth clubs meeting after school as well as a summer play scheme. These are popular amongst the pupils and make a useful contribution to the quality of their social lives.
32. Curricular planning for the pupils' learning to be developed systematically is good. The school has made considerable improvements since the previous inspection in curricular planning and now has a scheme of work covering National Curricular programmes of study in place in all subjects. There is a whole-school aim to raise standards of planning and pupils' attainment through an agreed rationale and practice which successfully underpins the ethos for learning that is clear and high. The schemes of work are broken down into units of work which are written by the class teacher so as to be relevant and specific to individual pupils in that class. This ensures that the needs of individuals are met. This planning is overseen on a termly basis to ensure whole-school consistency. These units of work include learning objectives linked to assessment intentions which enable the teacher to assess the attainment of pupils at the end of the unit against specific criteria linked to National Curriculum levels. This information is then well used to inform planning of the next unit. This is an effective and efficient system.
33. All pupils in the school have a statement of special educational need and the provision for pupils is overall satisfactory. Provision for those pupils with more complex needs is satisfactory although there is insufficient use of augmentative and additional communication skills to support and enable these pupils to maximise their progress. The report for the annual review of the pupil's statement of special educational need is very thorough and evaluates pupils' attainment and progress accurately. It also identifies learning targets for each National Curriculum subject. Teachers also identify specific learning targets for each pupil and whole-school targets in English and information technology have been set to help the school gain a measure of progress over this academic year. All these targets are brought together in individual education plans which are well monitored and regularly reviewed by the class teacher. They are of good quality.
34. In Key Stage 2, a deliberately small group of pupils has been established to have more individual attention. Another small group of pupils (known as the unit) meets together daily to take part in a programme of activities structured for their needs. Whilst pupils benefit from this provision, the assessment procedures for this significant minority of pupils are insufficiently rigorous or systematically recorded to provide a basis to evaluate attainment or plan for consistent progress and this is unsatisfactory.
35. Procedures for assessing children's attainment in the Nursery are very good. The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and the use of this assessment information to inform the next stage of planning are overall good throughout the rest of the school. Assessment is well integrated into curricular planning and the school has done considerable work since the previous inspection in raising staff expertise in leveling and annotating work against agreed levels within the National Curriculum. An individual portfolio is prepared for each pupil at the end of the academic year which is a snapshot record of his or her attainment at the time. This record gives accurate information evaluating the pupil's progress, which is used as a measure of progress and to inform planning of future targets. Teachers know their pupils well as is shown in the reports for the annual review which are detailed and specific. The end of year report very successfully combines pupil self-assessment of their work with teacher overall evaluation.
39. **Integration**
36. The school provides good opportunities for its primary pupils to experience working alongside pupils in other local primary schools. These occur for one afternoon each week. Pupils look forward to and enjoy these experiences. The host schools and their pupils welcome them into a variety of activities that, with

support, are well matched to their needs. During the sessions observed for example, pupils were taking an active part in art and craft, in games, movement to music and a science lesson. There were clear gains in pupils' confidence and interaction with their mainstream peers. The planning and levels of support provided for these sessions are good. At secondary level, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to integrate in local schools. Five pupils are currently attending secondary schools for specific subject lessons. In conversation, two of these pupils talked enthusiastically about their experiences there and are clearly benefiting from the additional facilities provided for their subjects as well as from the interaction with their mainstream peers. Nursery and Reception age pupils are placed in an integrated nursery at a local primary school. They make very good progress in this setting, both in their social and academic development. The high quality of planning and liaison between the two schools are major factors in this very successful provision.

40.

40. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

37. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The whole school, class and departmental assemblies are good and they encourage prayer and offer opportunities for reflection. They are also used successfully for teaching pupils about control, care, courtesy and consideration for others. The assemblies are of a broadly Christian nature. They have improved significantly since the last inspection and now fully meet statutory requirements. Religious education, English, music, history and art lessons all help to foster spiritual development. In these subjects, pupils are encouraged to raise questions about human experience, religious beliefs and feelings.

38. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school works very hard to help pupils develop positive relationships and provide an ethos in which everyone feels valued and cared for. Moral values are regularly being reinforced and most pupils have a very clear understanding of the reasons that help them to distinguish between right and wrong. The 'code of conduct tree' is an effective tool that sets high expectations in terms of caring for one another within the community of the school, respecting and valuing one's own family.

39. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teachers and support staff display genuine care and concern for pupils' social education. There is a mutual respect between pupils and staff. Staff provide good role models and pupils are happy and feel secure in all aspects of their school life. Pupils are taught to take responsibility through such things as taking registers to the office, senior pupils putting away chairs and tables in the hall after lunch, helping pupils younger than themselves and offering help to those with disabilities.

40. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils of different abilities and backgrounds are well integrated within the school and are well supported through a good approach to equal opportunities. Pupils learn of other cultures through English, history, geography, religious education, art and music. Each year, the school celebrates other cultures and this year they are looking closely at Japan and China. Recent developments using information and communications technology are providing links with two schools in Australia and another is soon to be established with a school in Sweden. The cultural and multi-cultural dimension is very good. There are some well planned opportunities for pupils to learn about religious festivals through Christian and Jewish faiths which are studied in lessons as part of the religious education scheme of work.

41. At the time of the last inspection this aspect had a number of strengths; however, there were insufficient opportunities for spiritual development. The strengths have been sustained effectively and weaknesses in the provision for the pupils' spiritual development have been eradicated.

45. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

42. There are good systems for monitoring both the academic progress and the personal development of pupils. The children in the Nursery are well supported by staff and their transition to the Reception is smooth because of regular contact with the main school. Staff know pupils very well and individual education plans include a very effective focus on specific areas for development, which are used well to support pupils in the classroom. More informal ways of supporting pupils, for example, at meal times and during registration, are also very effective in promoting pupils' confidence and their very good attitudes to learning. The progress of younger pupils in self-awareness and independence skills is recorded in detail

and is fully reflected in their individual education plans.

43. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The registers are regularly checked for any problems by the headteacher and the educational social worker with whom the school has a very good relationship. Registers are marked correctly with reasons for any absences identified. Notes and records of telephone calls concerning absences are kept. This was a concern in the previous inspection report. Rates of attendance are reported correctly in the appropriate documents, including the pupils' reports at the end of the summer term, the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.
44. The school's behaviour policy is very consistently implemented by all staff and pupils are very much aware of the principles of the school's code of conduct. Respect for others is a noticeable strength of the school's ethos. During the inspection week, observation, scrutiny of records and conversations with pupils all indicated that the sanctions listed in the policy very rarely have to be used and that the numerous celebrations of pupils' achievements include explicit recognition of good attitudes and behaviour.
45. There are good procedures for the implementation of child protection procedures. The school's policy complies with local child protection procedures and all staff are familiar with its requirements. As noted in the last inspection report however, there are still limited opportunities for formal staff training in this area.
46. The school takes its duty to safeguard its pupils very seriously. There is a range of very detailed policies which relate to the safety and general well-being of pupils and these are very effectively implemented. A designated person tours the buildings and carries out risk assessments, for example the governors' premises, health and safety sub-committee is very active in monitoring this area of the school's work. Staff maintain detailed records of accidents, incidents and various hazards which arise. There are sound arrangements for the control and administration of medicines. There are good levels of care provided for pupils with additional needs and there is effective liaison with external agencies, such as the medical services. Special arrangements for children with additional physical needs are satisfactory but grab-rails in toilets and a ramp to one of the temporary classrooms are lacking. The school is aware of these needs and action to resolve them is reported to be in hand.
47. Since the last inspection, the high standards of provision for the support, guidance and pupils' welfare have been maintained. In addition to the improvements noted above, a sound policy on the handling and restraint of pupils has been introduced. In one issue raised in the last inspection report however, there has been no progress, despite the school's continued efforts to resolve it: parking and turning space for vehicles is very limited. During the inspection week, considerable congestion and difficulties in the arrival and departure of pupils were observed. Arrangements for escorting pupils to and from their vehicles are well staffed and supervised but access to and from the busy road in front of the school continues to raise concern for pupils' safety at the beginning and end of the school day.

51. **Partnership with parents and the community**

48. The school's partnership with its parents and the community is very good. This shows a good improvement since the previous inspection report when links with parents and the outside world were good. Parents feel that they are always made welcome in school and the school works very hard to promote this. The school has used a number of initiatives in the past to make parents feel at home. Parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school through their responses to the questionnaire and the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection.
49. The school has recently changed its way of reporting pupils' progress to parents. They now receive a high quality, full report on every subject at the time of their child's annual review. This is detailed in all subjects and is particularly good in English and mathematics. Details are given on the progress made to meet the objectives of the previous review and new ones are set. The information given is specific and precise with very good details of what skills and knowledge pupils have acquired during the year and what they now understand. There are comments about pupils' attitudes in some reports; learning objectives are set in all subjects for the coming year. These form an effective basis for the pupil's individual education plan. Parents also receive another brief report at the end of the summer term. Good termly information about the curriculum their child is following is provided either in a letter or in the home school diary. This forum for the exchange of information is very well used and appreciated by staff and parents, particularly for

younger or less able pupils. One class of pupils with communication problems sends home a daily sheet telling parents what their child has done in school with any relevant comment. Other information provided for parents is of very good quality; it is informative, clearly laid out and helpful. Parents are given a number of formal opportunities each year to discuss their child's progress with staff and most parents take these up. The school endeavours to be in contact with all parents at least twice each year.

50. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good. A good number of adults come into school to help with a variety of tasks. Parents help with swimming, horse riding and integration; a grandmother helps with reading and a grandfather with singing and on camps. Other parents are willing to turn their hands to shrub planting, shed painting and fence building, whilst some are willing to provide teas and give help for specific events. The school very much appreciates this help and parents are pleased to be of assistance. The Friends of Fitzwaryn School are very active in raising money for the school. A very large sum has already been raised towards a new school mini-bus with fund raising events organised by the Friends and through a launch to which a number of businesses were invited. This has enabled the school to make bids to other organisations. The Friends have also provided very good support in such areas as the seniors' Christmas activities, holiday and camping fund.

51. The school's relationship with its local and wider community is very good. The school has benefited from visits from such diverse people as theatre companies and the policeman who came in to talk about saying 'no' to strangers. There are visits linked to what pupils are learning about in school, such as to Warwick Castle, the Ashmolean museum and Kintbury canal. During the inspection, a small group of pupils visited the Wyld Court 'Rainforest' where they were able to experience the heat, sights and sounds of the tropical atmosphere created there. Work experience is provided within the local community for pupils in their final year. There is a large range of businesses who are very willing to provide this service including shops, hairdressers, nurseries, garden centres and builders. Pupils' requests for particular experiences can generally be met. Both pupils and providers are well supported before, during and after the experience. The school has very good links with other countries both directly and through the Internet. This helps pupils to develop an awareness of life beyond their own immediate experience. The connections cover countries in Europe and also in Australia where there have been reciprocal staff visits. These links are being further developed. All these very positive links have a very beneficial effect upon the pupils' learning.

55.

55. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

55.

Leadership and management

52. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides clear leadership, management and educational direction for the school within a framework of continued uncertainty about the designation and focus it may have following an extended period of consultation by the authority over its future provision for pupils with special educational needs. The newly appointed deputy headteacher has quickly gained insight into the school's current priorities and her role in addressing them.

53. The governing body takes an active role in the strategic management and direction of the school and it is suitably organised into subcommittees. The headteacher, senior management and governing body are working effectively together to raise standards and to achieve further improvements in the school. Co-ordinators carry out their work effectively and the leadership and management of the Nursery are highly effective.

54. The monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is good. Teaching is monitored regularly both formally and informally and records are made by the headteacher of areas for further development. The headteacher also monitors teachers' planning to ensure consistency and quality. The aims, values and policies are clear and their implementation is very good throughout the school. This may be seen for example, in the consistent implementation of the behaviour policy and expectation teachers have of pupils.

55. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation are good. The school development plan is a clear and comprehensive document and there are regular opportunities where progress towards targets is reviewed. In addition, there is a rigorous evaluation of progress at the end of each year, including comments from all staff, using the school development plan as their reference. This provides a rich source of evaluative comments about initiatives and the impact they have on standards and pupils' progress in a wide variety of contexts throughout the school. The more recently established senior management team does not yet have

sufficient opportunities to monitor the curriculum planning, standards and pupils' progress.

56. The school has a very good ethos, where relationships between pupils and with adults are very positive and there is a collective determination to improve further. Many pupils leave school with a real pride in their achievements, having developed the skills and maturity to progress to the next stage of their education as a result of the positive working atmosphere at Fitzwaryn school.

57. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The standards of attainment and pupils' progress, hindered at the time by the lack of a broad and balanced curriculum, have improved. All pupils leave school with nationally recognised qualifications, amidst a changing and more diverse school population with additional special needs. Strengths have been sustained effectively in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and there are now more opportunities for their personal development and independence than previously. The quality of teaching has improved from being mostly sound or better at the time of the previous inspection to the present time, where overall, teaching was judged to be good; the majority was good or very good. Weaknesses in the planning and use of individual education plans have been addressed effectively. There have been very good improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. Schemes of work are complete and there is a secure framework for the curriculum. Assessment procedures, that were seen to have weaknesses in the past, are now accurate and well integrated with the planning for the curriculum, with the exception of assessment arrangements for pupils attending for specific sessions in the class known as the unit and these are unsatisfactory. In addition, there has been good improvement in the leadership and management, previously judged as sound, and more recently seen to be good, with the governing body continuing to make a positive and strategic contribution to the life of Fitzwaryn school. As a result of the many improvements, the school has also improved by providing good value for money, previously only judged to be satisfactory. The school has continued to make strenuous efforts to resolve the congestion and unsafe transport arrangements in the car park for leaving and collecting pupils but without success.

58. The school has good capacity for further improvements. There is a wide range of policies, procedures and strategies, that have proven to bring about the changes and improvements required over time. The headteacher has established and developed a cohesive team, who shares a commitment to bring about further improvements across the school.

62. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

59. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are both suitably qualified and experienced and have considerable expertise in particular subject areas, for example English, mathematics and science, and a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. Some staff however, lack expertise for the demands of pupils with increasingly complex difficulties. There is a good number of support staff, many with additional and relevant training and some signing skills. Teamwork displayed between teachers and assistants is very strong and makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.

60. All staff have up-to-date job descriptions and appraisal of all staff is well established, with individual targets being clearly linked to the school development plan. The link between appraisal and training is clearly identified. Professional development arrangements are good and any training is shared systematically with appropriate emphasis on its impact on pupils' standards and progress. The effectiveness of the training is closely monitored and is fundamental in the raising of standards throughout the school. An example of this is the time given to the careful introduction of the Literacy Strategy which has had a favourable impact on the attainment and progress of pupils. There is a programme for the induction of staff and all staff new to the school have a mentor for at least one year. The school receives valuable support through the services of a physiotherapist, speech therapist and occupational therapist, as well as the sensory impaired services and school nurse. Other professionals, such as the careers officer, make a valuable contribution to the school's provision.

61. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The accommodation for children under five is very good with separate and secure areas for outside play as well as spacious indoor facilities and good quality resources. The school occupies a pleasant site, with a single storey building with additional mobile classrooms. The school buildings have ramps where possible but there are remaining areas where access is difficult for pupils with limited mobility. Classes in the mobile classrooms have no covered walkway, which results in pupils with mobility problems getting wet when walking between buildings in bad weather. There are

specialist rooms for music, art, design and technology and science. One of the specialist facilities for pupils with additional complex needs, the room with sensory equipment, is situated within the medical room, which limits its effectiveness. Outside facilities are a good resource for teaching and physical and social development. There is a wide range of adventure playground equipment and a good-sized field for physical education. The pond and garden area are attractive features within the school grounds and a good resource for science and environmental education. The buildings and grounds are well cared for and there is a regular programme of maintenance. This, and the eye-catching displays of class work, contribute to the positive learning atmosphere in the school. Concerns expressed about the congestion on the school driveway at the last inspection still exist.

62. There is a range of sufficient and good quality resources to support teaching in all subject areas. In English, history and geography resources are good. Information technology resources are satisfactory but there are insufficient additional communication aids to meet the needs of some of the pupils with more complex learning difficulties.

63. There has been a satisfactory improvement in all of these aspects since the last inspection including the provision of specialist teaching areas and the appointment of staff with subject expertise to meet the demands of the National Curriculum such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

67. **The efficiency of the school**

64. The financial planning is good and linked closely to the school development plan and its priorities. School development planning has a clear cycle that involves staff in evaluation, planning and monitoring. The school development plan is costed but some success criteria are not specific and consequently do not allow for the evaluation of all developments. The system of financial delegation to curriculum co-ordinators is good and the administrative officer carefully monitors budgets. In the best practice, the co-ordinator produces a thorough evaluation of the previous year's spending based on information gained from a resource audit, discussions with staff and monitoring of the subject across the school. A plan of future spending and needs is then produced, based on curriculum development and planning for the following year. There is an efficient system where co-ordinators bid for moneys in excess of their annual allocation for additional or larger replacement items.

65. The use of teaching and support staff is good and they are deployed effectively. Overall, teachers make satisfactory use of the accommodation and learning resources. The exception is the craft/science room which is currently underused and the sensory room facilities are shared with the medical room thus limiting their availability and accessibility. The current arrangements, whereby a classroom in Key Stage 2 becomes the unit for daily sessions with pupils having more complex difficulties are not entirely effective as resources cannot be organised to meet the needs of both groups efficiently.

66. The budgets for the school are efficiently administered, with good systems in place for financial planning, monitoring and evaluation. The governors' finance subcommittee has clear terms of reference and meets frequently to monitor and evaluate the budget and forward plan. All members of the finance subcommittee receive regular reports and are informed about the progress of income and expenditure throughout the year. The governing body is clear about its financial responsibilities. School accounts and financial arrangements are well managed and up-to-date. The significant balance carried forward to the following year is a planned one to maintain staffing levels and have the necessary resources for future changes. The school accounts have recently been audited and the few minor amendments mentioned have been rectified.

67. Day-to-day organisation and administration are good with systems that are responsive to the needs of all who are associated with the school. The administration provides good, unobtrusive and efficient support to the running of the school, and ably supports both teachers and pupils.

68. Overall the school manages its finances efficiently, the progress made by pupils and the quality of education is good and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are generally very good. The school provides good value for money, which demonstrates another improvement since the last inspection.

72. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

72. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

69. The quality of education for children under five in the Nursery situated at a local primary school Nursery is very good. Children with statements of special educational needs work effectively alongside others. Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis from the age of three and make good progress that prepares them effectively for the next stage in their education. Children's individual needs are assessed whilst they are in the Nursery and appropriate school placement is agreed for them by the time they are five. The children have a wide range of learning difficulties and the majority transfer to Fitzwaryn School.

73. **Personal and social development**

70. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. The quality of teaching is very good and based upon establishing friendly relationships between children and adults. The organisation of activities promotes and supports participation in groups or pairs, but also gives opportunities for independence. There is very good interaction between children as they sit in groups on the carpet, sharing books. For example, a child points to a picture in a book and another child says the word carefully for the first child to try to repeat, or points to other interesting items on the page. One child helps another with an inset jigsaw and praises him when he completes it. Pupils play together well in the 'home corner', join together in number games and share the bicycles outside, taking each other for rides in a trailer behind a bicycle. All children appear happy and comfortable, adapting well to activities on the outside play equipment with each other. At snack times, all pupils sit at the tables and enjoy a sociable experience, enjoying a companionable, sharing time, offering the plate to each other and taking a piece of carrot or fruit politely. Children develop good attitudes to work and each other. They are interested, responsive and show determination to participate. Children show enjoyment and respond well to opportunities to make choices

Language and literacy.

71. Children make very good progress in the development of literacy and language. The quality of teaching is very good. Children are confident to contribute, even when they have limited language. They share in the introduction to literacy strategies through the reading of big books in a group. They follow the repetitive stories and show pleasure in joining in with something familiar when, for example, the baby owl puppets are used to tell the Owl Babies story. Staff foster an appreciation and enjoyment of books so that children handle books with care and select a book to look at when on the carpet with interest. Pages made from board or paper are turned over carefully. The sharing of books and games with adults leads effectively to improvements in sitting, listening and concentration skills. Children respond well to the very good modelling of signing during stories and songs and some are learning a few basic signs, for example, 'hello', 'please', 'thank you' and 'biscuit'. The very good use of questions by adults, for example, 'Can you show me your big eyes?' supports the development of speech and language. The question 'What do you use this brush for?' and the smiling, encouraging, 'Yes, yes,' give children the opportunities to make appropriate gestures to brush teeth or hair and to attempt to say the word confidently. Children enjoy making marks and patterns with crayons and pens on paper and are learning to hold these correctly. They like to see their name written on the page.

75. **Mathematics**

72. Children make very good progress in the development of skills in numeracy. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. Children play number games with a dice, 'count' spots to six, often hand on hand, and put their picture correctly on a board. They are gaining an understanding of big and little and beginning to order events and routines of the session and seasons. Teachers see that all children have some time in groups and match the names of adults to certain groups. Some children match numbers to six and are acquiring an understanding of full and empty vessels, such as plates, cups and buckets in the sandpit. There are many opportunities for counting and singing number rhymes through the day and children join in these with enthusiasm.

76. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. Children make very good progress in the development of knowledge and understanding of the world through the provision of a range of appropriate experiences. The quality of teaching is very good. They show awareness of daily routines when asked to move groups, clear up at the end of activities or prepare for going home. Regular visits are made to local shops to buy food for snacks or to the nearby library for story-telling sessions. Children explore the wider world of the primary school when they join Reception children for story time or a special puppet show. In the classroom they learn how to switch a torch on and off, how to shine the light on cellophane or perspex paddles. Amazement and delight are clearly evident when they see circles of a different colour appear. Children show others the effects of prisms, with great excitement and comments were heard such as 'Look, they make us look funny, upside down'. When working on the computer, children know that the mouse is used to change effects and that touching the switches makes changes happen on the screen.

77. **Creative development**

74. Children make very good progress in creative development. The quality of teaching is very good. In music they differentiate between loud and soft and the teacher's quiet singing helps them to reduce the volume of their playing gradually until it, too, is soft. They are aware that instruments have different names and make different sounds and they enjoy listening to music. Children are already establishing a repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes. They join in the singing of "Here we go round the mulberry bush" confidently, although they are adding new lines. They match their actions to the singing well, as they do in the "Goodbye" song at the end of the morning. Children have daily opportunities to paint, stick and create and gradually improve their confidence and skills in these areas. They make tissue paper fish collages, large egg-shaped portraits of Humpty Dumpty, blackbirds for the nursery rhyme, and day or night-time skies with watercolours. Several children recognise the colours red, yellow and blue consistently. They play together quietly with construction toys and build long rail and road tracks together across the room.

78. **Physical development**

75. Children's progress in physical development is very good. The quality of teaching is very good. They are confident in their use of the outside play equipment and show growing agility and mobility in their gross motor skills of climbing and balancing. In their physical education lessons in the school hall, their use of space and ability to move around in safety and with consideration for others is developed. Children become confident in their ability to pedal and control tricycles and bicycles. There is great pride and a sense of achievement for all when a child sits on a tricycle for the first time and tries to pedal it around the room. Fine motor skills are developed carefully through frequent opportunities to handle small tools, brushes and crayons or insert pieces in puzzles.

76. The teaching is very good. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children under five and of the specific needs of individual children, which ensure that activities are matched well to their abilities. A calm atmosphere, which is very conducive to work and learning, is created and the smooth and unobtrusive operations within a large nursery setting reflect the highly effective teamwork. Teachers stimulate the imagination and curiosity of the children with a wide range of well-organised activities and ensure that all children participate in these. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and achievement and monitor the children's progress very effectively. The children's individual education plans are reflected well in everyday activities, including the very good questioning used to develop their use of language. The staff make very good use of thoughtfully chosen resources, for example, the specially adapted computer keyboard and good range of software and the interesting outside play area.

77. The planning for each day's sessions is imaginatively based on the Desirable Outcomes for Learning and includes times for group and individual work when children have some valuable 'special time' with the teacher. During these times, the teacher is able to focus on specific targets. The procedures for assessing children and recording progress are very good and resources, including the covered outside play area, are of high quality. There are imaginative plans to improve and extend this area. The quality of the provision has not only been maintained since the last inspection but has been strengthened and further improved. The Nursery provision, situated in a nearby mainstream primary school, provides very good opportunities for all children to learn together, regardless of their special needs. The good links established between parents, teachers and the community serve to enhance the understanding of those children with special

needs in the immediate locality.

81. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

81. **English**

78. The pupils make good progress in English throughout the school. The majority of pupils are making good progress in the development of reading and writing skills. Pupils are working successfully towards clear individual and school targets set for them in English. The significant minority of pupils with more complex learning needs make satisfactory progress as there are limited opportunities to develop their communication skills further with the current technology. They are limited by lack of provision for augmentative communication aids. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study towards the Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate in Educational Achievement. In all, four pupils were entered for the exam and all passed, three with merit. The progress currently made in English across the school has improved when compared with the last inspection.

79. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils listen attentively. Pupils' understanding and use of language to express themselves are developing well. Pupils exchange greetings and respond to questions with answers in full sentences. They ask politely for a chair or some materials and explain clearly the differences between fiction and non-fiction books in the library. In assemblies, pupils listen carefully and make sensible contributions which show they remember stories they have heard previously. They discuss the meaning of the parables of the lost coin and lost sheep and show clear understanding of the main points and key words. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are willing to offer opinions about the books they read and make sensible observations about the presentation of written material, for example, 'You can use different fonts for writing bold'. Pupils explain clearly what makes a classic story and discuss events in an extract from Black Beauty enthusiastically. Pupils in Key Stage 4 talk about the news and identify a good range of news sources in a current affairs lesson. Some show a good grasp of ideas about the Australian referendum and ask relevant questions about it. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in communication skills. They listen to instructions, and contribute to discussions with words, gestures and some signing. Opportunities to develop augmentative and additional communication skills are missed and the use of information technology to further support their learning is underdeveloped.

80. Progress in reading is good for the majority of pupils. The teaching of reading has benefited from the introduction of a structured literacy hour that has been appropriately modified to meet the learning needs of the pupils. In Key Stages 1 and 2, some pupils read the days of the week accurately and other information around them. Some pupils read the early books from a range of reading schemes, some reading a book together with understanding and enjoyment of the story. They read books they have written together as a class with relish and emphasis when their own name appears. From Key Stage 1, pupils build up words well and use their developing knowledge of letters and sounds appropriately. Less able pupils show an interest in books, look carefully at pictures and are able to read simple sentences from a book or use the symbols with associated words to read their own sentences. By the end of Key Stage 4, a small number of pupils read books of their own choice, such as 'The Iron Man' and 'Frankenstein', or read simple poems fluently and with understanding. They follow the story as they read, enjoying the humour or the tension that is being created. These pupils know how to attempt new words and make a good attempt at explaining their meaning. Pupils in Key Stage 3 enjoy reading extracts from Treasure Island and other classics so much that they take home taped versions of the whole story.

81. Pupils with more complex difficulties are able to identify words on flash cards and words in books when given the additional assistance of symbols. They recognise four of the words that they find on the computer, 'Yes', 'No', 'Exit' and 'OK,' presented to them on flashcards. Pupils enjoy reading simple stories with colourful illustrations or non-fiction books with quality photographs of objects they recognise. They look around the area for additional signs for their sight vocabulary. Throughout the key stages, pupil are introduced to novels, plays and poetry of good quality and, through well planned use of the library, learn that they may select fiction and non-fiction books, read for pleasure or information. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils apply their knowledge of the alphabet when they use dictionaries. They read out definitions of words to find out alternative adjectives for a text or search for words to describe someone's feelings.

82. Pupils' progress in writing is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects

the high priority given to this area in pupils' and the school's targets. There is a clear progression from the making of marks on paper, to the beginning stages of print writing and the formation of letters to the writing of words, sentences, paragraphs and the completion of course work in Key Stage 4. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils practice the formation of letters and write their name. Most hold a pencil correctly and some write over, or under, a model. Some pupils write down letters as a member of staff dictates them to complete words needed for the day's news. In Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils use capital letters for names and write simple sentences using capital letters and full stops confidently. They use word banks and dictionaries when writing a letter and identify simple spelling patterns. Pupils learn how to break longer words, for example, 'recommended', into syllables and spell each part correctly. They practice writing a word in two different ways to check the alternative ways they are thinking of spelling it. Pupils in Key Stage 4 label diagrams and answer written questions about what they have read to complete assignments related to their externally accredited courses. Writing is used well for a range of purposes throughout the school. Pupils write imaginatively as invaders in history, and in geography they write carefully thought out reasons why they would or would not like to live nearer to the school. Pupils contribute to displays around the school, use French dictionaries to look up words for French foods and write, in English, of their thoughts about the preparation of a French meal, one concluding, 'It did turn out well!' In religious education they write their own very personal and moving commandments to display on tablets of stone and in history they write thoughtfully of their feelings about evacuation. Pupils draft and redraft their work on the computer, sometimes with adult support. They make word banks of key words for their writing in science and history and teachers use technical vocabulary consistently in lessons such as science and English, to help pupils spell specific words correctly and recognise them in books.

83. At all key stages, the response of pupils is consistently very good. They behave well and enjoy their work in English. Pupils relate well to adults and other members of their class. Pupils concentrate for extended periods of time, they respond well to praise and encouragement and work well together in groups. Pupils are confident and willing to offer opinions and observations that they know will be valued and respected.
84. The quality of teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good in all key stages. The best lessons are characterised by good teacher knowledge both of the subject and of the special educational needs of the pupils. Lessons are well planned and organised effectively and clearly based on the learning targets set for individual pupils. There are high expectations that pupils will be involved and make progress. Activities are changed at regular intervals to ensure that pupils maintain their interest. Routines are well established and understood by pupils. Pupils' successes are noted, either during lessons or soon afterwards, and detailed records are kept of pupils' targets and progress. A good feature of lessons is the positive relationships maintained between teachers, support staff and pupils. Support staff are well briefed, knowledgeable and make a very positive contribution to the learning of the pupils. There is a consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour. In the few lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, tasks are not always matched well to pupils' abilities and there is insufficient use of augmentative and additional communication to enable pupils to make good progress.
85. The co-ordinator for English provides clear, effective leadership and has led the school well during the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. This has been carefully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and there are now consistent schemes for all aspects of the subject. The schemes are being evaluated on a whole-school basis to assess the school's success in enabling pupils to achieve the literacy targets within their individual educational plans. Teachers set realistic targets in speaking and listening, reading and writing and these are used as the basis for planning. Comprehensive procedures are in place to assess and record pupils' attainment and progress and work is monitored and moderated by staff regularly. Pupils' work is attractively displayed in classrooms and corridors as are other books and artefacts related to stories and poems under discussion.
86. Resources for the teaching of English are good, with a wide range of reading books and large texts for shared reading. Both fiction and non-fiction books are used effectively in the literacy hour. The school has a developing collection of good quality tapes and videos to support learning. The library is a bright attractive centre for learning and is used regularly. There is an appropriate range of information technology equipment and software that is used constructively in lessons, but there are insufficient augmentative communication aids to support pupils with more complex needs.
87. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Teachers provide more opportunities in writing for a range of purposes and audiences and pupils are encouraged to spell words

for themselves and to develop strategies for checking their spelling. Information technology is used regularly for drafting and redrafting work. There is planned, regular use of the library and the majority of pupils make good progress.

91. **Mathematics**

88. The pupils make good progress in mathematics overall in all key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study towards the Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate in Educational Achievement in mathematics. In 1999 four pupils took the examination, all were successful either at pass or distinction level. Results in previous years have been equally good. Pupils take the national tests at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Results show steady progress from one key stage to the next with the majority of pupils achieving Level 2 or 3 by the end of Key Stage 3.

89. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress, and for many this has been sustained from the Nursery. The younger pupils are becoming confident in counting to ten using real pennies to buy articles in their class shop. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in groups or independently to count up and back at least to ten and they know the concepts of more than and fewer. In Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils make good progress overall but a minority with more complex needs making satisfactory progress. These pupils can recognise numbers securely up to five, they join in number songs such as 'ten green bottles' and have had experience of working with two-dimensional shapes. Other pupils in this key stage are working with place value of hundreds, tens and units and can use standard measures. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress. They are confident enough in computation to begin to solve problems encountered when shopping, in giving correct change and when working with fractions, finding the greatest variety of ways to divide 20. In Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress overall and those with complex needs make satisfactory progress. These pupils are able to count to 20 with support and can recognise two-dimensional shapes of different size and colour. They can sequence their daily timetable. Other pupils who are preparing for the Certificate of Educational Achievement are making good progress in a wide range of skills necessary for that examination. In a lesson beginning a module on data analysis, they are able through use of specific vocabulary and past experience to produce a logical method to organise the data using a Carroll diagram.

90. Mathematics is integrated effectively into other subjects of the curriculum. In science pupils are able to use standard measures in their experiments. In geography, pupils have made bar charts to record data collected from a traffic survey. In Key Stage 4, pupils have used information technology to record data from a survey which was part of their life skills course. Overall, however, information technology is not sufficiently integrated to enrich and extend pupils' mathematical experience.

91. Pupils' response to their mathematics lessons is very good. They are attentive in listening to instructions and are able to carry them out with the minimum of adult support. They like to be kept busy, welcome challenge and show high levels of diligence and perseverance. When asked to work in smaller groups they show good levels of support for each other and collaborate well in using equipment and taking turns. Pupils take a pride in completing any written work and older students especially maintain their working files carefully.

92. The quality of teaching is overall good, never less than satisfactory and, on occasions in Key Stages 1 and 3, very good. Teachers' expertise in the knowledge of the subject as well as the techniques of teaching mathematics are secure. In general, teachers' planning is well focused onto specific learning objectives with activities well graded to extend pupils' experience during the lesson. In these lessons, pupils make good progress in both consolidating number skills and in developing that knowledge to become more aware of new patterns and solve different problems. When planning is less challenging, the activities become repetitive and pupils make less progress. The use of whole-group teaching and discussion is very effective in ensuring that all pupils have the necessary skills before starting the task of the smaller group. These tasks are skillfully varied for different pupils, usually with a 'real life' emphasis, such as paying for goods and giving change, so that all pupils can be fully stretched. Plenary sessions are successful in helping teachers and pupils measure the progress they have made in the lesson. The lessons when teaching is very good, are characterised by a crisp pace throughout, with the teacher asking demanding questions which encourage pupils to make real progress in solving problems with their own strategy.

93. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully

implemented through the use of a detailed action plan which identified developments needed in planning procedure, teacher expertise and resources. Staff collaboration in these developments has been a strength and the co-ordinator now intends to monitor the delivery of the strategy so that good practice may be shared.

94. Resources are now adequate and have been well chosen to support the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. Further materials are to be purchased as the strategy develops. Teachers use resources effectively in all key stages.

95. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen throughout the school and Key Stage 4 pupils now gain good results consistently. The quality of teaching has improved with all teachers using a consistent planning framework which delivers all aspects of the scheme of work. Assessment practice is now consistent giving evaluated and accurate information for the pupil profiles. This assessment is used regularly to inform new work.

99. **Science**

96. Overall, the majority of pupils make good progress in science in all key stages. A minority of pupils with severe or complex learning difficulties make satisfactory progress as there are fewer opportunities for them to communicate their thoughts through the appropriate technology devices in science. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study towards the Welsh Joint Education Committee Certificate in Educational Achievement in science. In all, four pupils were entered in 1999, and all passed; two with distinction.

97. Younger pupils make good progress as they learn to observe and describe observations of basic experiments with light when looking through a prism. Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to understand that body parts have different functions. Those young pupils with severe learning difficulties show an interest and awareness of the feel and smell of items associated with the 'Rain Forest' during a trip outside school. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 use their senses to explore characteristics of different materials. They compare fluffy and non-fluffy materials and can distinguish between them.

98. In Key Stage 3, pupils carry out observations and list physical features that may be seen on the earth when looking at it in photographs taken from space. They know that the earth is a sphere and are beginning to understand about night and day and the earth's rotation. Older pupils in Key Stage 4 are using their skills to record results, name and locate by pointing to several major organs of the body, and talk about issues concerned with healthy eating and exercise. They know about the lungs and their part in acquiring oxygen and about the heart and circulation system. They use skills and knowledge to gain very good results in external accreditation for their degree of special educational needs.

99. Pupils respond well and are interested in the range of practical experiences offered to them. They show a willingness to co-operate with their teachers. Pupils listen carefully, try to answer questions and are keen to undertake investigations. The few occasions when the pupils' response is less satisfactory are a result of poor matching of tasks to their abilities and of little involvement in practical activities.

100. Teaching is good overall, but ranges between very good and satisfactory. Teaching for the minority of pupils who have severe learning difficulties is satisfactory as teachers have more limited expertise and strategies for those pupils. The best teaching is characterised by good planning, sound knowledge of both subject and pupils' needs and a determination to encourage pupils to gain skills to become independent. Where progress is good, lessons are well organised and allow for pupils' practical involvement. Behaviour management is effective. Teachers use good, open-ended questions and work well with other adults for the benefit of all pupils. This approach was seen in a lesson where pupils and adults were required to discuss the working of the heart. They had previously dissected a heart and were required to make a model heart using a variety of resources. In otherwise satisfactory teaching, the tasks are not wholly matched to individual abilities or needs, and symbols are not effectively used to reinforce the main aims of the lesson.

101. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how to develop science and works closely with colleagues, resulting in knowledge and expertise being shared effectively. The science policy is satisfactory, with a developing scheme and units of work. Due to the format of these schemes and units, planning is sometimes duplicated, resulting in unnecessary efforts by teachers. The

time allocated to the teaching of science is appropriate over time but is often included in the time given to other subjects, especially at Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum offered meets statutory requirements. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is carried out by the co-ordinator but its impact is limited as there are few opportunities for such activities currently. Assessment is good but some individual targets, especially at Key Stages 1 and 2, are not specific or particularly scientific. Good use is made of visits to places of scientific interest such as The Rain Forest at Newbury, local museums and farms, to extend the experiences available to all pupils.

102. Learning resources are satisfactory, well organised and accessible. There is a specialist science area in a room shared with other subjects but this currently is underused. The co-ordinator has recognised the need to develop the range of age-appropriate resources further following an audit of resources linked to the development of the units of work.

103. Since the last inspection, science has made good improvements, especially in the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and the quantity and quality of investigative work

107. **OTHER SUBJECTS**

107. **Information technology**

104. Information and communications technology is currently a major focus for the school and is a developing subject. The current government focus and a good school development plan are helping to raise the profile of this subject and to provide better access to computers for all pupils.

105. During the inspection, pupils were only observed using information and communications technology on a few occasions. Conversations with teachers, inspection of available work and the assessment of pupils' skills at the end of each key stage indicate that, throughout the school, the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. They make good progress at Key Stage 4. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls. A few higher attaining pupils at all key stages make very good progress. However, pupils with severe learning difficulties are given insufficient opportunities to communicate through peripheral devices such as touch, pressure, pull sound or voice activated switches and touch screens and therefore their progress is unsatisfactory.

106. The pupils making good progress in Years 10 and 11 improve their skills and knowledge and understanding of information and communications technology through attending the internal certification course of basic competency at Abingdon College. These pupils are able to apply these skills and use them for other externally accredited courses. When pupils are ready to move on to the next stage of their education, most will have experienced using word processing, data handling, modelling and control technology programs. Most will have a sound understanding of how information technology is used in the home and in business and is now a part of our everyday life.

107. During the inspection there were many examples of pupils satisfactorily using word processing programs at all key stages to support work in the literacy hour. In Key Stage 1, work on display shows how pupils have used a modelling program to produce a plan of a village. This work is closely linked to geography. In Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy using paint programs but their mouse and keyboard skills are underdeveloped. When pupils reach the end of Key Stage 3, their skills improve and they are able, with help, to integrate text and graphics, load and save their work and use the CD-ROMs and the Internet for research purposes. A good example of research was seen in history when pupils were looking for information about the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils in Key Stage 4, working at Abingdon College, make sound progress in compiling a class database and understanding more about fields. Pupils with severe learning difficulties were observed using a concept keyboard to write sentences but they are not given sufficient opportunities to use information technology for communication purposes.

108. Pupils' response to using computers is good. They are able to work co-operatively together in pairs and small groups. Most can be trusted to use the computers and printers sensibly. The majority of pupils are able to sustain concentration for relatively long periods of time, they show confidence and enjoy using computers.

109. The quality of teaching, in the one discrete lesson observed, was very good. Teachers' short-term planning is starting to incorporate the use of computers in a more structured way but the use of information and communications technology is not yet fully integrated into the curriculum. Some good progress has been made in using word processing in English and in history to research for information using CD-ROMs and the Internet. Good examples of pupils' work were the Christmas cards which demonstrated the ability of some pupils to integrate text and graphics. There were missed opportunities for using information and communications technology in mathematics, science, art, religious education, music and design and technology. Staff training is starting to have an impact with the majority of staff feeling more competent when using computers and demonstrating programs. However, the school acknowledges there are training needs in data handling, monitoring and particularly in using peripheral devices such as touch, pressure, pull sound or voice activated switches and touch screens. The connection to the Internet is providing some exciting new opportunities for pupils but it has signalled further training needs for staff in using search facilities and E-mail. A good recent initiative has been introduced to develop an international dimension and correspond with schools in other countries. This is designed to help make pupils more aware of the wider world in which they live. Currently the school is corresponding with two schools in Australia and is expecting to establish a link with a school in Sweden in the near future.
110. Information and communications technology is being co-ordinated effectively by the new deputy head. She has appropriately identified lack of peripheral devices for communication and the inadequacy of the sensory room for pupils with more complex needs. Since the last inspection, many of the older computers have been replaced and each class now has at least one multi-media machine. The last inspection showed that pupils enjoyed using the computers and were motivated by them. Teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum requirements was not secure and the computers were not used enough. There have been suitable improvements although there remains a continued need for staff training as new equipment is purchased.
114. **Religious education**
111. During the inspection, only a small amount of religious education was observed therefore an overall judgement cannot be made about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, conversations with teachers and the inspection of pupils' work at all key stages show that pupils are making satisfactory progress and that the school fully complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
112. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils learn about special occasions, places of worship and religious leaders. They enjoy stories associated with religion and listen attentively to these in assemblies. Some pupils in Year 2 remember that a story told by Jesus is called a parable. They know that these were used by Jesus to teach people about right and wrong and some pupils relate these to their experiences of life today. In Key Stage 3, pupils' work shows satisfactory progress is being made in studying the Ten Commandments. Some pupils have written accounts describing the story of Moses and the reasons for him leaving Egypt. Pupils in Year 4 make sound progress learning about Judaism and the significance of the Passover. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in assemblies. In a lower school assembly, pupils with severe learning difficulties played untuned percussion instruments to produce sounds like falling rain. Pupils in a senior school assembly followed the theme of 'being thankful for all we have' and were able to talk about this in the light of recent disasters they have been studying such as the Paddington train crash and the cyclone in India.
113. Pupils have very good attitudes to religious education. They are prepared to share experiences and offer opinions. They feel secure and confident enough to ask questions and show respect for other pupils' feelings. Pupils relate very well to one another and are very caring and constructive when discussing ideas.
114. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. Records show that the planned curriculum is closely aligned to the locally agreed syllabus and includes a good range of experiences associated with Christianity as well as other major religions. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and support teachers effectively. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of resources and artefacts to support pupils' learning. The subject makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
115. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory and an increasing range of provision for the pupils' spiritual development has been well integrated with religious education.

119. **Art**

116. Pupils make good progress in art throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing skills in drawing and painting, identifying patterns and creating simple self-portraits. In Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate skills and learn to work independently. They are able to produce more detailed self-portraits and ideas of pattern have become more abstract. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make further good progress by using three-dimensional media and colour to create effect, for example in producing a display of fireworks pictures. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are extending their knowledge of different media, considering the work of different artists such as O' Keefe and learning to compose pictures themselves. They apply their skills across other subjects. This was seen working effectively in a Key Stage 4 science lesson when the task set was to make a model of a heart. They made choices with regard to the resources to be used and then applied their skills to the making of the model.

117. The pupils' responses are good. Their attitude to the subject is positive and they are keen to try new techniques. They are generally well behaved and motivated, treating materials and resources with care and respect.

118. Only a limited amount of art teaching was observed. Art was seen being used in other subjects and the teaching during these lessons was generally good. The best lessons are characterised by clear planning with appropriately differentiated objectives. Support staff are well deployed and the staff team work well to ensure all pupils are involved in the activities. Teachers are alert to the response of the pupils and adjust the pace of the lessons accordingly. Pupils are given suitable opportunities for independent exploration and are appropriately challenged.

119. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors the subject informally across the school. Teachers prepare individual units of work on a termly or half-termly basis that are seen by the co-ordinator. The art co-ordinator is currently located in the Nursery, which is based on a site away from the main school, and this leads to difficulties in monitoring the standards of pupils and the work of colleagues. The school is fully aware of these difficulties and plans are being formulated so that she will get some time to monitor delivery in the classes. There is a specialist art and craft facility but this is currently underused. The co-ordinator has a budget for art materials and this has resulted in some specialist materials of a high quality but overall resources are satisfactory.

120. The standard of art has improved since the last inspection. There are greatly improved opportunities for older pupils, a satisfactory scheme of work is in place and specialist facilities have been provided.

124. **Design and technology**

121. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As their skills improve and they develop a better knowledge and understanding of design, their progress improves and it is good in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Some higher attainers make very good progress in developing specific vocabulary, working independently and helping others. The progress of pupils with severe learning difficulties is satisfactory as there is limited specialist technology, equipment and teaching strategies to challenge them further.

122. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can, with help, cut, peel and chop carrots, potatoes, courgettes and onions to make vegetable soup. The highest attaining pupil in this class recognises that heat has softened the vegetables which makes it easier to press them through a sieve. Pupils with severe learning difficulties in Key Stage 2 are learning how to join different fabrics by sewing them together. They rely heavily on the support of the teacher and support assistant to thread the needle, but nevertheless show determination and perseverance over intricate tasks. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are planning a sequence of actions for making toy games. They draw simple designs and select appropriate materials from a narrow range. In a food technology lesson pupils in Year 7 make carrot cookies from a wartime recipe. This work, which is closely linked to history, gives pupils an insight into how people had to manage when food was rationed in the Second World War. Pupils develop their skills as they move through the school and by the end of Key Stage 4, they are able to work more independently on design and make activities; for example, pupils in Year 11, working towards external accreditation, are able to consider how different blends of coloured dyes will work on their silk fabric paintings.

123. The attitudes, responses and behaviour of the pupils are very good. The majority enjoy making models and working with food and collaborate well together. They are enthusiastic, listen carefully to their teachers and most concentrate well for relatively long periods of time. However, most rely heavily on help from teachers and support assistants in food technology and when designing and making models.

124. The quality of teaching is very good in a third of lessons, good in a third and satisfactory in the others. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. In the best lessons, teachers' planning is very good and builds successfully on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, learning objectives are clearly defined which helps to develop the concept of design and to teach new skills. Clear instructions, probing questioning, good demonstrations and good management means effective use is made of time. Staff ensure pupils wear appropriate protective clothing and are careful to observe safety guidelines when using tools. In food technology lessons, rules of hygiene are well taught. The recording and assessment of skills and small gains in knowledge is good. Learning support assistants are very well trained and have clearly defined roles. They provide effective support and most are competent to teach small groups.

125. There was an appropriate scheme of work at the time of the last inspection but the school did not feel it was detailed enough and is writing another scheme which has yet to be completed. The school has not given sufficient consideration to using information and communications technology in the design process; there were a number of occasions during the inspection week when opportunities were missed, particularly at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Since the last inspection the range of equipment in the craft workshop has been reorganised and is now more appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. Large new work surfaces have been placed over the old work benches to make an area which is far more suitable for design and technology and can also be used for art classes. However, this facility is underused with insufficient use being made of wood, plastics and other more flexible materials.

129. **French**

126. French is taught to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 but not to those with severe learning difficulties, who are disapplied from the subject. This arrangement restricts access to those pupils to study French.

127. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress in French. Their progress in listening to and understanding French is very good. They understand an increasing range of questions and instructions in the language. They clearly become increasingly comfortable in a classroom environment in which French is the only language used. They listen very attentively and are building a useful vocabulary, for example, of numbers, colours and parts of the body, which enables them to participate enthusiastically in short conversational exchanges, games and songs. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils are guessing the meanings of new words correctly from the context in which they occur or from their similarity to English words. Pupils are making good progress in speaking. They make effective use of the very good model of pronunciation which is provided for them and they give short responses, name objects and use set phrases clearly and confidently. Their writing of French is limited in quantity but they are copying words and short sentences with good levels of accuracy. Pupils in Key Stage 4 were not observed in a French lesson during the week but their written work indicates that their vocabulary and use of sentences and patterns in language forms have continued to develop well, for example, in exercises requiring the calculation of the cost of different kinds of food and drink.

128. Pupils clearly enjoy their French lessons and they have very good attitudes to their work. They respond very well to the lively oral approach used in teaching. They sing and join in language games with confidence and great enthusiasm and are very keen to communicate in French as much as possible.

129. Teaching is very good and displays very good use of a direct use of the spoken word which is a major factor in pupils' clear enjoyment of French lessons and their very good progress in understanding and responding to the language. The teacher has very good specialist knowledge of the subject and this is reflected in the highly skilful way in which French is used as the sole classroom language throughout lessons. Teaching includes very effective use of gesture, humour and music and this adds much to the variety and pace of lessons. There are very good opportunities for pupils to practice and reinforce their language skills and to build up their confidence in using the language and these, together with a very good model of pronunciation for pupils to imitate, promote good standards in pupils' speaking, both as a whole class and individually.

130. The planning of the curriculum does not adequately reflect or support the range of work done in the subject by the pupils. The co-ordinator has not ensured that planning includes sufficient structure and detail of the development of pupils' understanding and skills through the subject's attainment targets and these weaknesses are also reflected in the scheme of assessment.

134. **Geography**

131. Only a small amount of geography lessons was seen during the inspection week. Discussions with pupils however, and scrutiny of their work in the subject indicate that they are making progress which is at least satisfactory and in some, geography skills are good, for example, in carrying out surveys in the locality of the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils talk confidently about places and features which they see on their way to school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are writing sentences to accompany photographs of 'our local area'. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have acquired a useful, if limited, vocabulary of geographical terms and are working with maps and globes with increasing competence. Although geography is not taught as a separate subject at Key Stage 4, pupils continue to study local areas in their 'Life Skills' course and from their research are producing and recording good quality information about services and facilities available.
132. Pupils enjoy talking about their geography lessons and activities, particularly about the opportunities for fieldwork which are provided for them. They are clearly interested in topics such as recycling and environmental issues and enjoy their visits to local areas of natural interest.
133. There is insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about the quality of the teaching of geography. Planning is good. It addresses a range of geographical skills, themes and places and includes good levels of detail about activities and strategies in the planning of the units of work. There are some very good resources, particularly those used in practical activities such as mapping skills and fieldwork, which are used very effectively to support learning.
134. Since the last inspection, there has been good development of the curriculum which now provides satisfactory coverage of the subject's programmes of study at Key Stages 1 and 2 and also includes study of countries other than the United Kingdom at Key Stage 3.

138. **History**

135. Pupils make good progress in history. In Key Stage 1, their sense of chronology develops well. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are able to look at toys for babies and at others for older children and to link these with changes in their own lives. They make good progress in their use and understanding of key words such as 'old', 'before', 'now', and 'new'. In Key Stage 2, pupils' work on the Romans shows good development of their awareness of how things were different in the distant past, in their study of such aspects as Roman baths and the Roman soldier, for example. At the beginning of Key Stage 3, very good progress is apparent in pupils' understanding of some of the reasons for historical events and in their response to the experiences of people in the past, in their study of the evacuation of children during the Second World War, for example. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have also made very good progress in understanding some aspects of historical inquiry, how an archaeologist works, for example, and the importance of recording finds carefully.
136. Pupils enjoy history, particularly, in Key Stage 3, the practical activities involved. They show a genuine curiosity about the past and, as their understanding develops, they ask questions and make good use of an increasing range of resources, including information and communications technology, to find out more. This interest is reflected in their good levels of concentration and effort in their history lessons.
137. The teaching of history is good throughout the school. For the younger pupils, there is an effective emphasis on key words linked with the use of simple resources, such as toys and photographs, to teach the basic ideas of chronology and sequencing events. For older pupils, teaching challenges pupils to think more imaginatively about the past. At all key stages, expectations are high, learning objectives are clear and pupils are organised very effectively in groups and for different activities which match their needs. Lessons have a lively pace and a variety of activities and are very successful in engaging and maintaining pupils' interest.
138. Planning of the curriculum is good. It contains close reference to the National Curriculum programme of study and includes good levels of detail about learning outcomes and activities. It is well supported by a very good range of teaching resources.

139. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in provision for higher attaining pupils and in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

143. **Music**

140. Pupils make good progress in music throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils use unpitched percussion and explore sounds of different everyday objects as well as instruments. In Key Stage 2, they begin to identify music with different tempos, stating whether they think a particular piece of music is fast or slow. These activities are linked creatively to music from across the world such as Brazil and Africa.

141. In Key Stages 3 and 4, the pupils develop their singing skills impressively and learn to sing in at least two parts. They understand the importance of posture and correct breathing as a means to improve the quality and volume of their sound. This is further developed in more public performances through the year as well as opportunities provided regularly during assemblies where their skills are demonstrated enthusiastically and confidently.

142. Pupils have good attitudes and develop a genuine enjoyment and appreciation of different musical styles as they move through the school. They use instruments with care and respect and listen to one another's contributions well.

143. The quality of teaching is good in all key stages. Teachers have a suitable knowledge of the curriculum and resources are chosen carefully to support the activities. Music planning is thorough and there is an appropriate framework that is followed by everyone to ensure good coverage over time. The resources are in good condition and easily accessible in the specialist music room. There are fewer instruments from different cultures.

144. Music is co-ordinated effectively and the subject makes a good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. There have been good improvements since the last inspection with a suitable scheme of work now implemented across the school.

148. **Physical education**

145. Pupils' progress in physical education is good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 4. In the lessons observed, progress varied from satisfactory to good and occasionally very good, especially in swimming.

146. In Key Stage 1, pupils experience basic gymnastics and are learning to move to music with some able to keep their movements in time with the rhythm. Other pupils are well supported by classroom assistants, and experience side rolling along a mat while listening to the music.

147. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of athletics and table cricket, learning and experiencing different methods of throwing. They practice indoors and use a range of materials including bats, balls and beanbags. With a high staff to pupil ratio, pupils with severe learning difficulties are supported effectively in this activity. Also in Key Stage 2, some pupils take part in horse riding. These sessions take place in an off-site specialist provision and are led by qualified instructors linked to the riding for the disabled provision. Pupils with severe and multiple learning difficulties benefit greatly from the therapeutic and physically demanding nature of sitting on a horse. Some pupils try hard to sit up straight, while others can sit straight, control the horse and trot in a straight line. Other pupils can give commands to the horses and practice their balance.

148. In Key Stage 3, pupils acquire skills that are being used to play team games. This was seen in a session when pupils had to control a ball with a plastic hockey stick. Their skills progressed sufficiently to enable all pupils to play an appropriately modified game of hockey.

149. In swimming, pupils make good and some very good progress in water skills and work towards accreditation by the Amateur Swimming Association. They use floats, holding them out in front and

practice by kicking. Some other pupils are supported by body aids and enjoy the sensation of the effects of water on their bodies. Others swim independently of aids and develop their confidence further with a few able to swim up to 800 meters.

150. Pupils always enjoy their lessons, and are keen to attempt tasks. Some pupils take turns, for example in athletics, where pupils wait for their chance to practice their throwing skills. When playing in a team situation, some have the capacity to share and co-operate. They are well behaved and most listen carefully to instructions.

151. Teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but only a small number of lessons was seen at each key stage. In the lessons observed, teaching varied from satisfactory to good. It is also good for those pupils who benefit from instructors who are qualified in swimming and riding, and have very good subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs. Where teaching is effective, clear learning objectives are identified, and good pace and enthusiasm for the subject are maintained, Good teaching often begins with a warm-up session and ends with a cool-down session which are clear and occasionally accompanied by music. Classroom assistants are effective in supporting pupils' learning.

152. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject meets statutory requirements over time with all aspects of physical education included in planning. A suitable policy for physical education is in place, with developing, informal monitoring of teaching and planning. The school is developing its small steps approach to recording pupils' attainment and, where it is used consistently, is good at tracking pupils' progress. However, this is not rigorous enough in its evaluation to fully impact on pupils' individual learning. The new co-ordinator recognises the need to develop further the whole-school scheme; units of work and assessment to ensure pupils learn continuously, building on prior learning.

153. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, which are used well, to support teaching, including a hall, outside fields, a small adventure play area and a secure, fenced grass area, all of which are good.

154. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in the quality of teaching, especially at Key Stages 1 and 2, including the content and breadth of the curriculum and in recording pupils' abilities.

158. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

158. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

155. The school was inspected by seven inspectors, including a lay inspector, for a total of 29 inspection days. All the teachers were seen teaching and in all, 67 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The teachers' planning and documentation were scrutinised and a wide range of the pupils' work analysed. Discussions took place with subject co-ordinators, teachers, senior managers and other staff, including visiting professionals to the school. Members of the governing body discussed their work and responsibilities with the team. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and those taking part in a programme whereby they are included in nearby local primary schools for one session every week, were followed and observed in that context. Pupils attending a local college were also observed. All parents received parent questionnaires and inspectors analysed the 30 replies. A meeting was held for parents to express their views about the school and 14 parents attended.

159. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

159. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y1 – Y11	67	67	67	22
Nursery Unit/School	6	6	6	0

159. **Teachers and classes**

159. **Qualified teachers (Y1 - Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	9.30
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	7

159. **Education support staff (Y1 - Y11)**

Total number of education support staff:	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	234

159. **Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	6

159. **Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	130

159. **Financial data**

Financial year	1998/1999
Total Income	564,264
Total Expenditure	529,573
Expenditure per pupil	7565,33
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,712
Balance carried forward to next year	87,763

159. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 72

Number of questionnaires returned: 30

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	55	41	3	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	53	47	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	41	41	14	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	43	43	10	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	67	20	7	7	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	53	40	7	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	48	38	10	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	50	15	8	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	62	28	10	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	60	33	10	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	27	7	0	0