

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Watling View School**  
St Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 117683

Headteacher: Mr S M Gardner

---

Reporting inspector: Michael Whitaker  
1424

Dates of inspection: 11-15 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708350

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	2 -19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Watling View St Albans Hertfordshire AL1 2NU
Telephone number:	01727 850560
Fax number:	01727 864391
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Robertson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Michael Whitaker, Registered Inspector	Physical education; Post-16 provision.	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management.
Peter Dannheisser, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities.	Attendance; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Support, guidance and pupil welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Esme Clark	Science; Design and technology; Music; Special educational needs.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mary Henderson	English; Religious education; Modern foreign language.	Efficiency of the school.
Elizabeth Mildner	Art; Geography; Areas of learning for children under five.	Curriculum and assessment.
Denise Morris	Mathematics; Information technology; History.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

The inspection contractor was:

Capital Inspections  
Chaucer Building  
Canterbury Road  
Morden  
Surrey  
SM4 6PX

0181-685 1729

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

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

# 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 1-8
- Key indicators 9

### PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

#### Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 10-24
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 25-28
- Attendance 29

#### Quality of education provided

- Teaching 30-35
- The curriculum and assessment 36-45
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 46-53
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 54-60
- Partnership with parents and the community 61-66

#### The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 67-73
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 74-78
- The efficiency of the school 79-83

### PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

- Areas of learning for children under five 84-91
- English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education 92-128
- Other subjects or courses 129-178

### PART C: INSPECTION DATA

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The school has created a very positive ethos where there is a real commitment to raising standards and preparing pupils and students for life after school.
- The school is effectively led and managed and this has a positive effect on the progress made by pupils.
- The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. It is particularly high in Key Stage 4.
- The Post 16 curriculum is particularly effective.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and this has a positive impact on learning.
- Provision for the personal development of pupils is very good.
- The school has effectively introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies.
- Links with the wider community and the involvement of parents' contribute positively to the progress made by pupils.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The curriculum is not fully balanced. Consequently pupils do not make as much progress as they could in aspects of science, geography and modern foreign languages particularly in the senior department.
- II. Lower attaining pupils, particularly those with profound and multiple difficulties do not always have equal access to the full curriculum.
- III. Assessment procedures are too cumbersome and are not used as effectively as possible to inform teaching and curriculum planning.
- IV. The School Development Plan does not provide a long term strategic plan for the future of the school and the targets are insufficiently linked to the impact on pupils' progress. Subject co-ordinators and the governing body are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating curriculum development and teaching in a systematic way.
- V. Levels of therapy support are not adequate to meet the needs of pupils.
- VI. Some pupils are regularly late for school because of transport difficulties.

**The weaknesses of the school are significantly outweighed by what the school does well. They will, however, form the basis of an action plan which will be sent to parents.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and the issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Consequently the school is better than it was. The curriculum is broader and more balanced than previously and schemes of work have been written for all subjects. Some imbalance in time allocations to subjects still exists. Learning objectives are now more clearly defined. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation and registration now meets requirements. Although therapy provision still does not adequately meet the needs the school has created a therapist assistant post. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

**Whether pupils are making enough progress**

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16	By 19		Key
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B		
English:	B	B	B	B		
listening and speaking	B	B	B	B	<i>Very good</i>	<i>A</i>
reading	B	B	B	B	<i>Good</i>	<i>B</i>
writing	B	C	B	B	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
Mathematics	C	C	C	C	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
Science					<i>Poor</i>	<i>E</i>
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	A	A		

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

**Best progress takes place in**

VII. PSHE: pupils throughout the school learn to do things independently and to be well prepared for life after school. For older pupils careers education and work experience are particularly effective;

VIII. all areas of the curriculum in Key Stage 4, as a result of the very good teaching;

IX. pupils' knowledge of life processes and living, in science throughout the school.

**Not enough progress takes place in**

X. investigative work in science;

XI. some pupils with more profound difficulties who do not have full access to the curriculum;

XII. modern foreign languages, because of the time allocated and the restricted access for some pupils.

**Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years	Good	PSHE	
5 – 11 years	Good	PSHE	Religious education
11 – 16 years	Good	English, history, design and technology, music, PSHE	
Post-16	Good	PSHE	Religious education
English	Good	Key Stage 4	
Mathematics	Good	Key Stage 4	
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Very good		

The quality of teaching is predominantly good. It is very good in Key Stage 4. In the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons, good or better in 73% and very good or better in 26%. It was excellent in 6% and unsatisfactory in 5%.

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**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Behaviour throughout the school is good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Some pupils are regularly late for school because of transport difficulties.
Ethos*	The school has a very positive ethos. A very good climate for learning has been established, pupils have positive attitudes and relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	Leadership and management are good
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad but there is some imbalance in the time devoted to subjects
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for moral and social development. It is sound for spiritual and cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing, resources and accommodation are good.
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**

- XIII. They are encouraged to be involved in school life.
- XIV. The school is approachable with problems.
- XV. The school promotes positive attitudes and good behaviour.

**What some parents are not happy about**

- XVI. Levels of speech therapy to support pupils'
- XVII. Lack of structure in respect of homework.
- XVIII. The appropriateness of the National

The findings of the inspection agree with the largely supportive views of the parents. Inspectors found that the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the further development of the National Curriculum had had a positive effect on the progress made by pupils. They agreed with the parents' views about levels of speech therapy and the lack of structure to the provision of homework.



## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise attainment and improve the progress made by pupils the school and governors should:

- (1) ensure that the curriculum is appropriately balanced by
  - (a) reviewing the time allocated to subjects, particularly science, geography and modern foreign languages (see paragraphs **11, 37, 110, 118, 146, 152**);
  - and
  - (b) ensuring equal access to the full curriculum for pupils of different levels of attainments and complexity of needs (see paragraphs **11, 40**)
- (2) ensuring that assessment procedures are more effectively used to inform teaching by reviewing the link between annual review targets, targets in individual education plans and National Curriculum objectives (see paragraphs **43, 44**);
- (3) improving the level of therapy support in consultation with appropriate authorities (see paragraphs **15, 56**);
- (4) improving the overall leadership and management by
  - (a) developing the role of curriculum co-ordinators and governors in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in a more systematic way (see paragraph **69**);
  - and
  - (b) developing a longer term strategic view of the development of the school by extending the school development plan and linking targets to the intended impact on pupils' progress (see paragraph **70**).

In addition to the key issues identified above the staff and governors should also endeavour to improve the punctuality of some pupils by improving the arrival time of some transport (see paragraph **57**).

## (4) **INTRODUCTION**

### (4) **Characteristics of the school**

1. Watling View is an all age (2-19 years) local authority school which caters for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. There are currently eighty pupils on roll, sixty boys and twenty girls. Only five pupils come from ethnic minority groups. All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
2. The school mainly serves the St. Albans and Harpenden area, although it does have a number of pupils from other parts of the South West Hertfordshire areas, including Watford, Rickmansworth and Hemel Hempstead, together with a small number from other counties. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic circumstances. Eighteen pupils are currently eligible for free school meals. This is low for schools of this type nationally.
3. All pupils and students have severe learning difficulties, a number have additional sensory and physical impairments and a significant number have profound multiple learning difficulties. During the last few years a number of pupils with autistic features have been admitted.
4. The ethos of the school strongly emphasises the development of personal autonomy through mutual respect and a shared understanding that everyone is of equal value as members of an interdependent and supportive community. There is a strong commitment to the development of communication skills that, with additional personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding, will enable pupils to participate and contribute effectively within the home, school and wider community.

5. The staff strongly believe that the pupils are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum which includes the National Curriculum. They strive to ensure that programmes of study taken from core and foundation subjects are imaginatively interpreted and made accessible to as many pupils as possible and that they enrich the experiences and learning opportunities available to them. High standards of planning, reporting, recording and internal monitoring are seen as essential in helping to ensure that pupils' individual educational priorities are met within a stimulating and appropriately challenging curriculum.
6. Achievement and effort is celebrated regularly by all members of the school community. The school endeavours to work closely in partnership with parents, carers and professional agencies and believes that it has created a climate within the school that is friendly, welcoming and supportive.
7. Progression and the achievement of pupils' individual targets are monitored closely to ensure that pupils meet their full potential. There is a philosophy of continually assessing performance and practice in order to ensure that the highest possible standards of attainment are achieved by all pupils.
8. The school aims to build upon its current good practice and continue to develop in accordance with DfEE and LEA initiatives and with its own priorities. The current targets are to develop further the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies, ensuring that they meet the needs of all pupils, and to introduce an updated ICT system throughout the school, enabling all pupils to have appropriate access to relevant software and the Internet.

9. **Key indicators**

9. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	8
	Absence	National comparative data	8
	Unauthorised	School	0
	Absence	National comparative data	1

9. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

9. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	26
	Satisfactory or better	95
	Less than satisfactory	5

9. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

9. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

9. **Attainment and progress**

1. *It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgments about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.*
2. Pupils of all levels of attainment and complexity of special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school in most subjects. This standard has been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education. As a result they develop very well personally and are well prepared for leaving school. Although progress is good overall, there are some weaknesses. For example, pupils do not make enough progress in experimental and investigative work in science because insufficient time is devoted to this aspect; pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in studying life and living processes in science but insufficient progress in other aspects of science because they have a narrow curriculum in science. Insufficient time is allocated to French and some pupils have no access to it and as a result insufficient progress can be made.
3. Overall, pupils in Key Stage 4 make very good progress because of the very high quality of teaching they receive. Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgment about progress in geography throughout the school.
4. Children under five make very good progress in personal and social development, and good progress in all other areas of learning. They are well prepared for entering the statutory period of their education.
5. Progress in English is good throughout the school in all aspects and it is very good in Key Stage 4 as a result of the high quality of teaching. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a positive effect on the progress made by pupils. During Key Stage 1 some pupils begin to match sounds to the alphabet during the literacy hour and many recognise their own and others' names. High attaining pupils make good progress in listening skills, joining in simple conversations and responding to requests and instructions. Pupils with more complex difficulties develop their range of responses through better eye contact, facial expressions and the use of signing. Good progress is also made in writing as pupils learn to copy over letters and a few write their name from memory. Others develop their ability to control their pencils when making lines or colouring pictures. Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 2 and 3. The literacy strategy has been extended to secondary pupils and provides a very good framework for planning. Significant improvements are evident in communication and speaking and listening skills. Pupils are more aware of what constitutes good listening and take turns readily. They willingly look through books and answer questions about pictures. Higher attaining pupils write more clearly and are less reliant on the use of symbols developed during Key Stage 2. Very good progress is made in handwriting, with some pupils writing clear sentences with accurately formed letter and correctly spaced words.
6. Progress throughout Key Stage 4 is very good in English largely as a result of the excellent quality of teaching. Pupils follow a greater range of shared texts and can identify key characters and themes in plays, for example 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Higher attainers develop their ability to read and spell unfamiliar words and they enjoy writing poetry. Post-16 students make good progress attempting more reading and writing without sign and symbol support whilst lower attainers extend their knowledge of social signs and symbols associated with travel and work experience. Progress for some pupils is restricted in all key stages because of the available level of speech therapy.

7. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and 2 and good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. Post-16 students make good progress particularly in the application of their number skills to practical everyday situations such as shopping or travelling. During Key Stage 1 pupils increasingly recognise shapes such as circles, triangles and squares and higher attaining pupils make pictures from them. Their ability to count and order numbers to 5 improves and they develop the ability to use mathematical knowledge to solve simple problems such as finding one the same. Lower attaining pupils, with support, develop their awareness of objects through feeling and looking.
8. In Key Stage 2 pupils consolidate their knowledge of number with higher attaining pupils undertaking additions and subtractions to 10. They develop the ability to sort by colour and shape and can draw and cut out shapes. Lower attaining pupils join in with number rhymes and rote counting to extend their knowledge and understanding.
9. Good progress is made throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Higher attaining pupils count in threes, fives and tens to 100 and use number squares with increasing confidence to count on and to count backwards. In Key Stage 4 they develop the ability to experiment using probability when tossing coins, for example. Addition and subtraction has been extended to 20. In Key Stage 3 lower attaining pupils begin to recognise numbers to 5 whilst in Key Stage 4 they begin to understand how to make appropriate guesses and develop their knowledge of shapes through exploration.
10. Progress in science is generally satisfactory throughout the school. It is good in respect of understanding living things. The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced and the time allocated is insufficient to enable better progress to be made in other aspects of science. In relation to living things they build appropriately on their knowledge as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1 they learn that plants and animals need food and water to grow whilst in Key Stage 2 they extend this understanding to learn about healthy eating for people. In Key Stage 3 they extend their knowledge of the human body and explore the importance of looking after teeth. In Key Stage 4 they have developed their understanding of the human life cycle and can use a stethoscope to listen to heartbeats. Progress in other aspects is more patchy but gains are made in knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their understanding of the properties of materials; for example, when comparing stone, wood and metal. In Key Stage 2 their understanding of light and dark develops, whilst in Key Stage 3 they begin to experiment with friction, drag and gravity. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand the relevance of gravity. In Key Stage 4 pupils understand about the effect of different forces and can record their results. Pupils with more complex difficulties develop their understanding of push or touch switches to activate lights or battery-operated toys but their progress is restricted by the narrow focus of the curriculum they receive in science.
11. Progress in information technology is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils' developing knowledge, skills and understanding support their learning in many subjects. In Key Stage 1 cause and effect is understood using a range of touch switches. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop this knowledge when working with torches, radios or touchscreens. Higher attaining pupils use a mouse to create patterns in mathematics and to write symbols or words in literacy lessons. Lower attaining pupils use communication aids more effectively to respond to questions. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils use switches with increased confidence. Higher attaining pupils can search for information, create more complex mathematical patterns and write stories in English.
12. Progress in religious education is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils develop and extend their knowledge of Christianity and other religions whilst in Key Stage 3 older pupils make good progress in developing awareness of the features of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In Key Stage 4 they make good progress in understanding the importance of keeping promises through marriage in different religions.
13. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment make good progress in physical education, music and history.

In Key Stage 4, many pupils make very good and sometimes excellent progress in history.

14. Progress in design and technology is good in Key Stage 1 and 4 and satisfactory elsewhere. In art, progress is satisfactory overall, with older pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 making good progress.

15. There was insufficient evidence in geography to enable judgements on progress to be made.

24. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

16. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They generally concentrate well when listening to their teachers, particularly in whole class literacy and numeracy sessions. Many pupils are able to offer their own ideas and opinions, and the vast majority work hard to complete their tasks. Pupils use resources with care; they can use a range of artefacts, books and other materials to effectively support their work. They practise to perfect their reading, writing and their number and investigative skills. They are proud of their achievements. Pupils are keen and willing to participate, they become as fully involved in lessons as possible, and show high levels of enthusiasm for many tasks. Only a very small minority of pupils, particularly those who have very challenging behaviour, have less satisfactory attitudes. These pupils sometimes find concentration difficult and can become aggressive and do not always remain on the work set.

17. The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good, and there are examples of very good behaviour particularly on local visits to the community. This was particularly evident when a group of pupils visited the local park and showed high levels of polite, well mannered behaviour. Pupils across the school are generally calm and purposeful, and they treat property and equipment with respect. Good behaviour plans, which are an integral part of some pupils' learning programmes, are effective for most pupils, and are adhered to by all staff. These behaviour plans ensure that pupils who have difficulty conforming, or responding, and who occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour, have realistic guidelines. Pupils usually respond well to the consistency of these plans, and thrive on the constant praise for good behaviour. This helps to improve behaviour over time. Occasionally this system breaks down because of the severe difficulties of a small minority of pupils. In such cases staff are uncertain how to cope, and the learning of all pupils in the class can be affected. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the last year.

18. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They exhibit safe out of school behaviour. Many are beginning to take some responsibility, such as taking registers to the office, and helping to organise resources during maths lessons. A high percentage of pupils take responsibility for their own belongings. As they move through the school they become increasingly independent. For example, in Year 4 pupils were observed independently exploring foods through the senses during a science lesson. Older pupils sometimes take responsibility for cooking, or helping to cook their own lunch. Pupils take care of their environment, and many show confidence in all aspects of their school life. Some pupils are keen to help and care for others. This was particularly evident when a senior pupil was seen to console another pupil who had a cold and was feeling poorly. It was also evident in Year 11 when a higher attaining pupil helped a lower attaining pupil with adding numbers together during a maths lesson. By the time students leave school having been in the post-16 provision they are very prepared to cope personally with the transition to adult life.

19. Relationships across the school are strong and are a commendable feature of the school ethos. Staff respect their pupils and enable them to offer opinions and ideas. Pupils relate very well to each other. They are kind and helpful to those who are less fortunate. They collaborate where possible, and are respectful, polite and courteous to adults.

28. **Attendance**

20. Attendance is satisfactory. It is in line with national averages for similar schools. The great majority of pupils really like school and are eager to attend. However, punctuality is unsatisfactory for a minority of pupils. This is the result of problems related to the unreliability of some of the transport services. The last inspection found that there were no punctuality concerns but this is no longer the case.

## 29. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 29. **Teaching**

21. The quality of teaching is good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is almost always very good or excellent in Key Stage 4. Teaching of personal, social and health education is very good throughout the school. During the inspection 95 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better, 73 per cent was good or better, 26 per cent was very good or better and 6 per cent was excellent. It was unsatisfactory in five per cent of lessons.
22. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is nearly always good and in Key Stage 4 it is very good. They also have very good knowledge of the needs of pupils and students. This combined knowledge is used effectively to identify clear learning objectives linked to the needs of pupils to enable them to make good progress. Teachers' knowledge enables them to question pupils to extend their thinking and understanding. In Key Stage 4 history, for example, questions like 'who did Germany invade?' are quickly followed up with 'why would that cause a war?'. In Key Stage 2 physical education 'show me different ways of rolling'; 'which parts of our bodies are we using?' successfully challenged pupils' knowledge and understanding. In both circumstances teachers used their knowledge of pupils effectively to target questions. Occasionally teachers have insufficient knowledge of the subjects and this reduces the progress pupils or students are able to make; for example, in post-16 religious education lessons the teacher did not know enough about the topic to extend students understanding.
23. Expectations are nearly always high and this has positive effect on the progress pupils make. In Key Stage 4 expectations are exceptionally high and as a result progress is often very good; for example, in a literacy lesson pupils are challenged to understand the themes within 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and identify the roles of key characters. Throughout the rest of the school expectations are usually well matched to the needs of pupils; for example, in Key Stage 3 mathematics where a good range of activities are linked to pupils' needs, enabling them to make progress. Occasionally expectations are insufficiently challenging and too much is done for pupils, restricting their opportunity for choice and independence; for example, in a Key Stage 3 design and technology lesson decorating pyramids, most of the pyramids had already been made and there was very limited choice of materials or shapes with which to decorate them. Expectations are sometimes insufficiently demanding for lower attaining pupils; for example, in some Key Stage 1 mathematics lessons and in the restricted opportunities in some aspects of science and modern foreign languages for older pupils.
24. Teachers' planning is good overall and particularly good in Key Stage 4. Clear learning objectives are identified both for lessons and for individual pupils within each group. These are usually related to specific targets in pupils' individual education plans. They are particularly effective in Key Stage 4 because they are very specific, particularly in the medium term plans, and activities in the daily plans clearly reflect the long term objectives for pupils. Occasionally the lesson objectives are insufficiently related to the subject covered. For example, in a Key Stage 1 religious education lesson pupils made good progress in relation to personal development but made little progress in their religious knowledge and understanding because the subject objectives were insufficiently clear. Lessons generally reflect a good range of methods to maintain pupils' interest and motivation. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours has been particularly effective in this respect because of the clear framework and variety of activities they provide. The school is beginning to apply similar principles throughout the curriculum. Time and resources are used effectively in teaching. In music, for example, throughout the school lessons move at a brisk pace, maintaining pupils' enthusiasm and interest. A wide range of instruments and electronic aids are used effectively and students have recorded their own Compact Disc.
25. Teachers use a wide range of recording strategies to note pupils' achievements but these are difficult to track to determine progress over an extended period and are not always used as effectively as possible to inform teachers.

26. Although homework was provided for some pupils during the inspection and it did support learning there was little evidence of a systematic approach specifically designed for this purpose. Parents raised this at the parents' meeting and were right to question the school's approach.
35. **The curriculum and assessment**
27. The school is becoming increasingly successful in meeting its aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. There has been good progress since the last inspection. It is very successful in its aim to prepare the pupils for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life. The school's commitment to develop pupils' and students' communication skills so that they can make choices and personal decisions is very effective. There is very positive ethos; a real commitment to raising standards and preparing pupils and students for life after school has been created.
28. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education as well as personal, health and social education (PHSE) are taught. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum now has overall breadth and successfully promotes the intellectual, physical and personal development of all pupils. The curriculum is not yet fully balanced. The school has effectively implemented both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies and now needs to consider how the remaining teaching time can best be prioritised to give a balanced and meaningful experience of the other National Curriculum subjects. Science and religious education are under-represented at all key stages and as a consequence pupils make insufficient progress in some aspects of these subjects. Insufficient time is provided for modern foreign languages.
29. The school is successfully committed to the National Curriculum and its potential to give enriching and relevant learning experiences for all pupils. In the lower school the Highscope model is effectively used to widen pupils' experience and enable them to have confidence in making choices for themselves. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is enriched through extra time given devoted to regular careers education, links with a local school and combining with the post-16 students for option activities. This is good preparation for the next phase in their education at post-16. The effective post-16 curriculum prepares pupils well for when they leave the school which for the majority is a move to further education. The school has just completed an appropriate 14-19 curriculum planning document to formalise the continuity of experience for students through both Key Stage 4 and post-16.
30. Statutory requirements are met and no pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum. All pupils experience elements of PHSE with sex education being taught from Key Stage 3 onwards. Consideration is given to drugs awareness for older pupils. Careers education and guidance has a high profile and is of good quality with students being well prepared in Key Stage 4 for work experience and college link courses that take place during post-16 provision. This enables all students to make good progress in developing confidence, maturity and the knowledge to make the transition from school to further education. The planning for this transition is sensibly on-going from the annual review at age 14 and good use is made of the careers service during this time.
31. The school is committed to equal opportunities and access to the curriculum for all. It is generally successful in these aims. Each class includes pupils with a wide range of attainments and teachers plan work and activities to match the attainment of their pupils. Work planned successfully challenges higher attainers. However, in some subjects the adaptation of planning is not sufficiently precise to challenge lower attainers; for example, at Key Stage 1 in mathematics and at Key Stage 3 in science. This results in those pupils making less progress in those subjects. In Key Stage 3 some pupils do not have the equal opportunity to study a modern foreign language or access to the full science curriculum.
32. The staff provide a good range of extra-curricular experiences for the pupils. There are lunchtime clubs for football and music. Most classes are offered at least one residential trip every two years and, despite the wide catchment area of the school, theatre trips are popular. Pupils have taken part in dance and



drama festivals as well as sporting fixtures against other schools. All of this contributes effectively to the progress made by pupils and, importantly, to their personal development.

33. The school has made considerable improvements since the previous inspection in curriculum planning and now has schemes of work covering National Curriculum programmes of study for all subjects. There is a whole school aim to raise standards of planning and pupil attainment through agreed rationale and practice. Learning objectives now form the basis of lesson planning. The school has successfully incorporated both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and in both these areas planning for individual pupils through specific targets within the structure of the strategies enables them to make progress. This structure is not yet present in all subject planning. In most subjects, whilst planning for individual pupils is effective within the class group, the scheme of work does not plan progressively challenging work as pupils move through the school. There are good examples of progressive planning in music and physical education. Whilst the schemes of work include the necessary programmes of study, there is a need for an overview of each subject scheme to highlight pupils' learning experience in that subject as they move through the school, to structure the schemes so as to ensure that the skills and concepts of each subject are steadily developed and to inform teachers of the previous and future expectations for pupils.
34. Procedures for assessment are overall satisfactory and good at Key Stage 4 and post-16. Each pupil has an individual education plan (IEP) which emanates from the annual review of their statement. The school is working hard to develop a more effective assessment system. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have been involved in a county baseline assessment for pupils with severe learning difficulties. In Key Stage 4 and post 16 specific learning objectives in teachers' planning leads to focused assessment. The involvement of students in self-assessment and target setting motivates those students and leads to good progress for the majority. At post-16-students produce a national record of achievement of high quality in their final year.
35. Teachers are diligent in recording pupils' responses and attainment against English, mathematics and IEP targets and, overall, this recording is specific and useful. There is also recording at the end of lessons and modules of work. There is not yet a consistent system to gather this recorded information together for individual pupils to give an overview of progress in each subject so that teachers could identify strengths and areas for development which need to be addressed. Assessment and recording of attainment in some subjects is at present inconsistent. There is a need to consider ways of relating learning objectives to assessment criteria in these subjects to give a manageable and accurate basis for recording pupil progress.
36. Reports both for annual reviews and at the end of the school year are of good quality, with specific examples of pupils' progress in each subject and IEP target area. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge on a day to day basis in planning lesson activities and the division of groups within the class. On a longer term basis, the present assessment procedures are not used as effectively as possible to inform on-going planning of modules of work.
45. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. It is better for moral and social development than for spiritual and cultural. The school has a very good ethos, and staff provide fine role models. Respect, responsibility and concern for the well being of others is uppermost in everyone's thoughts and actions. The school is adequately equipped to provide a respect and knowledge of the festivals and practices of some world faiths but currently there is no close relationship with religious institutions.
38. The school assemblies focus less on prayer and reflection than the social and musical side of pupils' development. However, such is the self-esteem, enthusiasm and joy which these occasions encourage that there are many moments when pupils demonstrate a recognition of values beyond the direct content

of the assemblies; for example, when they express sincere pride in their own and their fellow pupils' achievements.

39. Moral issues are regularly addressed in assemblies and in a variety of lessons. The school has a prominent personal, social and health education curriculum which it considers one of its central provisions. There are regularly timetabled lessons during which issues, including moral questions, can be explored.
40. Pupils are helped to understand when they have not behaved appropriately and are encouraged to put things right, and to apologise. Their understanding is further enhanced through small rewards and certificates which are awarded at the end of the week.
41. Adults set good examples in the care which they show for the welfare of all pupils. Many pupils show care and consideration for each other. Some older pupils are particularly good at looking after younger ones whilst staff look on from a distance. On one occasion, an older girl with a small boy hanging on to her hand asked a member of staff to look after the boy, saying that she now needed a little time on her own in the playground. She and many other older pupils reflect the staff's caring attitude in their own behaviour. Pupils are given appropriate responsibilities in class and outside; for example they help to run a weekly tuck shop and, until recently, a school bank.
42. Many pupils are open and friendly at informal situations such as lunchtime. Social interaction in the playground is generally good, though there are some pupils who find it difficult as yet to join in.
43. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social skills. This is particularly the case during lessons in which skills for daily living are practised. During the inspection pupils went shopping, worked at an environmental centre, learnt at an agricultural centre, went swimming, and had work experience at a large store. Pupils have also occasionally taken part in activities with other schools and in the past on residential trips, all of which have benefited them socially.
44. Pupils' experience of the richness of cultural experience is enhanced in art lessons, the strong input of music throughout the school, visits to museums, shops and houses, and environmental areas. Pupils have been visited by a theatre group. However, there is only limited evidence in the curriculum, displays and assemblies of efforts to emphasise the value and diversity of other contemporary cultures. The number of visitors coming into the school such as writers, artists, story tellers and religious leaders, is also limited.
53. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
45. Procedures for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils are good overall. They are most effective in relation to promoting attendance, child protection issues and promoting health, safety and well being. The staff and governing body contribute to the provision of a very caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are met. The academic needs of most pupils are being comprehensively assessed although the way in which this data is recorded does not make the task of setting and updating specific targets for pupils easy.
46. Teachers know the attainment levels of their pupils but newcomers and supply staff might find up-to-date information difficult to interpret. The individual education plans are reviewed formally only once a year. These reviews are comprehensive and involve all the specialists involved with the pupils, including respite carers and parents. New targets are set for a whole year and tend therefore to be rather general. Arrangements for annual reviews meet statutory requirements.
47. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers know their pupils well. Parents and pupils say that all the staff are kind and supportive. Pupils and staff benefit from the specialist support of speech,

occupational and physio-therapists. These specialists spend useful time training and informing staff and parents and they make themselves regularly available to parents. Parents say that there is a need for more speech therapist time and indeed the provision of all three services does not fully meet the level of need.

48. The school monitors attendance well. The school follows up all unexplained absences diligently and only authorises absences when the reasons are well understood and sensible. The registration procedures are efficient. Pupils use the brief registration time productively; they greet each other and complete the day's timetable. There is occasional contact with the educational welfare officer and closer links with the social services. There is however a continuing problem associated with the transport. The drivers and escorts are concerned and caring. However, some transport is regularly unreliable. This results in some pupils spending too long travelling to and from school, which has an adverse effect on their welfare and makes them late for school.
49. Pupils maintain a high level of good behaviour. Teaching and non-teaching staff help to foster good behaviour which can be rewarded and celebrated at weekly assemblies. Pupils understand and value certificates they can win and show great pleasure at the success of others. Pupils are trusted and are given as much responsibility as they can handle. They are not over-protected; for example, they are allowed to handle tools when they are ready, they take registers to the office and they are encouraged to go to the shops by themselves when ready, after they have been shadowed for a while.
50. Pupils have many regular, structured opportunities to consider feelings, attitudes and behaviour with each other. The work is being done through the use of 'circle time' and in many lessons, and encourages positive interaction and enhanced self-esteem. For example, during the inspection some pupils were being given practical help in keeping themselves clean and they took pride in looking after their hair and learning how to shave. There is a comprehensive and well thought out scheme of work, and teachers' planning is monitored to ensure that all aspects of personal and social education are being covered. Staff are well aware of child protection issues and have been trained to take appropriate measures if they feel concerned.
51. There is a nurse on duty all day and there are regular visits by the community paediatrician. The staff are vigilant and thorough with regard to pupils' health. The premises and grounds provide a clean and healthy environment which is very well cared for by the site staff. Professional checks on electrical and fire prevention equipment are regularly undertaken. There are regular fire drills and great care is taken to prepare for any journey away from the school. However, the governors and staff do not undertake formal monitoring of health, safety and security issues through risk assessments and regular audits. A number of small health and safety issues which came to light during the inspection have been referred to the staff, and action will be taken.
60. **Partnership with parents and the community**
52. The partnership with parents is good and links with the community are very good. There are good relations between the school and a local primary school which one pupil attends once a week. In addition, pupils from secondary schools visit as part of their work experience. During the inspection upper school pupils shared a weekly music lesson with pupils from local secondary school.
53. Every effort is made to help pupils plan and prepare for adult life. Parents are fully involved and supported in this. The school, pupils, parents and specialists from the Careers Service talk together over many years to help prepare the way. This is done sensitively with the professional parties listening carefully to what parents, carers and pupils are saying. Pupils and their families are given solid support by staff and specialists such as the educational psychologist. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents come to the annual review meetings and keep in daily touch with the school by means of the contact book which staff spend considerable time writing. The vast majority of parents feel that they are well informed. There are now three open meetings a year whereas there were fewer at the time of

the last inspection. In addition, there are several workshops which parents are invited to attend, which provide a great deal of information and support.

54. Parents and carers have opportunities to visit special assemblies and see their children take part and they are encouraged to take an active part in school. They feel well briefed and appreciated by the staff. There is a thriving parent-staff association which organises events, raising funds and contributing significantly to the spirit of the school community.
55. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents are sent a considerable amount of information about school activities. The information is presented in a readable way. The main annual reports are informative and give parents an indication of the level of their children's efforts and attainment.
56. The school is actively ensuring that pupils have very good links with the community. Pupils are able to go on several visits out of school. The school has successfully created many opportunities to help pupils prepare for life outside the familiar confines of the secure school setting. Pupils visit local shops, gain work experience in large stores, go swimming at the local baths, contribute to work at an environmental centre and attend courses at an agricultural college. The school has taken pupils on residential journeys and pupils clearly enjoyed and benefited from the challenges presented in this environment such as water sport and abseiling, as well as the social experience. Pupils have taken part in local dance, sporting and music events, and have visited parks, a farm, London and local museums, and the Abbey. They have made a Christmas CD and helped to publicise it on local radio.
57. There are few visits to the school by artists, children's theatre, and religious or cultural groups. These are missed opportunities to enhance the pupils' experience of the wide diversity of cultures and cultural experiences in contemporary Britain.

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

66. **Leadership and management**

58. The leadership and management of the school are good and have a positive impact on the good progress made by pupils. The quality of leadership and management has been maintained since the last inspection.
59. The school has a very clear educational direction and has established largely effective strategies through the school development plan and target setting to achieve its objectives. There is a clear commitment to raising educational standards, improving pupils' and students' progress and preparing them for life after school. This philosophy is shared by all staff and governors and is evident in all aspects of school life. From first entering the school, pupils are progressively encouraged to develop their independence in relation to their specific individual needs and the success of this work can be seen when young adults leave the school at 19 years of age.
60. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively by members of the senior management team. Findings are evaluated and shared with teachers and, where necessary, appropriate support is provided. Subject co-ordinators are in post for all subjects. They currently monitor teachers' planning but do not yet monitor teaching.
61. There has been a great deal of curriculum development since the last inspection. The school effectively responded to criticisms about the balance of the curriculum and the absence of schemes of work in many non-core subjects. Since then it has effectively introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies. These developments have been monitored by the management team and very well supported in terms of in-

service training and resources. However, the response to these changes has not been fully evaluated. For example, the introduction of literacy and numeracy strategies has been considered in terms of the effect on pupils' learning but not in terms of the effect of other subjects and pupils' learning within them. As a result there is now some imbalance in the curriculum and the progress of some pupils has been adversely affected. Although the governing body is supportive and some evaluation occurs it does not have formal systems for monitoring the work of the school. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for the school. All staff and governors are involved in preparing it, with subject co-ordinators identifying development needs for their subject. Progress is monitored and evaluated and outstanding items are carried forward into the following year's plan. Although this is a sound process it does not provide a longer term strategic plan for the further development of the school. Targets are identified but they are not always linked to intended outcomes for pupils and costings are not always clearly identified. It is therefore difficult for the school to evaluate the success of developments in relation to the impact on pupils' learning or determine the value for money. The school is aware of these current weaknesses.

62. A very positive ethos has been created within the school. There is a clear emphasis on raising educational standards. The senior management, well supported by staff and governors, are constantly reviewing procedures and searching for new ways of improving the school. For example, they have been actively involved in research projects exploring target-setting for schools for pupils and students with severe learning difficulties. They are very receptive to new ideas. An effective learning environment has therefore been created and very good relationships exist at all levels.

63. All statutory requirements are met.

64. A very positive response was made to the last inspection and the school is well placed to develop further, given the effective leadership.

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

65. The provision of teaching staff is good. Staff are well experienced and appropriately qualified to teach pupils from a wide age-range and with complex special educational needs. The experienced teacher for the under-fives, although unqualified, is well supported by the Primary Deputy Head. The number of support staff is very good. Their skill and expertise make an essential contribution to the progress of pupils. Several of them are appointed to support named pupils and two have additional responsibility for First Aid. There is a full time School Nurse. The office staff, caretaker and lunchtime supervisors are all valued and hard-working members of the school community.

66. The school has an induction policy which is comprehensive and highly effective for newly appointed full time staff. Procedures for staff development are good. The second round of appraisal has been successfully completed. In addition to regular monitoring of staff by the senior teachers, the Head and two Deputy Heads see every member of staff individually during the summer term when any requests for training are carefully considered in line with the school's priorities. The support staff have opportunities to attend relevant external courses whilst further training is offered in-house through the weekly departmental meetings or by visiting professionals such as the educational psychologist and the speech therapist.

67. The school is well supported by the School Doctor and the School Psychological Service but cover from other outside agencies, in particular Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy and the Sensory Support Services, is not adequate to fully meet the needs of pupils.

68. Since the last inspection there have been extensive modifications and improvements to the school building and play areas including the provision of a separate area for the under-fives. For the post-16 students the acquisition of a mobile unit has given them a common room while training for independent living has been facilitated through the creation of a 'flat'. The improvement of toileting facilities now

ensures pupils' privacy and dignity. As a result of these improvements the accommodation is now good. The continuing lack of a specialist science room, however, affects the teaching of the whole curriculum and the changing facilities for the gymnasium and hydrotherapy pool remain inadequate. The school is well maintained and regularly decorated, creating a pleasant and attractive environment further enhanced by the evidence of pupils' activities and work displayed along the corridors and in the classrooms.

69. The school has improved the quantity and quality of its resources since the last inspection. Learning resources are now very good in history, physical education, religious education and music. They are good in English, mathematics and for the under-fives. They are satisfactory in art, information technology, design technology and science but unsatisfactory in geography and in the provision for pupils with more complex needs in science. The library has been relocated and is now of adequate size and easily accessible to all pupils. The books are of good quality and well displayed. Good use is made of loan facilities in the local community to enhance the school resources.

78. **The efficiency of the school**

70. The school's development plan provides a satisfactory framework on which to base expenditure. Since the last inspection the curriculum has been improved to provide overall breadth and balance. The governors and headteacher have a good strategic overview of educational development, are aware of the projected overspending on the current budget and have suitable strategies to deal with it, should it occur. The governing body has a good input into deciding priorities. However, priorities are not costed in most cases. Governors are aware that there is a need for prioritised allocation of funding in the school development plan. Subjects of the curriculum are all given clearly defined funding. Teachers are able to monitor their spending on the school's computer system. Subject development plans guide the way in which the budget is to be spent.

71. There is a good partnership with the local authority that has provided capital funding for an extension of classroom provision. The number of places has increased since the last inspection.

72. Teachers and classroom assistants are well deployed and classes organised to make efficient use of them. Teachers do not have much non-contact time and there is no allocated joint planning time for teachers and assistants. Additional LEA contract assistants are used effectively for a number of pupils. Although funding for the school is in the upper quartile for similar schools, the necessity for several additional staff for named children indicates that overall funding is not over-generous.

73. There is satisfactory financial control. The school's administrative officer is very experienced and has considerable expertise in the use of the computer system to manage and monitor the budget. She provides very good quality financial information in regular reports to the governing body. The recent audit by the local authority made several recommendations to improve the overall management of funds and the school has implemented almost all the actions required. Some aspects of financial control are unsatisfactory. The governing body does not have a strategic oversight of the school fund. Systems for monitoring class teachers' funds are not specific enough.

74. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and make good progress. Leadership and management are good and there is a very good ethos. In view of its many strengths, the school provides good value for money.

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

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

75. The provision for children under five ensures that they have a positive start to their school life and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There are currently five children under five attending the nursery, two of whom started this term and three who entered the school last term. Overall they are making good progress. Those pupils who have just moved up into a Key Stage 1 class are confident learners.

84. **Personal and social development**

76. Personal and social development is considered to be a vital aspect of the children's educational experience. Children make very good progress in this area. They are increasingly aware of being part of a group and take an interest in each other's activities, and there is the beginning of co-operative play in sharing toys, space and adult attention. They are able to sit in groups for story times and at home time with a sense of anticipation and interest. Children are encouraged to be independent in finding their coats and co-operating with getting dressed and organised for different activities. The quality of teaching in personal and social development is good. All staff in the nursery are very skilled in enabling the children to make the transition from home to school and to be able to make trusting relationships with adults and be confident in the nursery environment.

85. **Language and literacy**

77. Children make good progress in language and literacy. Many children can increasingly identify photographs of themselves or their home and a few are able to recognise and use a symbol to match the photograph. The majority of children respond in some way to adult conversation by either making eye contact or following the instruction or suggestion. A few are beginning to develop their ability to verbalise and sign. During stories and group songs the majority show attention and enjoyment, especially when the song is familiar. Some are able to turn pages and realise that the book has meaning. There were examples of past work showing children able to make marks and simple drawings with pencil. The quality of teaching in this area is good.

86. **Mathematics**

78. Children's progress is good in mathematical understanding. They learn to recognise the difference between objects of different colours and are able to match to objects of the same colour with a one to one correspondence. They become familiar with number songs and aware of counting who is in the class each day. They develop an understanding of positional language such as under, in and over there and are beginning to compare big and little. The quality of teaching in this area is good.

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

79. Children's progress is good overall. Children become confident to explore and experiment with magnets, sand timers and sand and water play equipment. They make the connection between cause and effect in pushing and pulling objects. Older pupils learn that the pad switch will change the computer screen. They are beginning to understand how tools can be used in making a fountain effect from a plastic bottle. They are aware of the chronology of the day and changes from one activity to another. They are confident to explore the outside play space. The quality of teaching in this area is good overall and satisfactory in a science lesson when tasks do not always sufficiently challenge higher attaining children.

88. **Physical development**

80. Children make good progress in physical development. They walk confidently and the majority have good mobility and balance. Physiotherapy is well used in class to support those who have difficulties in crawling and walking. In physical education lessons they respond to music well, moving about in response to the rhythm. They are able to touch head and shoulders during the song and are becoming aware of their bodies in movement. They can bounce balls and are confident in moving about the static play equipment in the outside area. Fine motor skills are developed when cutting and sticking or in pushing and pulling objects. The quality of teaching is good overall.

89. **Creative development**

81. Children make good progress in creative development. They are able to use tools, brushes and their hands to make marks on card or paper with paint and pencils. They have used paint and clay in an exploration of texture and colour. Some have been able to make controlled drawings of round shapes and straight lines. The quality of teaching is good.

82. Teaching for children under five is good overall. Resources are well chosen each day to encourage children to explore and experience a wide range of activities. Adult interventions in this personal exploration are sensitive and help children deepen their understanding. When the challenge level of specific activities is high, as in a technology session making water toys, children make good progress, in this instance in understanding both the making of the toy and the effect it had on the water. The very good teamwork of all adults in the nursery is a strength and of considerable benefit to the children's learning. The curriculum is based on a Highscope model which gives a wide range of experiences and develops the children's confidence as learners. It is linked to the guidance in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning for nursery education. Recent developments in adapting these for the nursery children are not yet embedded sufficiently to give a structure to the planning for an individual child's progress in a systematic way. The present assessment practice, although satisfactory, is not yet used sufficiently to measure progress in all areas of development against specific criteria to ensure that all areas are covered and that children's progress is maximised.

91. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

91. **English**

83. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop a curriculum which supports pupils' communication and literacy. The high standards described in the last inspection have been maintained. Areas for improvement noted in the last report have been addressed. There is now a whole school handwriting programme and more phonic work. The school has made a good start in implementing the National Literacy Strategy and adapting it for pupils with severe learning difficulties.

84. Overall, pupils make good progress in English across the school. During Key Stage 4 progress is very good. For other key stages, and for post-16 pupils, progress is mainly good. Progress in lessons during the inspection ranged from satisfactory in some lessons at Key Stages 2 and 3 to very good for all lessons at Key Stage 4 and one lesson at Key Stage 2.

85. During Key Stage 1, the literacy strategy is improving pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the reading process. The regular repetition of the routines of the literacy hour, including the 'Hello' session, helps many pupils to concentrate better. Some pupils with autistic features are able to stay with the group for increasing periods of time. In a lesson, using the big book 'The Absolutely Brilliant Crazy Party', two pupils matched all the sounds of the alphabet successfully. Many recognise their own and



other pupils' names. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress in listening, join in simple conversations and respond to requests and instructions. Some use speech as their main method of communicating, know the words of familiar classroom songs and develop increasing phonological awareness. Some make sound progress in speaking or communicating and in listening to adults. Pupils at a pre-verbal level develop their range of response through better eye contact, vocalisation, facial expressions and use of signing. Pupils make good progress in writing. Higher attaining pupils learn to copy over letters and a few learn to write their own name from memory. Others make sound progress in developing better motor control, and control their pencils and pastels better when making lines or colouring pictures.

86. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2. The literacy strategy is, again, very significant in enabling pupils to further develop reading and writing skills. Pupils with complex physical and speech and language difficulties learn to communicate, using a combination of facial expressions, gestures and positive reaching out. Listening and speaking skills have developed well. Some pupils enhance their spoken communication by signing and pupils listen well to each other. By the age of eleven, many pupils have developed expressive language skills to include a range of words and short phrases as well as signs. Whilst the majority make progress slowly over a long period of time, there are some magic moments for staff with the sudden emergence of speech with words spoken correctly in the right context. The majority of pupils show good recognition of initial phonemes and signs. In an early morning 'Hello' session, pupils make good progress in recognising and sequencing timetable symbols for the day. In a lesson using a big book 'Bake a Cake', pupils recognise pictures and their meaning during the shared text and follow the teacher's reading well. They use symbol-supported text and concept keyboards to develop reading skills. Progress in writing is marked by an increasing range of writing activities and better colouring. They copy the patterns of letters with more clarity and confidence. They use the computer appropriately to write using graphic symbols and text.
87. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good in the majority of lessons seen and over time. The literacy strategy, which has been extended to secondary pupils, provides a very good curriculum framework for planning. Pupils have made significant improvements in communication and speaking and listening. One pupil, for example, has a certificate in her Record of Achievement for controlling her feelings and using clear language to express herself. Pupils are more aware of what constitutes good listening skills and take turns readily. Pupils are willing to sit and look through the pictures in a book and answer questions relating to items in the pictures. They have learnt to sequence lines in a poem. During Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils begin to write more clearly and are less reliant on symbols. One pupil can read simple text, including from web pages, accurately and easily. Others can read back their own writing but need symbols to help identify the words. Pupils have made very good progress in handwriting and some produce accurate letter formation. They enjoy copying from adult models and attempt some independent writing. One pupil can write his daily news clearly. Ideas are expressed in clear sentences, handwriting is legible, letters are formed and words correctly spaced.
88. During Key Stage 4 most pupils make very good progress in lessons and over time. Higher attaining pupils make more frequent contributions in class and some have improved memories for key words. Pupils go to the library and select and read books. They follow a greater range of shared texts, including big books based on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and identify key characters and themes in the play. Higher attaining pupils use different strategies to read unfamiliar words and spell them accurately. Some write words correctly when letters are dictated to them. They enjoy writing poetry and react with delight and pleasure when the teacher reads their war poems as he has previously read one from a mature poet; with the same background noise of a battle. The highest attaining pupils write accurate descriptive passages. They also convey great feelings and moral awareness when writing about war. Lower attaining pupils also make very good progress in looking at and identifying pictures. Pupils with profound and multiple needs have learnt to communicate awareness and preference for objects and take part in a wide range of whole class reading through gesture and expression. Older post-16 pupils continue to develop communication and literacy targets and make good progress. Some students attempt more reading and writing without sign and symbol support. Lower attaining students extend and consolidate their knowledge of social signs and symbols associated with travel and work experience.

89. Many pupils are enthusiastic about their work and develop an increasing ability to stay on task, in line with their age and stage of development. With support and repetition, they follow instructions sensibly and have very good relations with adults. Pupils show interest and enjoyment listening to others; for example, Key Stage 2 pupils answering questions from the book 'Who's in the Shed?' clap enthusiastically at correct answers or word recognition. Many are well used to the routines of the literacy hour and registration. They move from whole group work to individual or paired work without much fuss. Most are well behaved but, in a minority of lessons, the behaviour of one or two pupils has a detrimental effect on the lesson. However, others continue to listen well and are tolerant of disruption.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall. Nearly 80% of all lessons seen were good or better, with almost 80% being very good or excellent. The best teaching occurs in lessons where the work is very carefully matched to pupils' levels of understanding, as seen in literacy hour sessions. For example, at Key Stage 4, excellent planning identifies the literacy objectives for each pupil across a range of areas such as word work, sentences work, range of fiction and poetry and resources. Teachers make clear to pupils what they will be doing at each stage of the lesson, first in the shared reading or writing and then in the small group work. All groups are guided and supported very well and classroom assistants are very effective in stimulating and encouraging individual children. For example, in the first session of the morning, Year 2 pupils are engaged in a series of activities. These include writing skills, constructing their own timetable for the day and a choice. All pupils rotate round the activities and the classroom assistants show very good knowledge and insight into the learning needs of pupils. Most teachers have a secure grasp of the National Literacy Strategy and teaching is interactive, with imaginative and challenging tasks. At Key Stage 3, for example, reading 'The Spell Shell', is enhanced by dramatic role-playing that animates and enthuses pupils. Good use is made of plenary sessions to reinforce understanding. Resources are generally used well. Teachers make good use of some information technology programs using words and symbols. The pace of lessons is frequently good. Most staff are sensitive to individual pupils who take longer to respond to questions, and manage more challenging behaviour well. Occasionally, however, pupils with more complex physical and speech and language difficulties do not have sufficient access to the teacher's time.
91. The co-ordination of English is good. Since the last inspection the school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy. It is now in the process of adapting the national scheme for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple needs. At all key stages, long and medium term planning is good. Short term planning is variable in quality, some is excellent but all planning is at least satisfactory.
92. Most teachers record pupils' progress during or after each lesson. They use the information obtained by this assessment to plan future learning. However, the planning for progression and continuity across the school is not secure. Learning outcomes relating to the units of work covered and key skills need to be set across the school. This would ensure that the range of learning outcomes for each year group is more easily monitored and maximum progress achieved. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Poetry is used regularly for shared text work. Older pupils, for example, study 'The Battle' by Louis Simpson, and other war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. The variety of resources available at each key stage is good. The library is well used and has a wide range of additional material from which pupils make their own choice. Most classrooms aim to create a book-rich environment for pupils and have designated reading areas, though some are more effective in this than others.
101. **Mathematics**
93. The progress of the pupils in mathematics has been maintained since the last inspection.
94. The progress of the pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 1 is broadly satisfactory. By the time they reach Year 2 pupils of higher attainment are beginning to recognise shapes such as circles, triangles and squares, They make simple pictures with shapes, They begin to sort objects by colour, or shape. Many begin to count to 5 by rote, and work with adults to order numbers to 5. They use and apply their

mathematical skills to solve simple problems, such as finding one the same, or finding how many pupils are in class. Lower attaining pupils have a high level of support as they work with, or experience pasta shapes and real objects. They are encouraged to feel and look, as they develop their awareness of objects. All pupils use a range of resources including information technology to support their work; they use touch and single switches to create long and short lines and to copy given patterns. Progress is less satisfactory when tasks are not well matched to the abilities and needs of the pupils. In one lesson the complex behaviour difficulties of a few pupils inhibited the progress of many others. Sometimes staff are not clear about how to handle this difficult behaviour and this inhibits progress further.

95. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to make satisfactory progress in mathematics. In some lessons progress is good. They consolidate their numeracy skills through practice and repetition. They know and understand the routines of the numeracy lessons. Higher attaining pupils undertake simple addition and subtraction to 10. They form numbers to 10 correctly, complete simple puzzles, sort by two attributes such as colour and shape, sequence numbers to 10 correctly and draw and cut out simple two-dimensional shapes. Lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 experience a range of number activities such as joining in with number rhymes, rote counting activities and exploration of objects and shapes. The good progress seen in some lessons is closely linked to good teamwork among staff, and to the high levels of support that the pupils receive.
96. At Key Stage 3 the pupils make good, and sometimes very good progress. They generally achieve the aims of the lessons as they consolidate prior knowledge through practice and repetition. Higher attaining pupils count in threes, fives and tens to 100. They use 100 squares with confidence to count on, and to count backwards. They recognise numbers to 100, and can measure the area and perimeter of a small box, using cubes. They estimate accurately what the measurements will be. Lower attaining pupils begin to recognise numbers to 5, and explore a range of multi-sensory resources to enhance their mathematical understanding. The very good progress is linked to the good pace in lessons in which pupils are enabled to give answers to questions using alternative means of communicating, such as eye-pointing, or indicating to an answer card.
97. At Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress. In some lessons they make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils undertake experiments based on probability. They show understanding of their chance of being right as they guess whether a tossed coin will come down heads or tails. They follow up to three instructions as they move around a range of activities. They undertake addition and subtraction to 20, identify the names of two-dimensional shapes and use simple measures accurately. Many can tell the time. Lower attainers are fully included in lessons and benefit from good support to enable them to understand how to make an appropriate guess. They experience practical activities such as exploration of shapes and objects. They build with cubes and take them apart. They explore two and three dimensional resources.
98. The pupils' response to mathematics lessons is satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2, and is good or very good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Particularly good attitudes are seen where lessons have good pace and where teaching is very good. Pupils in these lessons engage with adults, listen attentively, and are fully involved in all the activities. Where behaviour and attitudes are less successful, it is usually where pupils have complex learning difficulties. Staff sometimes try to keep them on task for too long and lessons become disrupted.
99. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2, and is good or very good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers are generally confident in the subject and plan a good range of interesting activities. They plan well and thoroughly, and there is evidence of daily assessment of each pupil's achievement. Teachers use resources effectively to promote interest. They use time well and usually manage behaviour with understanding and success. In a small minority of lessons behaviour is less well managed. Staff are unclear about how to promote positive behaviour, particularly for a few pupils with very complex and challenging behaviour.
100. There has been a significant improvement in planning for mathematics since the last inspection. The

curriculum for mathematics is now broad and balanced, and it meets the needs of the pupils at the school. There is evidence that numeracy is being introduced across the school in a very effective way. Planning indicates that all aspects of mathematics are taught. Assessment is undertaken daily, and all pupils have numeracy targets which are regularly reviewed. The mathematics coordinator has undertaken some monitoring of planning and teaching. This has had a positive effect on the implementation of the numeracy framework, and staff feel well supported. There has been an audit of resources, and these are centrally stored to ensure efficiency. Overall resources for the subject are good.

Recent training has focused on the numeracy framework, but teaching assistants have not been included in this. This is a weakness as many teaching assistants undertake high levels of individual and small group work.

109. **Science**

101. Progress in science is satisfactory at all key stages and good in the development of an understanding of living things. Progress for some pupils with more complex difficulties, although satisfactory overall, is restricted by their limited access to some aspects of the science curriculum.

102. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have been introduced to a wide variety of living things, both plants and animals. They have visited a farm where they were able to come into close contact with the animals, recognising the differences between fur, feathers and scales. They develop an understanding that plants as well as animals need food and water to grow and that the seeds they put into soil develop into plants. All pupils experience a range of different materials investigating their different properties i.e. squeezing and pulling plasticene, experimenting with sand and water and finding out the differences between stone, wood and metal. They begin to recognise the differences between batteries and mains electricity as a source of energy and know the basic safety rules when putting plugs into sockets.

103. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils have learned to recognise and some can name various parts of their bodies and know they have bones which make up a skeleton like 'George'. They learn about healthy eating and can make appropriate choices between fruit or biscuit. They understand about light and dark and know that night is dark because there is no daylight. The majority of pupils know that light can come from a variety of sources while the lower attainers enjoy watching fibre optics. Pupils enjoy taking part in experiments but make very limited progress in developing investigative procedures of their own. The majority can activate kitchen equipment such as the food processor and microwave by using switches and have made simple electric circuits, the higher attainers asking relevant questions if the circuits fail to work.

104. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils begin to understand about the effect of forces experimenting with friction, drag and gravity. The higher attainers begin to understand the relevance of the 'centre of gravity'. They begin to make predictions; for example, testing out what might happen if they put a small balloon inside a larger one, so altering the centre of gravity. They can name parts of a flower and understand that worms are good for the soil. They continue to extend their knowledge of the human body; for example, how food is utilised and the importance of looking after their teeth. They know that magnetism is when magnets pull and push against each other and that magnets have an effect on some objects, such as screws or nails, but don't affect other things such as wood or paper. Pupils can record these experiments on charts. They know about the uses of electricity and are aware of potential dangers.

105. At Key Stage 4 the majority of students can label major parts of the human body both male and female and have written a simple life cycle for human beings from birth to death. They understand about the use of a stethoscope and have listened to their own heartbeats. They understand about the effect of different forces and have recorded their experiments with light and magnetism. The higher attainers know and use the framework for scientific investigations of method, experiment and conclusion.

106. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are offered an alternative curriculum, through which they make progress in awareness of themselves in space, enjoying the massage and aromatherapy

sessions. Most learn to pull, push or touch switches in order to activate lights or move battery-operated toys. Progress, however, is restricted by a lack of appropriate access and resources to a broader curriculum.

107. Pupils' response to science is good. They show interest and enjoyment in the work, generally concentrating well although there are occasions when they become distracted and 'off task' particularly when the challenge is not well matched to their ability. They listen and are tolerant of each other's contributions and help those less able than themselves. They participate well in group discussions and activities and the older students cooperate when required.
108. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory, often good and occasionally very good. No teaching was seen in Key Stage 4. Planning is consistently good with clearly identified learning objectives and effective use of signing to ensure every pupil can access information. In most lessons the match of ability to task is good but occasionally there is insufficient challenge for the higher attainers and too high expectations for the lower attainers, both of which affect pupils' motivation and concentration. All staff have good relationships with the pupils, valuing every contribution and raising confidence which promotes learning. The skilled and experienced classroom assistants are well deployed to support both learning and behaviour, further enhancing pupils' progress.
109. There is a science policy and schemes of work which cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum but the subject time allocation is insufficient to allow for all areas of the curriculum to be taught in sufficient depth particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4. There is a concentration on understanding life processes and living things while the other aspects are introduced but not well developed, with the exception of good, focused practical activities with electricity. The use of P.A.C.E. for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties also concentrates on body awareness. There is a need to develop an extended curriculum for these pupils and students. Recording is carried out on a daily basis, referencing the learning objectives and IEPs, but longer term assessment procedures are not consistently applied.
110. The newly appointed science coordinator has only been in post since the beginning of this term. She is aware of the need to develop guidelines for more consistent monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. She plans to arrange training sessions for staff to promote professional development, particularly in teaching science to pupils' with profound learning difficulties.
111. There is no specialist room for science, which restricts the curriculum taught to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16 students. Resources are adequate but require extending for pupils with more complex difficulties and reference books in the library. There is sufficient storage space and all resources are easily accessible.
120. **Information technology**
112. The progress of pupils in information technology is satisfactory overall. It has been maintained since the last inspection. No actual lessons were observed in which pupils were taught the skills and knowledge of the subject, but pupils were observed using information and communications technology (ICT) to support their work in many areas of the curriculum. From these observations it is possible to make judgements about the progress that the pupils make in information technology, but not about the quality of teaching in lessons. Pupils across the school use a range of switches, communication aids, battery-operated resources and computer systems to support their learning.
113. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use ICT to help them to communicate as well as to help them with their work in other subjects. They use a range of touch switches to achieve an understanding of cause and effect, and to make choices. They understand that everyday items respond to a signal or switch, and higher attainers are able to choose the appropriate option independently and show understanding that their action on the switch will cause something to happen. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use ICT

effectively to support learning. They begin to recognise that a range of devices can be used to provide outcomes, such as switching on a torch, a radio, or touching a touchscreen. Higher attainers begin to use the mouse, with support, to create simple patterns in mathematics, and to write using symbols or words in literacy lessons. Lower attaining pupils have access to a range of communication aids. They begin to initiate an action to respond to questions and to say what they want to do. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils begin to use ICT with even more confidence. They continue to use switches where appropriate. Higher attainers begin to find information and search for answers to questions. They create patterns and pictures with increasing control. Lower attainers experience the use of ICT with support. This is enabling those who can achieve to become more independent and to begin taking some control of their own learning. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils continue to use a range of switches and software programmes. They draw pictures on screen in art, create more complex mathematical patterns, and write simple news and stories in English. They develop their ICT skills through good support and through practice. Pupils of high and low attainment use computers to support their learning across many areas of the curriculum, and their progress continues to be satisfactory.

114. Pupils enjoy using information technology. They are enthusiastic to try new things, and are proud of what they achieve. They often share resources, and they help each other. They are responsive to the adults who work with them.

115. The curriculum is effectively planned but too little time is allocated to the teaching of skills and knowledge to enable pupils of all attainment to achieve greater understanding. The policy is clear, and the scheme of work offers guidance about what should be taught at each key stage. However in practice this does not happen. ICT is used effectively to support many subjects, but pupils' progress in the subject is limited because teaching time allocated is too small. A range of good quality new resources has just been purchased and the school is rightly implementing staff training. Assessment and recording procedures are currently unsatisfactory.

124. **Religious education**

116. Overall, progress in religious education is satisfactory. In lessons, progress was unsatisfactory for post-16 pupils and Year 1 pupils. It was good in some lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils develop and extend their knowledge of Christianity and other religions. They look at stories from the Bible, such as the Lost Sheep and extend their understanding of what it means to be lost. In a lesson on Divali in the sensory room, pupils with complex learning difficulties develop an awareness of light and sources of light. They use objects of reference to enable them to have an awareness of the celebrations during this festival. Following a visit to a local church, where the vicar role-played a Christening with the children, pupils re-enacted the Christening and consolidated previous learning. Older pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in developing an awareness of the features of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They develop sensitivity towards the special meanings conveyed by the symbols and objects used by some religions. One pupil writes that 'the Qur'an is a special book, it must not go on the floor.' In a lesson on 'Promises', with emphasis on the promises made in marriage Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in understanding the importance of keeping promises and the celebration of marriage within Christian, Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Post-16 pupils develop more knowledge about founders or others that have inspired the growth of different religions such as Jesus or the Guru Nanak. There is also progress in developing moral awareness and an understanding of right and wrong. Older pupils write with great insight into the horror of war and the evil of racism.

117. The response to religious education is satisfactory. Pupils generally listen well and have good concentration when activities are interesting and communication through signs and symbols is consistent. Relationships are good. In one lesson, an older pupil puts a consoling hand round the shoulder of someone who has a persistent and painful cough. Pupils usually answer questions enthusiastically, although occasionally some pupils with additional learning needs do not receive sufficient time and encouragement to contribute fully.

118. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in religious education is uneven and ranges

from very good to unsatisfactory. The main features of good teaching during the inspection were very good planning, secure subject knowledge and creative and imaginative presentations. In one lesson, where the class teacher was absent, the classroom assistants satisfactorily took over the teaching of pupils with complex learning difficulties. Their enthusiasm prompted a good response from pupils who made simple Divali pots. Where there is unsatisfactory teaching, opportunities are missed to explore the religious aspects of an event or issue. This is due largely to uncertain knowledge of key concepts of different religions.

119. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It has been very well co-ordinated and the richness of the subject brought alive. In service training has been provided for staff. Resources are very good and the school has good schemes of work and a policy based on the local Agreed Syllabus. The staff has shared planning. Assessment and recording procedures are not yet fully developed. Very good examples are recorded of particularly annual, whole day religious festivals during which different members of staff have workshops. In celebrating the Jewish religion, pupils built a Succah in the garden and also held a Succoth Festival in the sensory room. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

128. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

128. **Art**

120. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art overall, with some older pupils in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 making good progress. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. As pupils move through the school they gain skills in using pencil, brushes, sponges and a variety of printing utensils with increasing accuracy and care and at the same time experience a range of media including paper, clay and fabric. Younger pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to spread glue in making a collage of materials of their choice. They are able to appreciate their work and higher attainers display it to good effect. By Key Stage 2 pupils can use their painting skills to decorate elements of a whole class collage. Older pupils are using careful observation of leaf shape and colour as a stimulus for their creative work with batik and simple weaving. One group of Key Stage 3 pupils has very successfully used their in depth study of medieval art to explore the design and making of their own stained glass windows and clay faces. By Key Stage 4 students have sufficient brush control and understanding of colour to express their ideas and mood in paintings of the rainforest.
121. The response of pupils to their lessons is good. They show considerable interest, listen well to instructions and advice and follow carefully, whilst having the confidence to make their own choices and decisions. They are able to use equipment sensibly and safely. They persevere in their work and rightly show pride in their own and their classmates' achievements.
122. The quality of teaching overall is good and was very good in one third of the lessons observed. Teaching is best when the teacher has secure subject knowledge and is confident to help pupils develop their artistic insights and skills. In good lessons there is a considered use of resources which enables pupils to make choices and clear explanations of the technique needed helps pupils make good progress in using correct vocabulary, making design decisions and developing the necessary skills. In the very good lessons seen, pupils are sensitively challenged and led through a variety of experiences which help them build both confidence and awareness of the potential of their work. This was seen in a lesson on texture where the feel of wallpaper was replicated in pencil drawing. In those lessons that were satisfactory, although pupils were practising important skills, the completion of a finished product limited opportunities for pupils individual expression.
123. There is now a scheme of work in place which is a firm foundation for development of the subject. It will give additional support to teachers and is a stimulating teaching and learning tool. It covers all aspects of the national curriculum. There is a need to develop the pupils' knowledge of the work of

famous artists. There is some informal self-assessment for pupils but as yet no consistent system to record pupils' progress in the subject as they move through the school. The co-ordination of the subject is becoming effective and leading to consistent practice throughout the school. Resources are just adequate and are to be enhanced.

132. **Design technology**

124. Pupils make good progress in design technology in Key Stage 1, satisfactory progress in Key Stages 2 and 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4.

125. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have had opportunities to design and make a variety of things. These include pictures where they have used a range of materials such as tissue paper, matchsticks or sponge painting; tasted and cooked a variety of foods such as vegetables fruit and small cakes and put together simple construction kits. These latter are on display in the school entrance hall. Most can use hand tools such as scissors or mix with a wooden spoon although some need adult supervision. They can activate basic electric tools in the kitchen by pressing switches and the higher attainers can cut wood with a hacksaw, being aware of the need for safety.

126. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have consolidated the work in Key Stage 1. They are more confident in the use of tools, recognising that some are dangerous and need careful handling. They can assemble construction kits independently, make sandwiches and understand about hygiene in the kitchen. They know that people from other places cook different food, for example at the time of Sukkot, which they have made and tasted. Skills learned in design and technology are used to support topics in other areas of the curriculum such as art and science; for example, designing and making spiders' webs and skeleton mobiles.

127. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are becoming competent in making simple meals in food technology, understand the basics of healthy eating and know what ingredients are best to choose. They can use tools to cut wood and know that wood comes from trees. They can use a variety of tools such as saw, hacksaw, screwdriver, nails and hammer safely. They can make things using sellotape, glue and paper such as pyramids during a topic on the Egyptians. They were involved in a term's project earlier this year on Polar Regions when they constructed an igloo using bubble wrap and papiermâché, a penguin out of modelling material and model sledges. Lower attainers were fully involved, experiencing different materials and coloured lights in an ice cave.

128. During Key Stage 4 students use their skills to design and create interesting objects from a variety of materials, both new and reclaimed. The higher attainers are able to evaluate their work and when faced with a difficulty are encouraged to solve their own problems. They are currently making sculptures from wood and breeze blocks for the school's sensory garden. In food technology the majority can go shopping to choose food for a simple meal helping them towards independent living. These skills are continued at post-16, particularly through the use of the flat. The lower attainers are supported by close supervision and simple tasks to ensure they have a full range of experiences and make good progress.

129. The attitude of most pupils to design technology is good. The majority enjoy the subject but a few, particularly in the lower school, find difficulty settling in the specialised technology room. As they mature and become more confident the problems are resolved and, by the time they are in Key Stage 3, all students show enthusiasm for generating their own ideas and finding a way to turn their ideas into an end product.

130. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 teaching is good or very good. The lessons are well planned with appropriate challenge for all pupils. The classroom assistants are used effectively to support learning and behaviour. The choice and use of resources is good and pupils are provided with opportunities to explore materials and make predictions. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 2 due to the organisation of the timetable. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 3 planning was good, with clear learning



objectives, but no encouragement was given for individual designs and in one lesson no opportunity was provided for making choices. Teaching in Key Stage 4 was very good. Students are expected to design their own projects with an understanding of the purpose of the object, select appropriate material and tools for the task, solve their own problems and evaluate their work as it progressed.

131. A new curriculum has been introduced this term which is based on a commercial scheme. It covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and has been modified to meet the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Design technology is frequently taught within a cross-curricular topic promoting the development of skills in design and making through a broader spectrum. Recording is done at the end of each lesson against the learning objectives but at present there are no formal procedures for assessment against national curriculum levels.
132. The co-ordinator has only had the responsibility for a few months during which time the new curriculum has been introduced. There is a recognition of the need for more monitoring of pupils progress but teaching is regularly observed and monitored since the co-ordinator is also one of the Deputy Heads.
133. There is a specialist technology room which facilitates learning especially for older students but which is rather austere in its appearance, which may be a factor in the difficulties with some pupils. Resources are very good for construction kits, good for basic materials and tools but unsatisfactory for metalwork, modern materials such as plastic and the absence of a kiln to fire any work in clay. Resources for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very good. The school has frequent visits from a local technologist who has assisted in various projects including designing and making model aircraft and rockets.
142. **Geography**
134. Due to timetable arrangements there was only one geography lesson available for observation during the week of the inspection. There was a limited amount of pupils' past work to be seen and records of past work lacked detail and are insufficient to make judgements on progress or attainment levels reached. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on the quality of teaching.
135. In the one lesson observed at Key Stage 2 pupils showed that they are beginning the skills of observation and recording those observations during field work in the locality. Past work seen indicates that students at Key Stage 4 have learnt about tropical rainforests, environmental issues and the causes and effects of coastal erosion.
136. During the lesson observed pupils' response was very good. They showed good levels of concentration and participation. Key Stage 4 students have completed work diligently, neatly and carefully.
137. A scheme of work for geography has now been drawn together but has not yet been used sufficiently to judge its effectiveness. There is a need to ensure that the scheme plans for progressively difficult work for pupils as they move through the school and that sufficient emphasis is given to the key skills and concepts of geography at all key stages. Pupils' work is recorded but there is no regular system to assess against National Curriculum criteria nor to use the information so gained to plan future work.
138. The co-ordinator has begun to address deficiencies in resources, which still need further enhancement.
147. **History**
139. Pupils across the school make good progress in history, and there was an example of excellent progress in one lesson at Key Stage 4.

140. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. They learn about times past from a good range of multi-sensory activities. They consolidate their understanding of then and now through role-play, through effective use of resources and artefacts, and through looking at photographs and listening to music. They learn about aspects of life in Britain since the 1950s by studying the lives of their own grandparents. At Key Stage 2 pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good progress in history lessons. They learn about the Romans through role-play and dramatic representation. They develop an understanding of how the Romans dressed, as they dress up in simulated Roman togas. They respond to the range of resources and artefacts by trying to copy the mode of dress. In another class pupils take part in a Tudor feast as they learn about life in the court of Henry VIII. They can give details about the king's life, and enthusiastically retell stories they have heard. They make the best progress when they benefit from good questioning techniques by staff, who encourage them to think about what they have learned. At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in history. They learn about the Egyptians through handling resources and artefacts. They use history as a focus for other subjects, such as art and design technology. They experiment with Egyptian writing using sticks and parchment, and are able to name items from pictures, such as the Pyramids, mummies, masks, jewels, and the Nile. In another class in Key Stage 3 pupils show good evidence of progress over time as they complete worksheets based on life in Medieval times. They compare life then and now, and can explain the differences. At Key Stage 4 pupils make excellent progress in history lessons. They exhibit very good knowledge of what they have learned about the war years as they take part in discussion and role-play related to air raids. They become fully involved in discussing the effects of the war on people's lives. They benefit from some excellent teaching strategies.
141. Pupils enjoy history. In almost all lessons their response is good. They are enthusiastic to learn new facts, and join in with role-play and discussion with enthusiasm. They behave well in lessons and handle resources with care. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is excellent in Key Stage 4 because of the exceptionally well planned lessons, the imaginative use of resources and the way in which pupils become actively involved in lessons; for example, where pupils role-played air raids in World War II and gained a real insight into how it felt to be bombed.
142. The history curriculum is broad and balanced, but sometimes not relevant to the pupils' very individual needs. A wide range of activities is planned. Many extra-curricular visits take place, and these enhance the progress that the pupils make. Resources are satisfactory, and some high quality displays help to promote a positive learning environment across the school. Assessment is not sufficiently secure in all classes.
151. **Modern foreign language**
143. French is taught once a week for up to 30 minutes. This not sufficient to enable every pupil to make satisfactory progress. In one lesson seen, a small group of pupils had made limited progress in the acquisition of phrases and greetings. In addition, they had a good understanding of types of French food such as croissants. They enjoyed the work, especially using the Internet to obtain information. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 4 pupils had made good progress in developing simple vocabulary and using it in context, for example in a café. Teaching was imaginative and stimulated pupils' interest.
144. Since the last inspection, provision for the teaching of a modern foreign language has improved and it is now taught at Key Stage 3 as well as Key Stage 4. However, access to the subject at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory for lower attaining pupils and those with more complex needs. There are good schemes of work which are intended to provide pupils with the opportunities to develop an understanding of French and use French words and phrases correctly. The schemes of work are also planned to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of features of French geography, life and culture. The school intends to develop assessment criteria for each unit of work. Resources are good.
153. **Music**
145. Pupils make good progress in music across all key stages. Although music is not included on the

timetable in Key Stage 4 or post-16 the students who select it through the 'option' system make very good progress.

146. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have developed a sense of rhythm, enjoying clapping in time to the music, singing together and dancing. The higher attainers can memorise words and sing both individually and in groups. All pupils have been introduced to a wide variety of musical instruments and can shake and hit untuned percussion with enthusiasm. The pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience and respond to music through a multi-sensory approach, particularly enjoying the feel of instruments by vibration.
147. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have been introduced to a wide variety of music from different times and cultures including their own modern style. They begin to express opinions and react to different moods of music; for example, being quiet and relaxed when listening to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony or swaying to African Tribal music. They are able to make music using an increasing number of instruments both percussion, stringed and electronic, such as drums and guitar and keyboard. The higher attainers can recognise a single instrument during an orchestral piece; for example, one pupil in Year 6 could identify the sound of a flute. They understand the function of a conductor and become confident to perform to an audience.
148. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are more confident in expressing their views about different music and begin to understand why they prefer certain styles. They listen well and appreciate the performances of others. They can compose simple tunes that are incorporated into the various concerts which are given throughout the year. They can sing in groups and individually and have had some experience of part singing. They become competent in the use of a microphone. They begin to understand the importance of rehearsal and the need to record their own work for critical appraisal before giving a final performance. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties continue to experience a range of music through listening and feel. Some hum along when the group are singing and can make sounds for themselves by shaking and hitting percussion instruments.
149. Music is not taught as a discrete subject in Key Stage 4 or post-16 but it is offered within the 'option' subjects. Students who choose this option consolidate all their previous learning and become highly skilled and competent in composing and performing. Not only do they perform for the school and out in the community, but they have also been involved in recording a published CD. This entailed a considerable amount of rehearsal, appraisal, alteration and final recording in a professional studio.
150. Pupils' response to music is generally good but in the lower school they find listening and waiting for their turn difficult. However, as they mature they develop greater levels of concentration and begin to take a more active part in lessons. By the time they are in Key Stage 4 they collaborate when required, listen carefully, follow instructions for example of the conductor, express their own opinions and respect the opinions of others.
151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, good in Key Stages 2 and 3 and excellent in Key Stage 4 and post-16. Where it is satisfactory the lessons are clearly planned with stated learning objectives but expectations are too high, the instructions too verbose and the tasks are changed without clear explanations, so creating uncertainty for the pupils. Where teaching is excellent the relationships are very good, there is appropriate challenge for each individual, excellent use of time and resources and an expectation that everyone will take a full part in the activity to the best of their ability. The outcome of just such a session was a skilled performance presented at the whole school assembly.
152. The curriculum covers all the areas required by the National Curriculum. The range of activities offered has improved significantly since the last inspection and particularly in the Upper School. Students are encouraged to recognise and appreciate age-appropriate music, which is essential in preparing them for adult life.

153. There is ample opportunity for enhancing pupils' spiritual and cultural development through music from different times and cultures and the celebration of religious festivals including Harvest Festival and Easter. Music is also used throughout the school day to provide atmosphere particularly for relaxation during massage and the P.A.C.E. programmes.
154. The management of the subject is developing well with good schemes of work that provide staff with information on teaching activities and use of resources. Staff needs for professional development are identified through a termly questionnaire and further opportunities are available at specific staff meetings. The assessment procedures are not well developed, making it difficult to track progress, and there is no time allocation for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching.
155. There is no specialised music room but this does not adversely affect pupils' learning although it makes storage and movement of larger equipment inconvenient. There is a good range of resources but a need to provide additional woodwind instruments. The school arranges for visiting musicians such as 'Live Music Now', Classical Buskers and African drummers but there are few organised trips out.
164. **Physical education**
156. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment make good progress across a wide range of activities in physical education. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
157. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in dance lessons, responding to music when changing speed and direction, using different levels. They learn to roll in a variety of ways when responding to 'Ten in the bed'. Some pupils with more profound difficulties succeed with appropriate help and support. At Key Stage 2 pupils can dance to 'Robin Hood' music, creating a play. They swing their arms when marching, developing good movements in time to the music. Very good progress is made in gymnastics when pupils work on individual rolling, moving, pulling and pushing programmes despite their significant medical and physical difficulties. In both key stages progress in swimming is good for pupils with a wide range of attainment. Nearly all have become confident in water. Many can propel themselves through the water with aids using floats whilst some can swim half a length of the pool unaided. Pupils make good progress in gymnastics, hockey and circuit training in Key Stage 3. They increase their ability to make bridges, working in pairs in floorwork and using apparatus. In hockey passing and control skills are improved and overall stamina and co-ordination improves in circuit training. In Key Stage 4 pupils use their games skill effectively in basketball, demonstrating good progress in dribbling and shooting and developing their tactical awareness. Post-16 students use their developed skills well in trampolining and a variety of games.
158. Pupils have positive attitudes to physical education. They all join in activities with enthusiasm. Those with more profound and multiple difficulties often show real enjoyment and delight when helped to take a full part in lessons; for example, in dance and gymnastics lessons in Key Stage 1 when involved in rolling activities. They all persevere with tasks even when they find them difficult, showing a real determination to succeed; for example, when shooting in basketball in Key Stage 4, trying to move through the water when swimming in Key Stage 1 or creating bridges during apparatus work in Key Stage 3. They take responsibility for collecting apparatus where appropriate and personal development is fostered when pupils take responsibility for scoring and recording results in basketball. Behaviour is always good and often very good.
159. The quality of teaching is good and this is a major factor in the good progress made by pupils. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject which she uses effectively when demonstrating techniques to pupils, such as dribbling and shooting in basketball or in extending pupils' thinking when creating bridges in gymnastics. Lessons are thoroughly planned with clear learning objectives for each pupil, where appropriate linked to targets in their individual education plans. Lessons are well organised with clearly planned activities which promote the learning objectives. Non-teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons helping with groups or often following specific work with individuals to

enable them to take a full part in lessons. Work is well matched to individual pupils' attainment and, as a result, expectations are high and pupils make good progress. Resources are well selected to enable all pupils to join in, for example using basketballs of different sizes and rings at different heights.

160. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well planned to ensure that pupils receive a programme which enables them to build on previous learning. Good links have been established with specific physiotherapy programmes for individual pupils. Planning is good and ensures that pupils build on their previous learning as they move through the school. There is no clear systematic assessment procedure but careful recording of pupils' progress is undertaken.
161. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. She has a clear view of the needs of the subject and carefully audits resources to build into the whole school development plan. Resources and accommodation are very good although changing and showering facilities remain inadequate.
170. **Provision for post-16 students**
162. Provision for post 16 students is good. They make good progress across a wide range of activities extending and consolidating the good foundations laid during statutory schooling. The school successfully meets its aim of preparing students well for life after school through a carefully planned and sensitively managed programme which enables pupils to develop into young adults. Care is taken to ensure that parents are fully supported in what, for some, can be a difficult transition.
163. Very good progress is made in personal, social and health education. Students are increasingly encouraged to travel independently to a variety of settings, including work experience placements, planning their own journey carefully. Clear, unobtrusive, support is provided as students become more confident and independent. They increasingly develop their understanding of citizenship through their study of crime and make clear gains in their understanding of physiological changes, and how these affect emotions, during sex education lessons.
164. Good progress is made in English and mathematics, particularly in the practical application of their knowledge and understanding to everyday situations. In English students develop their letter writing abilities and increasingly use information technology to create lists, for example of the work they undertake at Landmark. Clear targets are set to develop confidence in speaking and listening in a variety of settings and computer skills and communication aids are used to good effect to enable students to make good progress. Language is effectively practised in real situations using vocalisation and symbols when shopping. This also has a positive impact in mathematics as students use their increased knowledge of money to solve practical problems such as how much a list of items will cost and how much change they can expect. Work on time is developed so that students have a clear idea of the sequence of events during a day. They apply their knowledge to timings for television programmes by planning their viewing.
165. Careers work and work experience form an important part of the post-16 curriculum and students make good progress in these areas, which contribute significantly to their personal development. In careers they develop an understanding of hygiene issues in the work place. They understand the need to dress appropriately, wash their hands and be conscious of safety issues particularly where food and machinery are involved. Work experience is successfully negotiated for students who benefit enormously from carefully planned placements; for example, in local DIY stores. College links enable students to make progress in agricultural work; for example, within the landskill setting.
166. Students have very positive attitudes to their work. They appreciate the practical nature of much of what they do and recognise how it will help them when they leave school. They are given, and take, many opportunities to develop their independence and take responsibility for themselves. They co-operate well in lessons; for example, when working in pairs in a careers lesson to see how much dirt remains on hands even after washing. Relationships are excellent and they spontaneously celebrate the success of

others.

167. During the inspection little direct teaching was observed with students but an examination of planning, talking to teachers and students, visiting colleges and work experience placements and an examination of detailed Records of Achievement indicate that teaching is good. It is a significant factor in the progress made by students. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the needs of students and their families which they use effectively to plan clear individual programmes. Groups are well organised and activities are well matched to the known needs of students. Resources, including community resources, are used well to achieve the objective for each individual.
168. The curriculum is well planned to provide a broad and balanced experience for students whilst meeting their individually needs. The recently produced 14-19 curriculum document will further enhance continuity as students move from Key Stage 4. Staff are constantly reviewing the availability of appropriately accredited courses. Assessment is on-going and informs individual programmes well.
169. Resources and accommodation for post 16 students are good and are well supported by the use of a wide range of external resources.

178. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

178. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

170. The school was inspected by a team of six inspectors for a total of 27 inspection days over a five day period. Prior to the inspection the registered inspector met with staff and governors and a parents' meeting attended by 32 parents was held. The responses to the questionnaire were analysed. School documentation was analysed by the whole inspection team before the inspection.
171. During the inspection 85 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Samples of work representing the full age range, all areas of the curriculum and the full range of attainment were scrutinized. Additional documentation, including statements of special education need, individual education plans and attendance registers were analysed. An annual review meeting was attended and discussions were held with the educational psychologist, therapists and the school nurse. The school bursar and caretaker were also interviewed.
172. Periods of registration, acts of collective worship and the arrival and departure of pupils were observed. Interviews were held with all teaching staff and the senior management team. Discussions were held with a number of governors and the head of a local primary school where one pupil is integrated. Pupils and students were accompanied on visits to the supermarket, the local agricultural college and to work experience placements. Behaviour in and around school was observed and the majority of pupils and students were spoken to either in class or around school. Extra-curricular sport and music were observed. The registered inspector met daily with the headteacher, who was also interviewed by all inspectors.

## 182. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 182. 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
YN – Y14	80	80	80	18

### 182. Teachers and classes

#### 182. Qualified teachers (YR – YR13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	5.8

#### 182. Education support staff (YR-Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	26
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	754

### 182. Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	897,341
Total Expenditure	890,599
Expenditure per pupil	11,272
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,000
Balance carried forward to next year	38,742



182. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 80

Number of questionnaires returned: 49

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	46	52	2	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	69	31	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	38	48	10	4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	45	45	4	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	50	42	6	2	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	44	6	4	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	53	41	6	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	35	26	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	58	33	8	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	58	38	4	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	77	21	2	0	0