

INSPECTION REPORT

Quince Tree Special School
Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124522

Inspection Number: 187080

Headteacher: Mrs. V. Vernon

Reporting inspector: Mrs. F. D. Gander
21265

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708448

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Quince Tamworth Staffordshire B77 4EN
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L. Newnham
Date of previous inspection:	12 th February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. Frances Gander, Rgl	Design and technology	Attainment and progress
	Art	Teaching
	Post 16	Leadership and management
Ms Helen Barter, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Ms Carol Etherington	English	Curriculum and assessment
	Geography	
	History	
Ms Aileen Webber	Areas of learning for children under five	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Music	
	Religious education	
Mr. Robert Wall	Mathematics	The efficiency of the school
	Information technology	
	Special educational needs	
Mr. Trevor Watts	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school ensures that the majority of pupils make good progress.
- There is very good teaching across the school.
- The school has implemented the literacy strategy very well and the implementation of the numeracy strategy is excellent. They are effectively taught and are contributing to the raising of standards.
- The provision for students at Post 16 is very good, and through the very good careers education and guidance programme, students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school ensures that pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and behaviour are very good, and as a result pupils' behaviour is also very good.
- Pupils' relationships with one another, and with other members of the school's community, are excellent, and this has a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The school provides very good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- The school has developed a very good partnership with the parents, and in addition has established excellent links with the community, which enhance the curriculum and the work of the school.
- The school's procedures for the health and safety and well being of the pupils are excellent.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the Governing Body is excellent.
- The school's use of self-review and its development planning are excellent, and provide a clear direction for improvement.
- The school's financial planning, deployment of staff, and its use of its learning resources and accommodation are excellent.

• Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There is an inconsistent use of signing, symbols, and communication aids for those pupils who have difficulty in communicating. This has an impact on the progress they are able to make.
- II. The new curriculum for individual pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is not monitored and therefore the school has no way of guaranteeing that their curriculum is broad, balanced or relevant to their needs.
- III. There is a very limited range of external accreditation.

The weaknesses of the school are few and are outweighed by the school's many strengths. These weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians at the school.

• How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and all the key issues have been addressed. The greatest improvement is in the accommodation for the teaching of students at Post 16. The school now has a new suite of rooms, which have been purpose built, and have been funded entirely by donations from the local community and trusts. This is especially commendable. As a result of this building project, the school has been able to provide a room for the teaching of art. However, there still remains insufficient room for teaching design technology and science to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. The role of the co-ordinators has been strengthened and they are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation

of curriculum planning and development, and in the monitoring of teaching. Assessment procedures have been developed throughout the school and are now used in planning the curriculum for individual pupils. The school has reviewed the start and end of each day. There is now a structured personal and social education session at the beginning of each day, and school finishes with a class assembly. The personal development of pupils and students is very good, and there were no examples of pupils being over-reliant on adults. However, the use of signing for pupils with communication difficulties is still under developed. There are more planned opportunities for spiritual and cultural development, and especially in the area of multi-cultural awareness. The school now complies with statutory requirements for collective worship; the marking of registers and the special needs policy of the school. The space within the school for the teaching of science has not improved, but the curriculum has been developed to take account of this. However, the coverage of the science curriculum at Key Stage 1, and for the youngest pupils at Key Stage 2, remains within the integrated schemes of work, and is still too loosely linked with the overall curriculum. The school has effectively improved its provision of religious education and it is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator.

• **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

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

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

Overall pupils make good progress. In the short time the children have been in the class for children under the age of five, they have made very good progress especially in language and literacy and personal and social development. In speaking and listening, pupils make very good progress, but there are many pupils whose progress is impeded by the lack alternative and augmentative communication. In reading children make a very good start and by the age of five they have made very good progress, however as some pupils progress through the reading scheme they move onto higher level books without a secure grasp of the words at the lower levels. In mathematics, progress is very good at Key Stages 1, 3 and 4, and at Post 16, but the progress of some pupils at Key Stage 2 is not as good due to low expectations of some teachers.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years	Very good	Language and literacy, Creative development	None
5 - 11 years	Good	Art, music, information technology, drama, religious education at Key Stage 1.	Science at Key Stage 1
11 - 16 years	Very good	Art, music, information technology, drama	None
Post-16	Very good	Religious education, drama	None
English	Very good		
Mathematics	Very good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Very good		

The overall quality of teaching is very good. During the inspection, teaching was excellent or very good in 49 per cent of lessons, good in 36 per cent and satisfactory in 14 per cent. There was unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson of design technology where the organisation of the lesson did not give pupils enough time to work on their projects

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. All pupils behave very well in and out of school. There are no instances of bullying or harassment, and the school has no exclusions.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance at school is good. It is consistently above the average for special schools and there is no unauthorised absence.
Ethos*	The ethos of the school is very good. The school is committed to high achievement for all pupils but this is not reflected in the use of a range of external accreditation to celebrate achievements.
Leadership and management	The leadership and management provided by the head teacher and the governing body are excellent. This is a very good school where all managers and staff work towards the common purpose of school improvement. The school makes very good use of self-evaluation to provide a clear educational direction.
Curriculum	This is good overall as it is broad and balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. However, there is some unequal opportunity, as pupils at Key Stage 3 are not taught a modern language. In addition, the new curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has not been monitored and there is evidence that for some pupils the curriculum is not balanced. Assessment across the school is good but external accreditation is presently insufficiently used and needs further development.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good and is strength of the school. Whole school initiatives provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the celebrations, life styles, beliefs, and values of other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The number, qualifications and experience of the staff are very good. There is very good provision for their professional development and this is very well linked to school developments. The resources are good, as is the accommodation, although some of the rooms are very small for the number and age of the pupils.
Value for money	Very 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	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IV. Parents felt that their children reached high levels of attainment in relation to their special educational needs. Some parents felt that their child had achieved more than they expected.</p> <p>V. Parents believed that the school teaches pupils about values and attitudes.</p> <p>VI. Parents were very positive about how the school ensures that pupils behave well, and that it taught pupils to act in a mature and sensible way.</p> <p>VII. They felt that the school provides them with good information about what is being taught.</p> <p>VIII. Parents felt that the school keeps them fully informed about the progress their child is making.</p> <p>IX. The parents were very positive about the quality of the support and guidance the staff provides for them and their children. They were especially complementary about the very good personal and social education guidance provided by the school nurse.</p>	<p>X. Parents felt that the amount of therapy especially the amount of speech and language</p> <p>XI. Parents were concerned that when the medical support, and that some pupils with</p> <p>XII. One parent was unhappy with the school had a dismissive attitude.</p>

The inspection team investigated the speech and language therapy needs of the pupils at the school and it found that 70 per cent of the pupils' statements of special educational need had it identified as a need. The inspection team agreed with the parents and felt that the current provision of six hours a week was inadequate to meet the need of the pupils, especially as many have severe articulation difficulties and there is a lack of augmentative communication across the school. The team felt the amount of time allocated for physiotherapy was satisfactory, and the school's arrangements to employ a physiotherapy aid provided good support to pupils. The team felt that at no time are pupils at risk due to a lack of nursing cover. The excellent arrangements in the school ensure the well being of all the pupils. The team found no evidence of unsatisfactory progress in reading, and all parents felt that the school was approachable.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

- ◆. The school, in partnership with the speech and language service, should enable pupils with speech and language difficulties to communicate more effectively by:
 - . reviewing the policy for total communication across the school;
 - . ensuring that pupils who have the greatest difficulty are identified, and their needs assessed in relation to the amount of support and augmentative communication they require;
 - . consistently using a variety of communication aids, including information technology, in lessons and around the school.(Paragraphs: 7,8,9,28,37,43,54,59,91,92,108,143).
- ◆. In order to ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to their needs, the school needs to:
 - . audit the curriculum and timetable arrangements of individual pupils;
 - . monitor and evaluate individual pupils' curricular provision on a regular basis.(Paragraphs: 21,42,70).
- ◆. Extend the range of external accreditation for pupils at Key Stage 4 and students at Post 16, so that there is recognition of their achievements.
(Paragraphs: 17,47,109,130,151,171,191).

In addition the governors should address, in the school development plan, the following areas, some of the school has already identified:

- . A review of the equal opportunities policy in the school. (paras: 70,179)
- . The balance of subjects within the integrated schemes of work. (paras: 40,44,122,126).
- . Progress in reading. (paras; 11,100,103).
- . The teaching of modern languages for pupils in Key Stage 3. (paras: 19,52,70,179).
- . The appropriateness of disapplying all pupils from the end of Key Stage assessment tasks (paras: 46).
- . Accommodation for the teaching of design technology. (paras; 127, 162).
- . The differentiation of tasks. (paras; 33,106,113).
- . Statutory requirements of the governors report to parents. (paras; 60,70).

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1.Quince Tree School is situated on the outskirts of Tamworth. It is built in a residential area and shares the site with a primary school. It was open in 1983 and built to cater for 80 pupils who have severe learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection the school had 84 pupils on roll which is broadly average for this type of school, and the governing body had declared that it was full to capacity.

2.The pupils are between the ages of three and 19, and all have a statement of special educational need. The majority comes from the immediate area of Tamworth, but some also come from the areas of Lichfield and Cannock. All pupils have severe learning difficulties, and 17 per cent have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above that found in schools of a similar type. The school has a very low percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The majority of pupils stay at the school until they are 19 years of age and the school currently has 15 pupils in its Post 16 group. There are no major changes to the school population since the last inspection.

3.The aims of the school are:

- . To offer a meaningful curriculum, through schemes of work and associated planning, which is both progressive and challenging.
- . To offer the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum.
- . To give each pupil appropriate experiences and opportunities to develop an awareness of the community they live in.
- . To prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life beyond school and to teach life skills which will improve self-esteem and the respect of others.
- . To work in partnership with parents in the education of their child.

1.The priorities of the school for the year 1999 to 2000 are:

- . To introduce a moderated self review into the school.
- . To increase standards in English by introducing a new language scheme, and by setting targets in reading and writing.
- . To increase standards in mathematics by introducing the National Numeracy Strategy.
- . To increase, in every classroom, the resources for the teaching of information and communication technology, and ensure that all staff have attended in-service training.
- . To ensure the new format for individual educational planning, reviewing and reporting has been used when assessing all pupils.
- . To continue developing GNVQ in performing arts and ensure that students gain external accreditation in this area.
- . To continue improving the accommodation of the school by equipping a room for the teaching of art, and by dividing a large classroom into two smaller areas.
- . To improve the outside play areas and the school's security.

1.Key indicators

There are no results for the standard assessment tests and tasks at the end of each key stage, as in 1999 all pupils were disapplied. At Post 16, nine pupils attained GNVQ (foundation level) in performing arts.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.9
	National comparative data	8.0
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	1.0

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	49
Satisfactory or better	99
Less than satisfactory	1

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

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

5. **Attainment and progress**

2.It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom the school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.

3.Overall, pupils make good progress across the school, and during the week of the inspection they were making very good or excellent progress in some lessons that were observed. However, while pupils with articulation and communication difficulties make satisfactory progress, they are unable to communicate effectively and realise their potential. This is due to the inconsistent use of signs and symbols, and a lack of communication aids with which to provide an alternative means of communication for those who need it. This area of weakness was highlighted in the last inspection report.

4.In the short time the younger children have been in the class for those under the age of five, they have made very good progress especially in language and literacy, and personal and social development. They also make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Many children come into the school at the age of three but are developmentally much younger than this. However, by the time they are five the higher attaining children communicate in simple sentences and can make themselves understood well. They understand that books contain stories, answer questions about the story, and anticipate what might happen next. These children can recognise their own name. Lower attaining children use signs and gesture to make their needs known. They listen to stories, take part in action and signing rhymes, show a respect for books and begin to realise that printed words give a message. These children pick out their name with a photograph of themselves alongside the writing. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn "turn taking" and are encouraged to make eye contact, verbalise and smile as a foundation for verbal communication. Some opportunities to help children communicate are missed as there are no single switch operated speech devices to aid their communication.

5.Progress in English is good overall. In literacy hour sessions, where teachers are confident in their knowledge of the National Literacy Framework, many groups of pupils make very good progress. In speaking and listening, where teachers place an emphasis on the development of these skills across the curriculum, pupils make very good progress. However, pupils with additional special needs in speech and language, who would benefit from the consistent use of signing and symbol-supported reading or from the use of augmentative means of communication, make only satisfactory progress overall.

6.In speaking and listening, pupils in all key stage make good progress. At Key Stage 1, they listen attentively to a story, and answer simple questions about what they have heard. By the end of the key stage, they can follow simple instructions and most can make their views known using basic sentences. Higher attainers can describe what they have done in the lesson. Pupils at Key Stage 2 listen to a shared text in a literacy session and indicate the key points of the plot. By the end of the key stage, most can follow more complex instructions, and are more confident when giving their answers. Pupils at Key Stage 3 understand and follow instructions for group work. By the end of the key stage, they can use their speaking and listening skills in a more social context, such as when they work together with pupils from a local mainstream school on a joint drama project. Pupils at Key Stage 4 can retell a story that has been read to them and by the end of the key stage can express in words how they will depict 'sadness' using facial and body language in a drama session. Post 16 students use

their skills in speaking and listening in a wider variety of situations in the community, for example during a local college link and on work experience. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties make progress in communicating their daily needs, in responding to a range of greetings, and in indicating choices, for example between instruments that they would like to play in a music therapy session. In school, pupils and students take part in drama lessons, which are of an excellent quality and give them opportunities to develop their imaginations. Many students express their thoughts clearly and with confidence.

7. In reading, pupils make good progress in relation to their differing abilities. However, whilst pupils make good and very good progress in their response to literature through literacy hour sessions and in whole-school topics that are literature-based, less progress is made in pupils' individual reading skills. Pupils at Key Stage 1 get off to a good start with their reading and build up a sight vocabulary of basic words, such as 'on', 'off' and 'open'. Higher attainers move on to reading early books in a graded reading scheme, and can read these simple texts successfully. Lower attainers can start to match words with the help of symbols. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to develop their independent reading, and by the end of the key stage, some are becoming more fluent readers, with a larger sight vocabulary. However, some pupils move up the reading scheme without a secure grasp of the words in books at lower levels. In Key Stage 3, pupils are starting to recognise some initial sounds of words but few use these skills in support of their reading. In Key Stage 4, some higher attaining pupils can use their reading skills to find out information, for example from CD-ROM or the Internet. However, many have an insecure knowledge of how sounds can be blended to read unfamiliar words and do not have a sight vocabulary of the words that occur with highest frequency in English. Students in Post 16 continue to extend their range of shared reading, including Shakespeare texts, but the confidence they demonstrate in speaking and listening skills is not present in their independent reading.

8. In writing, pupils also make overall good progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow patterns and learn to control a pencil. Higher attainers are beginning to write their names and to copy simple phrases. By the end of the key stage, many can form individual letters regularly and legibly. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to learn letter formation and construct basic sentences. By the end of the key stage, most can write or copy sentences about a story they have heard. Many pupils in Key Stage 3 write their name and address clearly enough to be read by external audiences. At Key Stage 4, some pupils can write in other forms, for example, in speech bubbles to tell a story. Older students continue to improve their writing, and by the time they leave school, some can write legibly, with clear letter formation. They apply this in a range of situations, for example, some know that sentences start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, and can apply this routinely in their writing.

9. Overall the progress that pupils make in mathematics is very good and the school's implementation of the numeracy strategy is already having an impact on progress. Progress is very good at Key Stages 1, 3, 4, and Post 16. It is good at Key Stage 2 but on the week of the inspection it varied between classes. In the better lessons, where the teachers have high expectations and where individual or group work was well matched to the different abilities of the pupils, progress was very good. Overall there has been an improvement since the last inspection. Overall the progress that pupils make in mathematics is very good and the numeracy strategy is already having an impact on progress. At Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils can count and recognise numerals to five. They also have a good understanding of concept of zero. Lower attaining pupils can recognise a square and a circle and indicate whether a pot is full or empty. Progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 is good. Higher attainers can order numbers up to twelve and count backwards as well as forwards. Pupils are beginning to recognise 1p and 2p coins and can successfully add two numbers under five together. Lower ability pupils are beginning to recognise numerals to five.

10. In mathematics at Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils are able to create number patterns

using multiples of 2 and 4. Lower attaining pupils can create simple repeating two colour and shape patterns. At Key Stage 4, pupils of average ability can count in 2s to 10 and 10s to 100. They are also able to add the numbers from two dice to play simple number games. Higher attaining pupils are able to successfully subtract numbers under five from numbers up to 30. They are also able to estimate the relative values and capacities of a number of soft drinks. Students at Post 16 continue to make very good progress. Higher attainers are able to recognise numbers and compare various types of graphs. Students of average ability can double numbers and count backwards.

11. In science at Key Stage 1, and in the class of younger Key Stage 2 pupils, the progress over time is only satisfactory. Pupils in the lower school have recently learned about minibeast and about various aspects of the Caribbean. These activities have been linked with pupils' learning in geography, design and technology, singing, and English. This has led to a lessening of the scientific elements of each lesson, and within each topic, and this in turn leads to a slowing of the progress that pupils make. In previous topics, pupils have gained satisfactory knowledge about their bodies and their senses, and about things that grow, whether plants or animals. They have also undertaken some investigations into different materials, but this investigative approach is not well emphasised in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.

12. In the rest of the school pupils' progress in science is good. They are learning to approach science through investigations and experiments, and they are developing particularly well in this respect. They also progress well in the other aspects of science, looking at each new area with inquisitive minds. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have experimented with floating and movement by different forms of power. They can describe the characteristics of a range of materials. They have learned about their senses and their bodies, and about a variety of living and non-living things. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress, building up sound skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the National Curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils understand about different characteristics of plants and their environments, how they grow and reproduce and what they need to survive. They have investigated different forces such as light, sound, electricity and magnetism, and have conducted experiments with vibrations and a variety of different materials. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have understood the investigations approach very well, and are developing all of their knowledge and understanding through it. They have a good understanding of basic electrical circuits, magnets, properties of metals, and the value of recycling some materials. They have a good knowledge of the human body, the major organs and the blood circulation system.

13. Pupils, overall make very good progress in their skills in using and understanding information technology. Progress at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is very good, and at Key Stage 4 it is excellent. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils have developed their skills in using the 'mouse' and can use the keyboard for word processing. Lower attaining pupils can use both the touchscreen and overlay keyboard to select initial letter sounds. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils can access the Internet and understand that it is a source of information. Lower attaining pupils can operate appropriate software using a trackerball, and all pupils have developed skills in control using a floor robot. They can indicate the direction of movement, while the highest attaining pupils are able to programme the robot independently. At Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils can access the Internet using an overlay keyboard, find a desired web site and print out information. Pupils of average ability can operate computers independently, have developed advanced mouse skills and can, for example, cut and paste items using a graphics programme. Pupils' attainments in information technology at the end of Key Stage 4 are excellent in relation to their abilities and this should be recognised by external accreditation.

14. Standards in religious education, and the progress pupils make, has risen since the last inspection from satisfactory overall to good. This is due to the developments the school has

carried out in the curriculum, and the teaching which is now all carried out by the co-ordinator and ensures a consistently high standard with a good understanding of the teaching of religious concepts. Resources have also been developed. At Key Stage 1 and at Post 16, progress is very good. For example, pupils spontaneously say "Thank you" to God and show a good understanding that different people have different beliefs and customs. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. They know that Harvest Festival is a time of saying "Thanks to God". They also know that a "sukkot" is for sleeping, in but they do not understand that this is for the faith of Judaism as learning about both faiths in one lesson is confusing for them. They understand about different kinds of Harvest Festival in the Caribbean and make comparisons with other countries. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4 they understand that groups of people have religions and cultures that are different to their own. Higher attaining students at Post 16 can relate aspects of their own lives that are special.

15. Overall, pupils throughout the school are making good progress in art, and around the school there is evidence of excellent work in different styles that communicate a range of ideas. Overall, progress is very good in music. The very good progress due to very good and sometimes excellent teaching by specialist teachers and their positive ethos concerning high achievement. In geography, progress is good at Key Stages 2 and 3 and very good at Key Stage 4, however, only satisfactory progress is made at Key Stage 1 where geography is part of the integrated scheme of work, and the focus of the lessons are not specific enough. Overall, progress is good in physical education, in design technology, and in history. It is satisfactory in modern languages for pupils at Key Stage 4 and students at Post 16. However, due to the school's policy to disapply all pupils at Key Stage 3 from this area of the curriculum it is not possible to comment on progress, or for them to demonstrate their ability.

16. Progress in personal, social and health education is very good overall. The structured first session of the morning, and religious education, throughout all key stages make a strong contribution to this area of the curriculum. All pupils have targets for this area in their individual educational plans, and these are effectively used to measure progress at an individual level. The support provided by the school nurse for the teaching of personal, social and health education is very good, makes a considerable impact on the progress pupils and students make, and is highly valued by parents.

17. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall, due to the level of support they receive and their individual curriculum. However, there are some unequal opportunities in the current way in which these pupils are timetabled, and not all have equal access to the whole curriculum. They make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, for example, to respond in different situations. They make very good progress in music, which is the result of specialist teaching, and the work of the music therapist and a group of learning support assistants who are responsible for musical communication.

18. There are no differences between the progress of boys and girls, this is also the position for those few pupils the school has who are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

22. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. The response of children under the age of five in lessons is very good overall. They behave well and respond to the clear guidelines of what is expected of them. They concentrate well and are happy to take part in guided activities and enjoy what they do, and this high level of motivation contributes directly to their very good progress. They take a pride in their work, choosing to take things home to show their families. They are polite and sign "Please" and "Thank you", when they are reminded by staff. They listen well, but as signing is not always consistently used this affects their understanding. The good management of the few pupils with challenging behaviour means that they are able to join in well with the class

activities.

20. Pupils have very good attitudes and they like coming to school and going to college. The school has done very well to maintain this high level of response since the last report. Pupils are very interested in all aspects of their work, taking a pride in their work, and are pleased with their results. With very few exceptions, they listen carefully well when things are being explained, demonstrated or discussed. Most are willing to make suggestions, offer solutions and ideas when discussing a shared reading book, setting up an experiment, or deciding on different ways of moving and landing in gymnastics. Many make good choices when deciding, for instance, what equipment might be most appropriate for particular activities in physical education, which book they might find certain information in, or when finding the best way of separating the ingredients of various mixtures in science investigations. Pupils concentrate well, and work for long periods on their writing, drawing, number work, or gymnastic tasks. They work alongside each other well, and older pupils, particularly, will together on joint projects in class, or in team games, swimming and gymnastic activities.

21. Pupils' behaviour is very good. The school has done well to maintain and improve behaviour since the last inspection, despite a changing population of pupils and students. There have been no exclusions from school in recent years. Parents are happy with the behaviour the school teaches their children, and they regard this as a very positive aspect of what the school does. In classes, pupils do as they are asked or told with little fuss in most instances. Their behaviour outside of the classrooms is also very good. In the corridors they move around school in an orderly fashion when going from one class to another, or going to and from the buses. In the playgrounds they play together well, for example, at football, or with large toy. On school visits, such as, to the park, a local school or the swimming pool, pupils behave well both on the journey and while at the venue. No instances of bullying or harassing each other were observed, heard of, or reported. The premises and the resources within the school are well looked after by pupils. There is no litter or graffiti in the school grounds. Inside the buildings, there is no damage to books, furniture or displays anywhere. Pupils like and appreciate their surroundings, and look after them.

22. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other. The school has made very good progress in this aspect, from the already high standards reported in the previous inspection. Pupils are very sociable. The more able pupils and students will chat amicably together at break times, and will discuss things in class in a friendly and positive manner. They have a good respect for each other, will listen and take turns well. They are polite, and many are confident, friendly in approaching visitors. They help each other and encourage each other well, in art and physical education, for instance, applauding each other's dance routines or their paintings.

23. The lower attaining pupils are also willing to wait their turn, let others go first, smile at each other, and respond positively when with classmates. Pupils relate very well to all staff, whether they are teachers, classroom support staff and lunchtime assistants, or the therapy, maintenance and caretaking staff, throughout the school. Relationships are particularly mature towards the top of the school, where pupils and students are more able to enter sensible discussions with staff on a variety of subjects that are significant to them. They show a good respect for each other's opinions and points of view, and try to be sensitive to each other's feelings when things might be going wrong, perhaps with their work or with something at home, such as a pet or family member being ill. Most pupils are beginning to understand the need for rules and ways of behaving, whether in classes, in physical education activities, in drama and role play situations, and in playground games.

24. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school has well maintained this aspect of its role since the previous report. The youngest pupils share their toys, and help with putting them away. They help with cleaning tables after lunch, clearing dishes away, and give

assistance to their less able friends. They attend the café that is organised in school once a week, and order their snacks, sit sociably with the other pupils, and take away their own beakers for washing. As pupils grow through the school they take more on responsibilities, and are developing well. They are responsible, for example, for changing the daily calendar, organising the milk and biscuits, washing up, or tidying books and chairs. They clean their lunch tables and clear the dishes away, and many pupils, especially towards the top of the school, wash their faces and clean their teeth after lunch without direct supervision. Towards the top of the school, pupils and students are willing to learn from their mistakes and those of others; they give and take criticism well in discussions. They learn much of how to behave and take on responsibility in role play and drama sessions. However, some pupils' speech and language difficulties, and their inability to articulate clearly and make their needs known impedes their personal development.

25. At Post 16, students learn how to use the telephone in different situations, how to make themselves clear, give information, and understand what they are being told over the telephone. They settle themselves well at break and lunchtimes, getting computers out, putting a radio on, reading magazines, or chatting with each other. They have good manners over meals, and are polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. At the college they mix well with other students. Some go shopping with supervision, and make their own lunches from the menus they have prepared and shopped for. Students make considerable gains in their personal development through their in-school work experience each week, helping in other classes, or running the Thursday café almost entirely without assistance. Pupils and students are prepared well for the next phase of their education and life. On leaving school all students obtain placements, with the majority going to a local college, and others to a residential college or adult centre. Many have been able to take a full and mature part in discussing the options for their own futures.

29. Attendance

26. Pupils' attendance at school is good. Levels of attendance have been maintained since the last inspection. They are consistently above the average for special schools and there is no unauthorised absence. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make during their time at the school. Although some pupils' attendance is affected by long periods of absence because of illness, other pupils have very good attendance records and come to school whenever they can. Parents report that their children like coming to school and that attendance is not a problem.

27. Pupils' punctuality is dependent upon the prompt arrival of transport. Unless there have been traffic delays, the buses usually are in good time for the start of school. There is sometimes a slight delay, however, between pupils' arrival and the start of lessons as it takes time to unload and escort pupils from the buses. The school has addressed the previous inspection finding that the time at the beginning of the school day was not used effectively and now ensures that registration and pupils' personal needs are dealt with efficiently so that lessons quickly get under way.

31. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

31. Teaching

28. The overall quality of teaching is very good. During the week of the inspection, it was excellent or very good in 49 per cent of lessons, good in 36 per cent, and satisfactory in 14 per cent. This is an improvement over the last inspection, as there is a higher percentage of good and very good teaching. There was unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson of design technology. Here the introduction to the lesson was over-long and did not allow enough time for pupils to work on their projects, which led to some pupils becoming restless and

uninterested. A temporary teacher who was also new to the school taught this lesson.

29. While staff teach their own specific classes for the morning sessions of personal and social education, literacy and mathematics, they teach all pupils according to their subject specialism. This makes judgements of the quality of teaching by key stage complicated, but on balance teaching is very good in the class for under fives, and good at Key Stage 1. At this key stage, a temporary teacher who has only been in school a short time takes the morning sessions. Here pupils also do not have the opportunity to be taught by the same range of teachers; some of who are very good teachers, as the pupils in the other key stages as a number of subjects are taught through an integrated approach. For example, the science specialist does not teach science. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is overall good, and within this there is some excellent and very good teaching, but there are also examples in literacy and mathematics where the expectations of higher attainers are not high enough. In two lessons during the inspection, the pupils spent too long consolidating their understanding instead of being moved on to new work. Teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 and at Post 16, is overall very good.

30. The teaching of the children under the age of five is very good overall. It is good for mathematics, personal and social education and knowledge of the world and very good for creative development and language and literacy. It is satisfactory for physical development. In all lessons a busy, productive and purposeful atmosphere is created. The very good planning and organisation of all lessons, apart from physical development, ensures that pupils are well motivated, moving between interesting activities that centre around a theme and different skills are reinforced across the areas of learning. For example, during the week of the inspection, children were introduced to the "Clever Cat" Letterland character for the letter "C", which became the theme for their experiences in other areas of learning. Learning support assistants are used very well and are clear about the learning objectives of each lesson. The very good management of all pupils' behaviour, including those, whose behaviour is challenging, ensures a calm environment, and has a positive impact on learning.

31. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics, information technology, art, music, drama and religious education. There is also very good teaching in literacy and numeracy, and at Post 16. Within some of these subjects there were examples of excellent teaching during the week of the inspection. These occurred in art, drama, English information technology, literacy, and religious education at Post 16. The overall teaching is good in science, design technology, geography, modern languages, physical education and religious education. Within these subjects there are also examples of very good teaching. There are no judgements concerning the teaching of history as it was not taught during the week of the inspection, except within the integrated schemes of work.

32. The high percentage of very good teaching is due to the high expertise of teachers who teach their specialist subject, such as, in music, drama and art, and therefore know their subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. This enables the pupils to make the best possible progress. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils' behaviour, participation and attainment, but pupils are sometimes unable to realise this due to the degree of their communication difficulties and the lack of signing, symbols and communication aids. Teachers, as a result of good in-service training, have become very skilled in the teaching of numeracy and literacy and are able to match the learning activities well to the pupils' differing abilities. The exception to this is in one class at Key Stage 2 where the expectations for higher attaining pupils are too low. Generally, all lessons have a clear focus for teaching and learning and build on previous work. The exception to this is in some lessons at Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2 where integrated schemes of work are used. Here the quality of the focus depends on the skills of individual teachers to teach and maintain a balance between the subjects.

33.All teachers use a variety of methods and strategies to get the best response from the pupils and use of different types of questioning, giving time for pupils to respond, especially those with the greatest difficulty in communication. However, not all teachers use signing consistently across the school, and during the inspection there were some examples of teachers communicating with pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 at a level which was not appropriate for their age, and this contrasts with the more adult approach in Post 16. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour very well. They are firm but friendly, make reference to acceptable behaviour, and there are very much a sense of value and respect for the efforts of all pupils. Time and resources are used well, as are the learning support assistants, who are well briefed so they can support pupils in the learning process, for example, in art. Assessment and evaluation, of pupils' achievements in lessons against the learning objectives, takes place during the best lessons and there are some very good examples of learning support assistants being involved in this process as observers and recorders. The teacher uses the resulting information when planning lessons, enabling work to be set at the appropriate level and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

37. The curriculum and assessment

34.There were no actual judgements on curriculum provision contained in the previous report, but the school has continued to develop the curriculum since the last inspection, and has addressed the curriculum and assessment related key issues. The subject co-ordinators' role in monitoring the curriculum has been extended to include time to monitor planning and some observation of teaching. Arrangements for personal and social education at the start and end of each day have been reviewed and are now consistent. Assessment procedures have undergone further development, and data collected are analysed to show trends in progress across the school, for example an increase in pupils gaining higher levels of achievement against the school's own system of awards following the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Assessment procedures remain good but they are not yet linked to National Curriculum attainment levels so the school is unable to identify pupils' levels of attainment in National Curriculum terms.

35.The curriculum for pupils under the age of five is good and meets its own stated objective to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, emphasising physical, emotional, social and cognitive development and purposeful play, offering opportunities to encourage learning experiences. The sensory curriculum for children within this group who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are appropriate but the balance of time spent withdrawn from the class has yet to be reviewed. These pupils do not have equal access to a teacher or their more able peers. When they take part in lessons with the rest of the class, for example, cooking within knowledge and understanding of the world, they make good progress and are well integrated by skilful facilitation from the learning support assistants and the teacher. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example pupils integrate with a mainstream playgroup and this helps their social skills. The very clear boundaries for expected behaviour that gives them a good grounding in understanding what is right and wrong. Assessment is good. The school provides a Baseline Assessment and careful recording of what children know, understand and can do, informs what is taught and individual targets and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs).

36.Across the rest of the school the curriculum continues to be broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are represented and it is of good quality overall but there are weaker areas within this judgement. For example pupils at Key Stage 3 and lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 are disapplied from studying a modern foreign language, which undermines their entitlement and equal opportunities. At Key Stage 1 the curriculum is satisfactory. The content of some subjects included in the integrated schemes of work at this key stage is not as clearly defined as subjects that are specialist taught further up the school. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is also satisfactory, but does not

give older pupils access to any externally accredited courses. The curriculum at Post 16 is very good and prepares students appropriately for the next stage of education and for later life. Here, modules of work are well linked to students' overall targets, and to external accreditation that provides a good framework for teaching and learning.

37. Personal and social education is included in the school's curriculum. This appropriately includes the teaching of drug awareness, sex education, life-skills and mobility. The school is effectively using the expertise of a member of staff to carry out individual programmes of physiotherapy so that pupils and students may become as independent as possible. Like wise the school uses the high level expertise of the school nurse to teach personal and social education. Careers education and guidance is very good, and due to the pupils' difficulties it is appropriately focused on at Post 16. It includes the careers service that offers very good advice to students and families as the students leave the school and move onto residential placements, work experience or further education.

38. The school strives to give its pupils equality of access to the curriculum and to all activities and this is satisfactory overall. This provision includes some integration with mainstream peers for pupils of all ages, and work experience and college links students at Post 16. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught separately for much of the week. This appropriately allows them access to a suitable curriculum that includes sensory education, including music therapy, time in the dark and light rooms and Jacuzzi sessions, and also builds in some social integration into their peer group classes within the school. However, their individual timetables are not monitored to ensure equality of entitlement, for example to all subjects of the National Curriculum and for access to a qualified teacher and consistency of approach.

39. Whilst the school provides a curriculum that meets successfully most pupils' special needs, those pupils with additional difficulties with speech and language do not have their needs fully met. Although they have group speech therapy in the classroom situation, and some receive individual therapy sessions, there is insufficient curriculum emphasis on the consistent use of signing, symbol-supported reading and the use of augmentative technological aids to communication. This situation is unsatisfactory overall, except at Post 16, where the provision of a differentiated curriculum is good.

40. Planning for pupils to build on their prior learning within and across key stages is good overall. It is very good in the Post 16 curriculum where planning ensures a smooth transition to college or other student placements. Great care is taken when planning whole-school topics to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study and certain topics are designated for subject co-ordinators to identify and redress any imbalances in their subject coverage. Teachers plan together successfully and topics are reviewed at the end of each half term. Many subjects benefit from the arrangements that allow them to be specialist taught from Year 4. However, some topics do not lend themselves to the successful inclusion of all subjects, and therefore pupils do not have a chance to keep up their skills in all subjects and may slip back. For example, in the whole-school topic on the Caribbean being taught at the time of the inspection, it was not possible to include history at most key stages. This issue is most noticeable at Key Stage 1, where planning to ensure continuity is satisfactory and some subjects are marginalised in the planning of integrated schemes of work, for example science and geography.

41. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which includes sports, enhances the curriculum. Some pupils represent teams at county and national levels as well as the school's participation in inter-school competitions, for example in football, athletics and swimming. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all levels of ability to attend out of school clubs run by school staff. Residential field trips are held with work in geography, history, science and physical education. Trips and visits to places of educational interest enrich the

curriculum. The many visitors into school also contribute to this, for example, an artist in residence, police liaison officer, multi-cultural theatre groups and two sports development workers, one of whom uses a wheelchair and provides a good role model for pupils with physical difficulties.

42.The school's assessment procedures and their use to inform curriculum planning remain good. Assessment information is analysed and used well in the formation of targets on the pupils' individual education plans. The school's own graded system of awards in English and mathematics, and the certificates in other subjects are properly moderated with samples pieces of work for each level which are kept in a portfolio of evidence. Baseline assessment has been introduced across the school, and, in common with other schools in the authority, it is used at the end of subsequent key stages in place of the national standard assessment tests. However, it has not, as yet, linked its assessments to National Curriculum attainment levels and is therefore unable to track pupils' progress through these levels.

43.Students at Post 16 have impressive success in their drama work, many achieving a distinction level in GNVQ foundation level in the subject. There are plans to extend accreditation in this subject, but as yet there are insufficient opportunities for accreditation in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy or in any other subjects, such as, information technology or art. Both Post 16 students and pupils at Key Stage 4 would benefit from further participation in externally accredited courses.

47. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44.Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good and this is a strength of the school. The school has maintained its very good provision for social and moral development since the last inspection. Planned opportunities for spiritual and cultural provision have improved from satisfactory to very good. Whole school initiatives, such as the Caribbean Week, which took place the week before the inspection, and included all pupils, provide excellent opportunities by involving music, dance, celebrations, festivals, life styles and beliefs and values of another culture.

45.The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good across the school and this is an improvement from the last inspection. They learn about the values and beliefs of Christianity and other religions in religious education. Pupils, in every year including those who are under the age of five, make visits to churches, and meet vicars and lay preachers, some having the opportunity to try on their special clothes. For example, pupils at Post 16, explore a variety of acts of Christian worship, the sounds and imagery used and talk about the emotions and thoughts being expressed. There are plans to visit places of worships of other faiths. They have the opportunity to find out about the belief systems of other people. For example, older pupils talk to a member of the Rastafarian culture, during the Caribbean Week, about the meaning of some of the important features of his lifestyle and beliefs. They recognise the different attitudes and values that people have and question and express their own beliefs. Opportunities are provided for all pupils at the beginning and end of religious education lessons to have a quiet reflection time with a candle. Weekly, whole school assemblies provide a further opportunity, for example when the music therapist plays the flute while the head teacher offers a thought for the day, a prayer and time for reflection. Other opportunities are provided to develop pupils' spirituality through music, dance and drama.

46.Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The emphasis on knowing what is expected of them for work and behaviour is begun in the class for children under five. Pupils know the routines and anticipate what they should do at certain times in the day. They are given very clear guidelines on what is right or wrong. For example they use the sign of "good", with a thumbs up, if they share with others. They take this clear view of what they should or should not do through the school where the good role models of teaches reinforces their

understanding. They demonstrate by the time they reach Post 16 that they have achieved a mature approach. For example, they hold their own meeting in religious education lessons and discuss what is needed to create a good meeting. The creative way the religious education curriculum is organised provides them with opportunities to reflect on, and question, the way different people behave and how people should behave, particularly towards each other. The music curriculum is organised to give pupils clear guidelines on behaviour, which leads to self-discipline, for example of following the conductor.

47.Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Drama, music and art all provide good opportunities for pupils to gain social skills. At lunchtime there are clear, written objectives for individuals and groups and these include good manners, being helpful, sharing and speaking pleasantly to each other. Pupils achieve these aims and behave in a well-mannered and socially acceptable way. They also take responsibility for helping each other and clearing up after their meal. Pupils of all ages have very good opportunities for integration with pupils in mainstream. For example, children in the class for under fives attend a local playgroup. They fit into the class and play well with the other children. Students at Post 16 take part in an extensive work experience programme in which they progress from a placement within the school to the highest attaining students taking up placement in a fast-food outlet and at the local primary school. The majority of students help in classes around the school for one day each week, and at the same time students get the opportunity to set up and run the school's café. They show initiative and for example help pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to move around the school. They participate in the community, for example, by raising money for cancer in memory of one of the teachers at the school who died.

48.Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There are very good opportunities to learn about their own culture, for instance in music, art, dance and drama. Pupils contribute to a published book of poetry by children from local schools. They also produced a moving collection called "We can sing a Rainbow" of poems, illustrations and songs. They have opportunities to visit museums and for artists to visit the school. For example during the Caribbean Week pupils visited the Sea Life Centre to experience life under the sea. Their opportunities to experience the multi-cultural aspects of society are also very good for example through subjects such as art, music and drama. The Caribbean week and work following on from this into the inspection week provided excellent opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of the culture and beliefs of other people. However, pupils at Key Stage 3 and some pupils at Key Stage 4 and Post 16, do not have the opportunity to experience the French culture on a regular basis as they are disapplied from being taught a modern language.

52. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

49.The provision that the school makes for the support and guidance of all pupils and students is very good and has a positive impact on the progress those pupils make. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to maintain a secure and caring environment in which pupils are looked after well by their teachers and other staff in the school. The school has reviewed its procedures at the start and end of the school day and now uses this time very effectively through the establishment of clear routines for support staff and planned activities such as 'circle time' to promote pupils' personal and social development.

50.Parents are very positive about the support provided for their children. They appreciate the school's efforts in helping their children to settle into school life and to cope with any changes they may have to make. They feel that there is excellent preparation by the school and careers service for pupils when they leave school. They value the work that the school does to help them with strategies for managing behaviour and coping with their child's feeding and toileting needs. They commend the care and attention afforded to their children by the school

nurse who is actively involved in pupils' personal and health education, and praise her support of the school's provision for sex education. Although parents feel that their children are given high levels of support by the school's staff, they are concerned that there is insufficient provision for specialist speech therapy and physiotherapy and that their children are not receiving the correct allocation of support due to them.

51.The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development during their time at school are good. Pupils' statements of special educational needs, their individual education plans and their end of year reports are detailed documents which make clear pupils' priority objectives and the progress that they are making towards them. Teachers are consistent in their use of records to show developments in academic achievement, for example, in reading. Pupils' records of achievement effectively demonstrate the range of activities undertaken by pupils during the key stage, their achievements gained in school, for example in swimming, and their participation in extra-curricular activities such as field trips. Photographic evidence is used well to document achievements such as pushing the right button in a lift or participating in a school play. However, although the school's policy for the use of records of achievement to involve pupils as far as possible in self-evaluation is clear, in practice there is little evidence of this happening regularly. The previous inspection also noted that this component could be further developed to promote pupils' involvement in recording their personal development.

52.The school employs a very good range of strategies to promote positive standards of behaviour and this has a very good impact on pupils' learning and the progress that they make. Staff place very good emphasis on the consistent encouragement of positive attitudes and very good standards of behaviour and pupils respond well to this. Where pupils have individual behavioural problems, there are clear procedures in place to implement behaviour management programmes that are well documented and set up with the agreement and support of parents. Support staff are clear about the school's policies and are fully involved in the implementation and monitoring of pupils' individual behaviour management plans. Strategies used by teachers such as stickers and merit cards are effective in encouraging pupils to improve their behaviour. There are clear guidelines in place for staff to report any incidences of bullying. Effective use is made of lessons in personal and social education and 'circle time' to address issues of friendship and attitudes towards others. All staff have are trained on the use of SCIP (strategic crisis intervention and prevention) which is used if a pupil's behaviour is likely to cause harm to themselves or to others. There are clearly documented procedures for recording any such incidents and the two teachers responsible for the management of the programme are regularly updated on latest techniques and guidelines.

53.Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are very good. There are clear systems in place for recording and reporting pupils' absences. Transport escorts are very effectively involved in the process. They encourage parents to report the reasons for pupils' absences at the time of absence and are clear about the need to report any concerns directly to the secretary who is responsible for the administration and completion of registers. At the last inspection, it was noted that registers were not always completed correctly and this issue has now been resolved with all pupils who are educated off-site having an authorised absence with a correct code.

54.The school makes excellent provision for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. It is fortunate to have the services of a full-time school nurse who offers very effective support to the school, its pupils and families. She manages and administers clear procedures for dealing with pupils' illnesses, medication and first aid and provides a very high standard of care for all pupils in the school. She has very strong links with a range of outside health, social and welfare agencies and uses these effectively to ensure that the welfare of individual pupils is secure. Arrangements for reporting child protection concerns are very good and are clearly documented. Confidential counselling is available for pupils where necessary and very good

support is given to families who require multi-agency support.

55. Although the school receives very good support from a number of outside agencies, there is insufficient support allocated to the school for the high percentage of pupils who require regular speech therapy as identified in their statements of special educational need. Currently the school is allocated six hours a week to assess, support teachers and work with pupils, either in groups and on an individual level. Seventy per cent of pupils have speech and language therapy on their statements and a large number have articulation difficulties, which while they can make themselves understood within the school, they cannot be readily understood outside the school environment. This is of significant concern to parents and is endorsed by the inspection team, especially as the school is about to lose 50 per cent of its allocation due to maternity leave and they cannot be guaranteed a replacement. In addition the school does not have school policy on communication and consequently there is no consistent approach to signing, the use of symbols or augmentative communication. This impedes some pupils' progress in achieving their potential, for example, in reading.

56.The school offers a comprehensive programme of health education, which includes sex education and drugs awareness. Programmes promoting, for example, personal safety, healthy eating, hygiene and growing up are effectively supported by the school nurse who takes a lead responsibility for personal and social education, and from outside support from the police liaison team. The careers service offers very good advice to pupils and families as they leave the school and move onto residential placements, work experience or further education.

57.The school places high priority on providing a safe, secure and clean environment for pupils and staff. The site supervisor has a very good awareness of current health and safety regulations and requirements and arranges regular inspections of the school premises and equipment, fire drills, checks of the minibus and assessments of new items of equipment brought into school. The health and safety policy is detailed and, along with the staff handbook, gives good guidance to staff to ensure the overall care and well being of pupils while in the school.

61. Partnership with parents and the community

58.The quality of partnership that the school has with parents and the community is very good and is a strength of the school. Since the last inspection, the school has developed the quality of information that it provides to parents in order to further involve them in their children's education and in the life of the school. It has continued to strengthen its links with the local community and, in particular, the use that it makes of integration to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences in mainstream education.

59.Parents show very strong support for the school and its work. They report that the information they receive about what their children are taught and how well they are achieving and making progress is excellent. They feel very well informed about choices available to pupils when they leave the school. They report that the school encourages them to be involved in school life by supporting their children at home and school and by seeking support for the school from the local community. A very small number of parents are not satisfied with the school's provision for homework although others say that they are happy with the arrangements.

60.The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Parents are kept very well informed about events in school and the work their children are doing through regular informative newsletters. Home-school diaries are a very effective method of encouraging regular communication between parents and their child's teacher and are used well by both to relay any concerns and to continue an on-going dialogue about pupils' progress. This has a positive impact on the support and guidance provided for pupils and their families. Very good arrangements are in place for more formal contact with parents through termly meetings to discuss learning objectives, and annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational need. Parents receive very good quality information about the targets that have been set for their child to work towards in their individual education plans. Information in end of year school reports about a pupils' academic achievements is detailed in each curriculum area and gives parents a very clear picture about their child's personal development. The school is very open and welcoming to new parents and encourages them to keep in regular communication with teachers through the diaries and by visiting the school at frequent intervals to meet teachers and those who are involved in the care of their children, including outside agencies. The school prospectus and the governing body's annual report give parents helpful information about the running of the school, which they appreciate. However, the quality of the prospectus is just satisfactory, as it does not contain any visual representations of the school or pupils working. Both the prospectus and the annual report to parents do not contain all the statutory elements and therefore do not meet current requirements.

61. Through the home-school agreement and its documentation, the school actively encourages the support and involvement of parents, both in their child's work and in the life of the school. Parents report that they are encouraged to help with practical activities such as swimming, sports and riding and to join the Quince Tree Friends' Association. Through the Association, parents take part in regular fund-raising and social events, which helps to involve them in school life, to meet teachers in a less formal setting and to raise funds to provide additional resources for the school. Although there are very few parents who help regularly during the school day, all parents are very supportive of events and activities to which they are invited; for example, to Friday class assemblies, concerts and 'fun-days'.

62. The school's partnership with the community is excellent and this has a very positive impact on pupils' progress and their personal, social and cultural development. The school is very well known in the area and has well-established support from schools, businesses and charitable organisations. Through local and parental support and funding it has been able to extend its premises to provide good quality accommodation for students in the further education department. It makes very good use of local and regional press to publicise its activities and the achievements of individual pupils. A recent initiative where the pupils have 'adopted' a local church as part of the national Schools Adopt Monuments Scheme has received recent publicity. Excellent use is made of a wide range of visits outside school for all pupils in order to enrich the curriculum and to provide pupils with different social and cultural experiences. These visits include trips to gardening centres, farms, the library, shops and park as well as further afield to museums, theatres and a sealife centre. Residential visits to places such as Betws-y-Coed in Wales are very successful in developing pupils' social skills and promoting their independence. The school also makes good use of visitors to enrich pupils' learning. These include regular visits from the police, storytellers, musicians and theatre groups.

63. The school makes excellent use of its links with local several playgroups, schools and colleges in order to provide pupils with valuable educational experiences outside school. These successful programmes of integration have a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. The youngest children in the class for under fives have regular opportunities to socialise and play with children in two different playgroups. Parents of children in the playgroups welcome the opportunities given to their child to mix with others that have different educational needs. The playgroups provide good support and guidance to students from the school who are taking part in work experience. There are strong links with nearby primary and secondary schools. Pupils in Key Stage 3 take part in joint activities, such as drama and physical education, with the oldest pupils from the neighbouring primary school throughout the year. The oldest pupils in Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to attend the local high school as part of their studies for GNVQ accreditation. Students who are in the further education department benefit from weekly link courses at Tamworth College where they have good opportunities to work alongside other students and to develop their social skills while taking lunch in the College refectory. These pupils have the opportunity to develop their working skills through a good range of placements at fast food outlets, a children's farm, playgroups and homes for the elderly.

67. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

67. Leadership and management

64. The leadership and management of the school provided by the head teacher and the governing body are excellent. This is a very good school who has achieved all the key issues from the last inspection, further improved its standards, implemented national and local initiatives and through self-evaluation and review has started a cycle of improvement. This is a school where all managers and staff work towards the common purpose of school improvement, and where they consider current practice at all levels. Corporate decisions are

then made about how the school has and is to further improve, and there is a clear educational direction for the school. For example, in the provision of accommodation for the Post 16 students, and in the targets set for school improvement. Although there is a planned cycle of school review scheduled for the next two years, the educational direction for the school is clouded by the uncertainty of its future in the light of the special educational needs review being carried out by the local education authority. However, this has not stopped the school managers planning short-term improvements.

65. There is a clear management structure at all levels and communication within the school is very good. Senior staff meet frequently, as do curriculum co-ordinators, and class support teams. The members of the senior management each play an active role in the whole school development and have clear roles and responsibilities. There has been the careful deployment of staff in which their area of expertise has been very well matched to their responsibility and to the teaching of their specialist subject. This has a very good impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school, and subsequently, the progress pupils make. All staff feels valued and empowered. Curriculum co-ordinators provide good leadership overall, and now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Since the last inspection they have carried out a phased monitoring function of curriculum and teaching across the school.

66. The involvement of the governing body is very good with the governors playing a proactive part in the process of school improvement. All are very supportive of the school's work, have a strategic view of the needs of the school, and are actively involved in the auditing and monitoring of curriculum areas, for example, in information technology. The governing body are a group of people who 'make things happen'. They meet regularly, have the necessary committees who report to the full governing body and receive reports and presentations from subject co-ordinators. They now fulfil their statutory responsibilities highlighted in the last report, but the annual report of the governing body to parents has statutory areas omitted, such as, detailed financial accounts, the professional in-service training of staff, the authorised and unauthorised absence rates, and student destinations. The school's policy for equal opportunity is satisfactory in terms of the commitment that the school makes in providing equality for all pupils. However, the governing body does not have clear procedures for monitoring the implementation and operation of the policy to ensure that all pupils have true access to all elements of the curriculum. This is especially important in the light of the curriculum entitlement issues of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those who do not receive a modern language.

67. Monitoring and support of curriculum development is good and has resulted in improved consistency in planning throughout the school, improved progress in many subjects and raised standards of teaching since the last inspection. The school has implemented the Literacy Framework very well, and the implementation of the Numeracy framework is excellent. Both areas are well led and managed. However, the school's decision to pilot the inclusion of individual pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties into classes across the school has not yet been monitored, and there is a curriculum imbalance for some pupils and as well as an unequal opportunity for some to be taught by a qualified teacher.

68. School development planning, and its' monitoring and evaluation has continued to be improved and is now excellent. Along with the school self-evaluation it is used very well to evaluate and achieve school targets. Areas for development are prioritised, costed, have a time scale, and have success criteria and a review date. The governing body is very well involved in the prioritising process. They assess alternative scenarios and act a critical friend to the school. Planning documents link educational and financial planning are clearly based on whole school and subject audits. For example, in information technology the audit has had the assistance and support of the chair of the governing body.

69. The ethos of the school is very good. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school

with all members of the school community working towards a common purpose. Attitudes to work and behaviour are very good, and relationships within the school are excellent. Teachers give excellent role models for the pupils and students they teach. Although the school is committed to high achievement and the realisation of full potential for pupils, it is not completely achieved due the lack of external accreditation for pupils at Key Stage 4, especially as some pupils are able to achieve this. Approved policies are in place for all subjects and areas of the school and the school very well meets its aims to provide a safe, secure caring environment and a broad and balanced enjoyable curriculum which fosters self esteem, mutual respect and trusting relationships. The parents of pupils at the school fully support the aims and values of the school.

73. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

70.The adequacy, qualifications and experience of teaching staff is very good, as it was at the time of the last report. There are sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, especially as their qualifications are very good, reflecting expertise throughout the core and foundation subjects. Teachers are all well experienced, and many have additional qualifications in different of education such as Early Years and special educational needs. This has a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Class sizes are manageable, and the deployment of teachers as subject specialists in the afternoons ensures that good coverage of the curriculum is possible, and that pupils receive the expertise and experience of staff.

71.There is very good provision of support staff throughout the school, in a variety of roles. The school has well maintained this very high standard since the previous report. Classroom support staff are all well qualified and are very capable in all aspects of their work. Many of them have roles that include additional responsibilities, such as, art and literacy support, or the organisation of resources or the library, as well their main tasks in classes with the pupils. There is excellent teamwork between them and often their handover to one another is seamless. The school secretary very capably acts as general administration and financial officer, secretary and first point of contact for parents and visitors. The school nurse very ably takes responsibility for personal and social education, including sex education, as well as the administration of medication, health, hygiene and overall care requirements. The site manager is very good; he is particularly active in refurbishing and redecorating many areas of the school, including minor building works, such as the sensory garden fountain, wheelchair ramps, display units in the foyer, and the library. Further very good support comes from the music therapist and the physiotherapist, who work actively with pupils, and who assist in the planning of other sessions of the pupils' activities. Support from the clinical psychologist is also very valuable, especially in giving family therapy support where it is sometimes much needed. Whilst the speech and language support staff give very good direct help and planning advice, they are allocated to the school for too short a time to fully meet the needs for all pupils for whom there are statements of special educational needs requiring this type of support.

72.There is very good provision for staff development. This was also very good in the previous report. Training for teachers and classroom support staff is very well organised and is linked to the school's development plan and the budget. Much of the training is bought in, or run from within the school. This is a deliberate policy on the part of the school, as a way of ensuring quality, relevance and reliability in the provision of courses. Teachers who have a mainstream background are encouraged to undertake further training for qualifications in special educational needs. They have undertaken a lot of training for the teaching of National Curriculum subjects in special schools. There has been a very good and effective focus on numeracy this year, literacy last year, and information technology for several years, which has a raised the quality of teaching in the school. Additionally, teachers have attended training events for particular interests, needs and priorities. Classroom support staff have also taken

part in very good training in areas as diverse as numeracy and information technology, first aid and behaviour management, gymnastics, music therapy and supporting least able pupils. Many are due to attend a training course at a local college, to gain an additional qualification in special educational needs to add to their original nursery nurse training.

73.Members of the governing body have undertaken training on how to fulfil their role most effectively, especially how to carry out a "moderated self review" and to judge their own performances, and that of the school. Individual members have attended events on, for example, information technology, signing, literacy and numeracy. Appraisal fully meets requirements, and is undertaken very well. It takes the form of "target setting" in meetings with teaching and support staff, and it is well targeted at school priorities such as the major literacy, numeracy and information technology projects. This is a voluntary commitment on the part of the support staff, and they are very positive about the benefits it brings to the school, the pupils, and to their own professional development. The induction process for new staff is very good. It is flexible, well targeted and organised. It includes having an experienced mentor, information packs, team teaching, watching each other teach, holding meetings with colleagues, and attending courses that should be useful in fulfilling their new role. Many teachers and support staff has worked in the school on a supply or voluntary basis prior to their full employment, or were placed in the school as part of their initial training.

74.The accommodation is good overall. There has been a great improvement since the last report, primarily due to the school's own internal efforts, and has allowed the school to increase the quality of it curriculum. The huge investment in an extension has created a Post 16 unit that is spacious, clean, comfortable, and well equipped for the students who use it. It has done much to create good working conditions throughout the school by freeing up space for other classes to move into, and to use for storage. Whilst two classrooms are still quite small, and the new art/design technology room is not spacious, the situation is vastly better than previously, and has a more positive impact on teaching and learning. Most classrooms have their own integral toilet and changing facilities, good stock rooms and cupboards, corners for information technology and for quiet interactive sessions, and they have very good displays that greatly enhance the whole learning environment.

75.Outside the classrooms, there is a good range of facilities such as a very well refurbished library, two sensory rooms, a Jacuzzi and a sensory garden, all of which contribute effectively to pupils' learning. The hall is multi-purpose, and is a throughway at one end. This is sometimes distracting to classes using the hall for drama or for physical education. It is also quite small for assemblies when the whole school is together. There is no science facility, such as a mini-laboratory for older pupils and students. Some storage of equipment such as musical instruments in corridors is reasonable where the space is wide, but in other places, stored boxes and equipment restricts movement around the school. Further around the school, there are good adventure play facilities, well-maintained grass and hard play areas, and play areas for separate classes, or to be shared by several classes. The school has recently increased its security arrangements, including the installation of a good quality perimeter fence.

76.The school's own accommodation is well supported by the use of external facilities, especially for physical education, and for topics such as science, history and geography. Local schools and colleges are also used to support the in-school resources, as well as local swimming pools, parks shops and museums. Good use is made of two residential centres, one in the midlands, and one in north Wales, which support the schools' extra curricular provision. The school is very clean and very well maintained. It is very well upgraded by the efforts of the site supervisor and the caretaking staff.

77.The resources that the school uses are good overall, and are diverse enough to support all areas of the curriculum. This is a considerable improvement on the situation at the time of the last report. Throughout the school, the resources are of good quality; they are very well organised; they are sufficient of them for all pupils; and they are accessible to all staff when they are needed. Resources for English are good, particularly with respect to the Literacy Project, the library, class libraries and the very good stock of "Big Books". There is a weakness, however, in the use of books with older children that are not appropriate to their

ages. Maths resources are very good. They have been supplemented recently by the numeracy project, and include a very good range of books, games and small "table top" equipment. There are good resources for science, including a new "portable laboratory" to help with the syllabus for older pupils and students, and the light and dark sensory rooms for the lower attaining pupils.

78. For information technology, the resources are very good. There are many new computers with access to the Internet, and a good range and quantity of appropriate software and peripheral equipment such as touch screens, switches and alternative keyboards. There is, however, a lack of communication aids for the less able pupils to use in their general communication around school. Religious education has good resources, and adds to these by extensive borrowing of artefacts from a loan service. There are also good resources for other subjects, including physical education, music, art, design and technology, history and geography. Many of them are new, and all of them are good quality and appropriate to the pupils and their needs. The resources for French are satisfactory. In particular areas of the school, there are also good resources. This includes, for example, the under fives class, Post 16, and the class for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. The school also owns a minibus that well supports the curriculum available to the pupils by giving them access to places away from the school grounds.

82. The efficiency of the school

79. The overall efficiency of the school is excellent. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

80. Financial planning, based on appropriate information and projections, is excellent. The governors are very clear about their priorities and relate expenditure very closely to identified educational developments. At the time of the inspection the school had yet to complete the payment for the recent building work, and therefore is not carrying forward a large amount of surplus money into the coming year, as is indicated in the financial returns. Priorities established in the comprehensive school development plan are carefully costed and appropriate budget allocations are made. The school development action plans are excellent and contain details of educational outcomes and related expenditure. The highly effective system of moderated self-review allows staff and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of expenditure. This process has been very well used by governors to monitor the impact of Literacy expenditure on pupils' attainment and progress in English.

81. The governing body plays a very active role and closely monitors expenditure through the finance committee. Governors from the finance committee have a highly structured programme for reviewing the effectiveness of expenditure. Recent expenditure on information technology has been critically evaluated. Specific grants have been targeted on literacy and numeracy, and information technology. The finance sub-committee has a very clear long-term plan to fulfil their responsibility for evaluating expenditure.

82. Staffing arrangements for teaching the curriculum, supporting class groupings and pupil contact time are excellent. The school is highly responsive to changes in pupils' needs and organises staffing appropriately. Evidence of this flexibility includes the highly effective use of subject co-ordinators to teach their specialist subjects, supported by highly skilled and trained support staff. Governors very effectively consider a range of possible options when planning staff appointments and this adds to the excellent deployment of staff.

83. The school makes excellent use of the accommodation. For example, the cramped art room is used for both art and design technology. The school has also very effectively created a delightful library area drawing upon the carpentry skills of the site manager. The school makes excellent use of available resources in all curriculum areas. The school is very

successful in its private fundraising. The resulting income is very thoughtfully spent to improve provision for all pupils and for improvements to subject resources, fabric of the premises and the school grounds. The new accommodation for Post 16 students demonstrates the outstanding impact that such fund-raising has on educational provision at the school.

84. Day-to-day financial procedures and school administration are very good. The school secretary has clearly defined roles and responsibilities and is both very effective and efficient. The school has a very comprehensive administration handbook, which outlines regular office routines. The school has recently resolved a dispute regarding the most recent audit report carried out by the local authority. An effective action plan resolving the outstanding audit concerns has been presented to governors.

85. Funding levels for each pupil are below those nationally for similar schools and the quality of education provided related to context and income is very good. Pupils, other than those with additional special educational needs make good progress and pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and personal development is very good. Attendance is good and spending decisions are very cost effective. The school provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

89. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

86. At the time of the inspection there were five children who were less than five years old in the early years class. All children have some difficulty with language and communication, some have physical difficulties, and some demonstrate difficulties associated with autism. A few children have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Overall the children make very good progress in the areas of learning and the quality of the provision shows a good improvement since the last inspection.

90. *Personal and social development*

87. Children make very good progress in personal and social development. For example, they are introduced to routines at lunchtime and follow these very well, including helping to clear up their own plates. They take part in daily "Hello" sessions when they say, sign and sing "Hello" and higher attaining children recognise their names, with the photograph prompt being hidden. Lower attaining children recognise their name with a photograph clue and count with the teacher how many children are in school that day. Children also have the opportunity to attend a playgroup with children without special needs, and show the ability to mix socially and to gain social skills. Teaching of this area of learning is good. However, in Jacuzzi sessions which contribute to the physical development of children, the organisation is inappropriate as one pupil has to wait for a long time, already changed, before he can have his turn. All children's progress is affected by the lack of consistent signing. All staff use signing, but at times, for example when a new concept is being introduced, there is insufficient reinforcement of the use of signing to facilitate children's language and aid their understanding.

91. *Language and literacy*

88. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. Children are encouraged to communicate in all lessons, with a focus, for example, in their daily "Hello" session. They are supported in their understanding and encouraged to use language by the use of signing. However, this is not always consistently used to reinforce their language work at every opportunity. Higher attaining children speak in simple sentences and can make themselves understood well. Lower attaining children use signs and gesture to make their needs known. They listen to stories and take part in action and signing rhymes. Children with challenging behaviour make good progress in joining in with actions in songs. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn "turn taking" and are encouraged to make eye contact, verbalise and smile as a foundation for verbal communication. Opportunities to help children communicate are missed as there are no "Big Mac" single switch operated speech devices to aid their communication.

89. Children's new learning for literacy is well supported, for example, with information technology and creative development. Children's appreciation of books is fostered well. They understand that books have stories that are read and higher attaining children answer questions about the story and anticipate what might happen next. Lower attaining children show a respect for books and begin to realise that printed words give a message. Higher attaining children can recognise big flashcards of their own name and lower attaining children pick out their name with a photograph of themselves alongside the writing. Higher attaining children can recognise that coffee, caterpillar and car start with the "c" sound, and the letter for "Clever Cat". Lower attaining children copy the sound "ccccc" or listen to the teacher and other children chanting the sound. Higher attaining children write the letter "C" with help and practice this when they are making things in other lessons. They are helped to write the letter on the computer screen with "Doodles" software. The teaching of language and literacy is very good.

93. **Mathematics**

90.Children make good progress. Higher attaining children can recognise, sign and name a triangle in their work on shape. They can find big and little triangles and sort according to two criteria, for example finding a big, yellow triangle. Information technology reinforces their learning when they are helped to draw a triangle on a touch screen. Lower attaining children, with prompting, can point to a triangle or circle. They reinforce the shape when they make a Rainbow fish out of triangles. The teaching of mathematics is good.

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

91.Children make good progress in this area of learning. Information technology is used within many of the other areas of learning and this provides them with the opportunity to explore the world of computers. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties use the dark and light rooms and the sensory garden to explore the world and they make good progress in these sessions. They turn towards and touch the light, for example from a bubble tube and from a torch shining on red, crunchy paper. Children explore, experiment and interact with construction toys and switch operated equipment. For example, they find out about cause and effect when they make toys and tapes work using single switches. Teaching of this area of learning is good.

95. **Physical development**

92.Due to the organisation of the timetable it was not possible to observe the children's weekly physical development lesson. However from the planning and from observation of two children in a Jacuzzi session, children make satisfactory progress. They take part in appropriate movement sessions and use large apparatus in the Hall. In the Jacuzzi session they make good progress when they are in the water, for example anticipating parts of an action rhyme and smiling and maintaining eye contact. However, progress is affected as one child has to wait, already changed, for a long time before it is his turn in the Jacuzzi. Teaching is satisfactory.

96. **Creative development**

93.Children make very good progress in this area of learning. The work is carefully planned to support the children's learning in other areas of learning. For example, they make and decorate rainbow fish to support their language and literacy text level work on the story of the 'Rainbow Fish'. They paint glue lines on the fish for scales and where they are able to, they are encouraged to make the shape of "C". They make a picture with circles and triangles to support their mathematics work on shape. In music higher attaining children anticipate actions as part of songs. Lower attaining children respond positively and attempt parts of the actions. All children, apart from children with complex learning difficulties, march to accordion music and "still" at appropriate moments in the song. Teaching of all aspects of creative development is very good.

94.The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. In less than a term at the school she has ensured that a very positive atmosphere is maintained for staff and children. This, designed to address all the areas of learning, is being implemented well, and all pupils are working towards the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes for children. The co-ordinator is aware that the balance of time for profound and multiple learning difficulties children needs to be reviewed. In the short time the co-ordinator has been in the school, she has learnt the basics of Makaton signing, but signing needs to be developed to ensure that it is used consistently in all lessons.

95.The qualifications and experience of the co-ordinator and the learning support assistants are very good. Their work is assisted by specialist teaching for physical development and music and by therapists. The accommodation is good. There is a large, spacious room with areas that can be separated off into different activities. Access to the light room and the nurse's room is off the room, but this does not provide undue difficulties. There is also a good

separate outdoor area for play that includes swings, large toys and tricycles. Learning resources are good. New resources have been bought and all resources are of good quality and very well organised. The use of learning support assistants is excellent.

99. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

99. English (including drama)

96.The school has maintained its high standards of provision in English and drama since the last inspection. Progress in English is good overall. In literacy hour sessions where teachers are confident in their knowledge of the National Literacy Framework, many groups of children make very good progress. In speaking and listening, where teachers place an emphasis on the development of these skills across the curriculum, pupils make very good progress. However, pupils with additional special needs in speech and language who would benefit from the consistent use of signing and symbol-supported reading or from the use of augmentative means of communication make only satisfactory progress overall. In reading and in writing, pupils make good progress. However, whilst pupils make good and very good progress in their response to literature through literacy hour sessions and in whole-school topics that are literature-based, less progress is made in pupils' individual reading skills.

97.Across the school pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. Pupils at Key Stage 1 can listen attentively to a story read by the teacher and can answer simple questions about what they have heard. By the end of the key stage, they can follow simple instructions given by the teacher, and most can make their views known using basic sentences. Higher attainers can describe what they have done in the lesson when encouraged to celebrate their achievements with the class. Pupils at Key Stage 2 listen to a shared text in a literacy session and can say what are the key points of the plot. By the end of the key stage, most can follow more complex instructions, and can give their answers with increasing confidence and a growing vocabulary. Pupils at Key Stage 3 follow directions in the form of a brief, for example, when their teacher describes what activities they must complete. By the end of the key stage, they can use their speaking and listening skills in a more social context, such as when they work together with pupils from a local mainstream school on a joint drama project. Pupils at Key Stage 4 can retell a story that has been read to them and by the end of the key stage can express in words how they will depict 'sadness' using facial and body language in a drama session.

98.Post 16 students use their skills in speaking and listening in a wider variety of situations in the community, for example during a local college link and on work experience. In school, they practise their speaking and listening skills through role-playing telephone conversations that they might need to make in life outside school. Drama lessons, of an excellent quality give them opportunities to develop their imaginations and many students can express their thoughts clearly and with confidence. They respect and value the views of others. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties make progress in communicating their daily needs, in responding to a range of greetings, and in indicating choices, for example between instruments that they would like to play in a music therapy session.

99.Overall, pupils make good progress in reading. Pupils at Key Stage 1 get off to a good start with their reading and build up a sight vocabulary of basic words, such as 'on', 'off' and 'open'. Higher attainers move on to reading early books in a graded reading scheme, and can read these simple texts successfully. Lower attainers can start to match words with the help of symbols. They make very good progress. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to develop their independent reading and make good progress. By the end of the key stage, some are becoming more fluent readers, with a larger sight vocabulary. However, some pupils move up the reading scheme, they do so without a secure grasp of the words in books at lower levels. Progress continues to be good at Key Stages 3 and 4. In Key Stage 3, pupils are starting to

recognise some initial sounds of words but few use these skills in support of their reading. In Key Stage 4, some higher attaining pupils can use their reading skills to find out information, for example, from CD-ROM or the Internet. However, many have an insecure knowledge of how sounds can be blended to read unfamiliar words and do not have a sight vocabulary of the words that occur with highest frequency in English. Students in Post 16 continue to extend their range of shared reading, including Shakespeare texts, but the confidence they demonstrate in speaking and listening skills is not present in their independent reading. Pupils and students across the school tend to reach a plateau at the lower levels of National Curriculum attainment.

100. In writing, pupils in each key stage make good progress. In Key Stage 1 they take part in pre-writing activities such as following patterns and learning to control a pencil through moving it between two lines. Higher attainers learn to write their names and to copy simple phrases. By the end of the key stage, many can form individual letters regularly and legibly. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to learn letter formation and construct basic sentences. By the end of the key stage, most can write or copy sentences about a story they have heard. Pupils in Key Stage 3 learn to write their name and address. Many write clearly enough to be read by external audiences, for example a postman could read the addresses that they write. At Key Stage 4, some pupils can write in other forms, for example speech bubbles to tell a story. Older students continue to improve their writing, and by the time they leave school, some can write legibly, with clear letter formation, and can apply this in a range of situations. For example, some know that sentences start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, and can apply this routinely in their writing.

101. Pupils' response to English is very good overall, but varies from lesson to lesson in direct response to the quality of teaching. Where the teaching is good or very good, pupils have better attitudes to learning, concentrate more and are motivated to produce better work. In general, pupils work hard in their lessons, persevering even when they find the work difficult. They try to improve, listening carefully to their teacher's advice and explanations. When given opportunities, they work well together in pairs or small groups, and handle books and information technology equipment carefully.

102. Teaching of English is very good overall, but is not consistent across the school. It ranges from satisfactory in some lessons, to some very good and excellent teaching of literacy and drama. Where teaching is best, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and can teach the basic literacy skills effectively. Pupils are well managed, and tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Lessons move with good pace, and planning is structured to give pupils opportunities to consolidate what they have learned and to build on prior learning. Information technology is used effectively to support pupils' learning and support staff well deployed to supervise group work. Where teaching is less effective, teachers have a less secure knowledge of the subject, and do not understand how to develop pupils' basic literacy skills, for example how to improve their individual reading skills. Planning sometimes does not cover the whole ability range, and higher attainers are under-challenged, reflecting low expectations of them on the part of their teachers. No use is made of specialist teaching of pupils, with classes receiving lessons from the English co-ordinator to supplement those from their class teachers. The exception to this is in drama, where standards are consistently high throughout the school.

103. The subject is well co-ordinated. The main English and drama co-ordinator provides very good quality leadership and management, ably supported by another teacher who takes responsibility for the speech and language programmes. There is close liaison with the speech therapist. Drama is used particularly well to support pupils' progress in English, and pupils learn an impressive range of dramatic techniques that help to raise their confidence, self-esteem and inter-personal skills, for example teamwork. The success of the drama programme can be seen not only in school productions and in joint projects with a local

mainstream school, but also in pupils' achievements in nationally accredited courses.

104.The breadth and balance of the English curriculum is good. However, the planning for pupils to build on prior learning is only satisfactory overall. Whilst the school's approach to the literacy hour has been very effective, planning to develop pupils' individual reading skills has not and, does not, ensure that pupils' reading skills are developed systematically throughout their time at the school. Pupils with additional speech and language therapy needs receive support in groups in their classrooms, and some receive individual therapy. Although the school has developed very good quality speech and language programmes, these are not linked to National Curriculum levels for higher attainers. For those who need augmented communication systems, too little emphasis is placed on consistent use of signing across the school, or on the use of symbols and technological communication aids.

105.Assessment information collected is used to inform curriculum planning, and pupils' progress through the school's own in-house awards system is monitored by the co-ordinator. Whilst this monitoring system is good, it has not yet identified pupils' weaknesses in applying their phonic knowledge, or the fact that some pupils are allowed to progress through their reading scheme without consolidating work at lower levels. Pupils' literacy skills are reinforced by lessons in other subjects, for example drama, maths, geography, personal and social education and religious education. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties, excellent quality music therapy sessions contribute greatly to the development of their communication skills. For those higher attaining pupils who study French as a modern foreign language, links are drawn between the two languages, and similarities and differences highlighted. However, although pupils make good and very good progress, there are no opportunities for older pupils to gain accreditation in basic literacy skills.

106.Accommodation is generally good, but the classroom for upper Key Stage 2 pupils is too small for group work to be fully effective. The library is housed in an open area off the main corridor and is attractively arranged. Each classroom has a small selection of books. Resources are of good quality but there are insufficient age-appropriate materials for older pupils and students. The range of multi-cultural texts and of literature in general has been extended and English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

110. **Literacy**

107.The school's strategy for implementing the National Literacy Framework has been successful and has started to have a very good effect on pupils' progress. Training has been effective in raising standards of planning and of teachers' knowledge and understanding of English. Led by the main co-ordinator, teachers have planned together well to provide a very good programme of literacy work across the school. Resources purchased for Literacy sessions are of high quality, and are shared across the staff, for example a good range of big books and accompanying class sets of normal sized versions of the books. Monitoring of literacy planning and sessions is in place, and has made a valuable contribution to the standards

111. **Mathematics**

108.Provision for mathematics is very good and a strength of the school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school's introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is excellent.

109.Overall the progress that pupils make in mathematics is very good and the numeracy strategy is already having an impact on progress. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils can count and recognise numerals to five. They also have a good understanding of concept of zero. Lower attaining pupils can recognise a square and a circle and indicate whether a pot is full or empty. Progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 is good. Higher attainers can order numbers up to twelve and count backwards as well as forwards.

Pupils are beginning to recognise 1p and 2p coins and can successfully add two numbers under five together. Lower ability pupils are beginning to recognise numerals to five. However, pupils could make even greater progress if teachers' expectations were higher, particularly for those pupils who are the higher attainers.

110. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 make very good progress. At Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils are able to create number patterns using multiples of 2 and 4. Lower attaining pupils can create simple repeating two colour and shape patterns. At Key Stage 4, pupils of average ability can count in 2s to 10 and 10s to 100. They are also able to add the numbers from two dice to play simple number games. Higher attaining pupils are able to successfully subtract numbers under five from numbers up to 30. They are also able to estimate the relative values and capacities of a number of soft drinks. Students at Post 16 continue to make very good progress. Higher attainers are able to recognise numbers and compare various types of graphs. Students of average ability can double numbers and count backwards. Lower attaining students are able to identify numerals and count blocks on block graphs.

111. There is evidence of the very good use of mathematics to support other curriculum subjects. Older students have used graphs very effectively in both geography and food technology. Younger pupils use number skills extensively during their welcome sessions each morning. Post 16 students also make excellent use of their money, addition and subtraction skills in operating a weekly café in the school hall for all pupils.

112. Pupils' have consistently very good attitudes to their work. Pupils are very interested in mathematics and respond with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. In one Key Stage 3 lesson pupils were engrossed in discovering if the tallest pupil had the longest hand. Behaviour is always very good and pupils' work very hard to complete the tasks they are set. A very positive feature of all lessons is the congratulation given by all pupils to the success of others. Pupils in all key stages concentrate very hard for long periods. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils are always very positive and this contributes to pupils' confidence to contribute to all activities. Pupils take great pride in their achievements and respect the contributions of other pupils.

113. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Planning is always detailed, making good use of resources and support staff. The planning for the numeracy hour is always very well related to teachers' medium-term plans and the schools' long-term plans for each key stage. The teaching of the initial whole class sessions is best where it includes appropriate tasks for all pupils. In the best lessons, teachers set clear learning outcomes for all pupils, relate these to pupils' individual education plans and assessment is ongoing. In the weaker lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, teachers have lower expectations of pupil achievement and do not match the content of the lesson to the needs of all pupils. The use of information technology to support mathematics is good overall.

114. Mathematics is very well led by the two co-ordinators that both have a very high level of enthusiasm for their subject. They have made an excellent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy to the school. Both co-ordinators have received highly relevant training and are very well placed to further develop mathematics. They have undertaken staff training and monitoring which have had a highly significant impact on the provision of mathematics across the school. Both co-ordinators provide very good support to other teachers.

115. Resources for mathematics are very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Resources for time, money, weight and measure have all been improved considerably. Resources for work on number are excellent. Teachers have carefully supplemented commercial resources with their own materials, which are always of a very high quality. The majority of resources are appropriately based in classrooms and very well classified. Supplementary resources are catalogued appropriately and stored centrally.

119. **National numeracy strategy**

116. The school has worked exceptionally hard to respond to the National Numeracy Strategy and to make it appropriate to the pupils learning needs. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has re-invigorated mathematics teaching throughout the school. Excellent long-term plans are in place for the delivery of the strategy at all Key Stages. Provision of standardised medium and short term planning is also excellent. Very good resources have been purchased to support the Numeracy strategy and these are very effectively used throughout the school. The mathematics co-ordinators have undertaken appropriate training and sought effective external support for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Training for other staff by the mathematics co-ordinators has been excellent and has included the observation of lessons, videoing of colleagues, monitoring and support. Teaching of the Numeracy Strategy is very good overall. Governors have been very supportive of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. Governors have excellent plans in place to review the effectiveness of recent expenditure on resources to support the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The overall effectiveness of the school's strategy for numeracy is excellent.

120. **Science**

117. Pupils' progress in science is good overall in the long term. In individual lessons during the inspection, it was never less than satisfactory, and was sometimes good. In Key Stage 1, and in lower Key Stage 2, pupils' long-term progress is satisfactory, and in the rest of the school it is good.

118. Pupils in the lower school have recently learned about minibeasts and about various aspects of the Caribbean. They have looked at, and handled, small creatures in the school's sensory garden, and a nearby field and wood. They have also visited a local pet shop to see a different range of small exotic animals. These activities have been linked with pupils' learning in geography, design and technology, singing, and English. This has led to a lessening of the scientific elements of each lesson, and within each topic, and this in turn leads to a slowing of the progress that pupils make, although it is still satisfactory. In previous topics, pupils have gained satisfactory knowledge about their bodies and their senses, and about things that grow, whether plants or animals. They have also undertaken some investigations into different materials, but this investigative approach is not well emphasised in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.

119. Towards the top of Key Stage 2, and through Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' progress is good. They are learning to approach science through investigations and experiments, and they are developing particularly well in this respect. They also progress well in the other aspects of science, looking at each new area with inquisitive minds. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have experimented with building small boats, and getting them to float and to move with different forms of power. They can describe a range of materials according to whether they are hard or soft, light or heavy, smooth or rough, rigid or stretchy. They have learned about their senses and their bodies, and about a variety of things that are living, and some that are not living.

120. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils understand about different characteristics of plants and their environments, how they grow and reproduce and what they need to survive. They have investigated different forces such as light, sound, electricity and magnetism, and have conducted experiments with vibrations and a variety of different materials. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have understood the investigations approach very well, and are using it to further develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. They have a good understanding of basic electrical circuits, magnets, properties of metals, and the value of recycling some materials. They have a good knowledge of the human body, the major organs

and the blood circulation system. They understand many of the features of things that grow, how and why they grow, and the different environments that different creatures and plants can be found in.

121. Pupils' response to lessons is good, and the great majority of pupils enjoy science very much. They contribute very positively to class discussions, when deciding how to conduct an experiment, for example, or what will constitute a fair test. They are very sensible, make suggestions and cooperate well together. Some of the more able pupils will help their lower attaining classmates, and will collaborate well on joint activities, such as when deciding how to separate some ingredients from a mixture. They concentrate well for long periods when completing their writing or creating graphs of their results, for example.

122. The teaching of science is good overall. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, and it is good in the rest of the school. In the lower school the planning is satisfactory, but it is based very closely on a topic, or "integrated scheme of work", and the essential scientific element can be diluted or lost altogether. Lesson aims thus become unclear, and activities do not always focus well on the science aspect of the plan. In the upper school, where a subject specialist teaches science, the planning is detailed and it reflects very good subject knowledge. The teacher has high expectations of the pupils' involvement and effort, and approaches all lessons through a very good investigative style. This challenges pupils to think very carefully, to plan their work, and to record it accurately. In one very good lesson with Key Stage pupils the teacher was considering the life and characteristics of reptiles, and had brought in a live gecko to supplement the rubber toys, worksheets, video and computer program that the pupils also looked at and used. The activities were well matched to the pupils and the lesson aims, and were pursued at a good pace. Support staff are well deployed with pupils who need extra help, and with supervising the computer-related work with a small group. During the lesson pupils were open-mouthed with wonderment and controlled excitement on touching the live creature and watching it walk around. Pupils with profound, multiple learning difficulties receive additional teaching in a range of settings such as the two sensory rooms, working with switches, in the Jacuzzi or in the sensory garden. The teaching is at least satisfactory, and is good overall, with aims that are appropriate to the pupils' needs, and good use of a variety of good resources. Sometimes, however, the lessons continue for too long, and the pace becomes slow, especially in the dark sensory room.

123. The science curriculum is good. It is well balanced and has good breadth. The experimental approach is a particularly good feature of the long-term planning, as is the clear focus on scientific principles through most of the school. The curriculum for the least able pupils is largely a sensory one, and this is very appropriate to their needs. Assessment is good, and it is well used to alter the plans for future teaching. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject, its future development and the resources that are available to support learning. The lack of a separate room or laboratory for science for the older pupils is not satisfactory, but it does not seriously prevent pupils and students from learning. There is a very good and positive atmosphere in lessons and in the subject generally, and a clear pride in presentation and accuracy in the work that has been completed in previous terms.

127. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

127. Information technology

124. Provision for information technology is very good and a strength of the school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

125. Pupils make very good progress overall in their skills in using, and understanding of, information technology. Progress at Key Stage 1 is very good. Higher attaining pupils can use a mouse to select colours and colour a specific area of the screen. Lower attaining pupils can activate a spiral pattern and accompanying music by touching a touchscreen monitor. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make very good progress. Higher attainers continue to develop their mouse skills and have begun to develop keyboard skills. Lower attainers can use both the touchscreen and overlay keyboard to select initial letter sounds.

126. Progress at Key Stage 3 is very good. Higher attaining pupils can access the Internet and understand that it is a source of information. One pupil of average ability typed out his own sentence, using a personal dictionary to check the spelling. Lower attaining pupils can operate appropriate software using a trackerball. All pupils have developed skills in control using a floor robot. They can indicate the direction of movement and higher attainers are able to programme the robot independently. Progress at Key Stage 4 is excellent. High attaining pupils can access the Internet using an overlay keyboard, find a desired web site and print out information. Pupils of average ability can operate computers independently, have developed advanced mouse skills and can, for example, cut and paste items using a graphics programme. Pupils' attainments in information technology at the end of Key Stage 4 are excellent in relation to their abilities and this should be recognised by external accreditation.

127. Progress of pupils at Post 16 is very good. Lower attaining students use a touchscreen with good accuracy to practice drawing numerals. Students of average ability can use the computer with help to produce different types of graph. Higher attaining students know how to print and organise their work on the computer.

128. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are very good. They are very excited by familiar activities using the Internet or robot. Pupils work very hard, concentrate for extended periods of time and are exceptionally well behaved. In the best lessons, pupils share access to the computers, allow other pupils to contribute, they show initiative, are exceptionally well behaved and use a variety of strategies to respond to questions from the teacher.

129. The teaching of information technology is very good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very good technical expertise. This is enhanced by the very good skills of the support staff. The appropriate use of touchscreens and overlay keyboards further enhances teaching of information technology. All teachers have high expectations of pupil achievement. The use of the subject co-ordinator to teach information technology at Key Stages 3 and 4 has a very positive impact on pupil achievement.

130. An excellent, well-structured and rigorous development plan for information technology is in place. This plan has been adopted and is being very well monitored by governors. The co-ordinator for information technology is exceptionally skilled and very knowledgeable. The curriculum plan for teaching information technology is very well structured. Training and on-going support for staff is a strength of provision for information technology. The co-ordinator has systematically reviewed provision in other classes, devised very good training programmes for staff and written advice for individual pupils. The school has an assessment process for information technology in place, but it does not adequately identify pupil progress and requires revision.

131. Information technology is used well to support both literacy and numeracy. Some use is also made of information technology to support art and geography. For example, as part of a topic on the Caribbean, Key Stage 4 pupils accessed a web site in Barbados to investigate the weather on a daily basis. More work is needed to ensure that information technology makes a significant contribution to all subjects in the school curriculum.

132. Resources for information technology are very good, except for the provision of communication aids, which is unsatisfactory and requires urgent attention. All classes have a minimum of one computer and access to appropriate software and peripherals. The additional purchase of overlay keyboards and touchscreen monitors has had a highly effective impact on pupils' learning. The school has made a very good start to accessing the National Grid for Learning and four computers have access to the Internet. Further development in this area is well planned for the future. There is a very good library of additional software to support literacy and numeracy. Resources to support other curriculum areas are good, but need to be

enhanced.

133.The use of information technology to enhance display across the school is excellent and a strength of the school. Staff take great care in labelling displays using a variety of appropriate word processing and desktop publishing packages. A very good variety of pupils' work in information technology is widely displayed throughout the school. Displays would be further enhanced by the systematic use of symbols to accompany text, using appropriate software available in the school.

137. Religious education

134.There has been a good improvement in religious education since the last inspection. Pupils' progress has risen from satisfactory overall to good. The scheme of work now shows a range of activities, which are well taught. Teaching is now all carried out by the co-ordinator and this ensures a consistently high standard with a good understanding of the teaching of religious concepts. Resources have been developed.

135.Due to the organisation of the timetable it was not possible to see lessons taught at all key stages. However from the lessons observed, talking to teachers and pupils and from scrutiny of their work, pupils' progress in religious education is good overall. At Key Stage 1 and at Post 16 it is very good. For example pupils spontaneously say "Thank you" to God and show a good understanding that different people have different beliefs and customs. For instance they talk about the different types of Harvest Festival held in the Caribbean following on from their previous week's special topic.

136.At Key Stage, pupils make very good progress when they stick feathers, flowers and material onto card to make head dresses to show how people in the Caribbean celebrate the Festival of Jonkannu. They pose for photographs, dance and blow whistles to steel band music. They quieten at the end of the lesson around a candle to reflect on the fun they have had and say "thank you". At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress. They know that Harvest Festival is a time of saying "Thanks to God". They also know that a "sukkot" is for sleeping, in but they do not understand that this is for the faith of Judaism as learning about both faiths in one lesson is confusing for them. By the end of the key stage, pupils make satisfactory progress. They understand about different kinds of Harvest Festival in the Caribbean and can compare the harvest vegetables and fruits found in England with those found in the Caribbean.

137.Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress when they respond to changes in moods created by music. In the sombre music they stay under a piece of fabric and touch the material. In the lively music they respond by smiling, laughing and vocalising. A higher attaining pupil in the group puts his hand in the air when he is asked to show he is happy. These pupils' progress is affected by the lesson being only of fifteen minutes long. At Post 16 students make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils recall that Rastafarians wear "tams", have long hair and are vegetarians and can describe what the Rastafarian visitor to the school, in the previous week, looked like. They understand that Rastafarians have a religion and culture that is different to their own and can relate aspects of their own lives which are special. For example they speak of visiting a relation each week and winning a medal in a race.

138.Pupils' response to religious education is good overall. At Post 16 it is very good and at Key Stage 1 it is excellent. Pupils listen well and have a good relationship with the teacher. They are very positive about the subject, involved and well behaved. The interesting activities help to motivate them and this helps them to empathise about other people's life styles and beliefs. The quiet times at the beginning and ends of each lesson with a candle creates an atmosphere that provides them with opportunities for reflection on guided subjects and about

things that are special to them.

139.The teaching of religious education is good overall. At Key Stage 1 it is very good and at Post 16 it is excellent. There is a good, enthusiastic and dramatic approach that is very motivating. The ritual of creating an atmosphere at the beginning and end of all lessons with a candle is very good. Pupils anticipate this as they have become used to it and learn how to use the time for quiet reflection. However, objectives of the lesson are not always fully shared with the pupils and at times they are not clear about the topic of the lesson. This is particularly the case where more than one religion, for example Harvest Festival in the Caribbean and Judaism, is introduced within one lesson and this confuses the pupils. Signing is not used consistently and there is little use of symbols and where more difficult, abstract, concepts are being introduced this makes understanding more difficult. In a few lessons, at Key Stage 2, pupils are not given the opportunity to sew fruit into a "sikkot" themselves, which limits their involvement in the activity.

140.The curriculum is good. There are good long term and medium term plans, planned around themes, with reference to the Agreed Syllabus for religious education for Staffordshire. Long Term Plans are centred on themes such as ways to worship, celebrations, looking for meaning, communities and people and ideas. Medium Term Plans include issues, religion, meaning and lifescape. Different Festivals and traditions are introduced to the pupils, for example Christmas and Easter for Christians, Divali for Hindus, Eid ul Fitr for Muslims and Hannukkah for Jews. Some aspects of the curriculum are based around unusual and innovative ideas, such as, Post 16 students holding a meeting in order to go on to think about worship as being a special kind of meeting. Religious education provides a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment is good and includes pupils evaluating their own response to lessons. However, annual progress reports do not always show sufficient detail between what different pupils know, understand and can do.

141.The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and energetic and creates a very good atmosphere for the pupils to learn about the beliefs of many different people. It also enables them to question their own beliefs in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Staffing is good as the co-ordinator teaches all year groups and this means they have the benefit of an appropriate approach to the subject, which enables them to view religious education positively. Accommodation is satisfactory. It takes place in classrooms, some of which are small for the practical approach to the subject. Resources are good, including artefacts of different religions. There is also the opportunity to borrow resources for different topics as they arise. The subject is very efficiently organised and learning support assistants are used very well.

145. **Art**

142.Overall, pupils are making good progress. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 but scrutiny of work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, and at Post 16, pupils' and students' progress is good and is the direct result of the high expectations of the art co-ordinator who teaches the subject throughout the school. Standards in this subject have been maintained from the last inspection.

143.At Key Stage 1, pupils' work indicates that they use, with increasing control, paint brushes, pencils and crayons. They use a range of media and resources for drawing and painting and their work contributes to colourful class and corridor displays. Samples of work kept by the school shows pupils have made clay models of caterpillars, dough figures, line drawings, and group collage work depicting bridges and tunnels. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils produce representations of objects from real life and from their own imaginations. When making model sea horses they can recall the process and sequence of events from previous lessons, know what materials they have used, for example, they recall the words 'mod roc' and 'bubble wrap'. They know the colours of different paints and inks, and can follow the

instructions given by the teacher to complete a marbling technique. They are able to select different colours and textures of paper, and apply it to a surface using glue. Evidence of work in sketchbooks shows that they complete prints, investigate shading between light and dark, carry out leaf rubbings, and work with clay.

144. At Key Stage 3, there is evidence of opportunities for pupils to explore both two and three-dimensional processes. They continue with colour mixing, and printing, and some sketching shows more detail, such as the scales on fish. They are introduced to work of other artists, such as, as Van Gogh and Lowry, and around school are displays of pupils' artwork in the styles of these artists. Pupils continue to use their skills in selecting different textured paper and card to create mood and feelings to their collage work. In the one lesson seen at this key stage during the inspection, pupils used rollers and paint medium to create with block prints a representation of the 'Traveller's Tree' depicted in a story connected with the Caribbean theme. They can recall the name of the tree, make colours lighter or darker by mixing two or three paints together, and can arrange a pattern of prints of leaves. At Key Stage 4, pupils' skills and understanding are further developed. When considering still life, the higher attaining pupils are aware that this is 'only what one can see', and during a lesson they create Batik prints of gourds. They know how the Batik process is carried out and can name the tools they are using. Pupils show that they have a good understanding of art techniques, colour mixing and detailed observation, which have been developed over a period of time. Students at Post 16 continue to make very good progress and can demonstrate in the end of lesson evaluation that they can reflect on their efforts and talk about the next stage and how to develop it. They examine the work of other artists, such as, Kandinsky and are able to extend colour and texture. Scrutiny of work shows that they have created patterns for decoration of pots, made line drawings of local monuments, such as the church, and have explored Celtic designs.

145. Throughout all key stages pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are consistently very good. They are enthusiastic and keen in art lessons. They remain focused upon their tasks even when there is no direct supervision, and co-operate well with each other. Relationships with adults are excellent in all the lessons observed and pupils value the praise they are given. All pupils showed a determination to complete the work set, and are able to reflect either individually or as a group on the work during the end of lesson 'Gallery' session.

146. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is overall very good, with an excellent lesson seen at Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 1, teachers have good lesson plans linked to cross-curricular activities and integrated schemes of work. Across the rest of the school art is taught by the co-ordinator who is a specialist art teacher and therefore has a high level of subject knowledge. In conjunction with this, she has very high expectations for all pupils and a belief that all pupils can achieve results. All efforts are valued and respected. Medium term planning is detailed and although tasks are not differentiated for different abilities, the lower attaining pupils are identified for support. The teacher has excellent relationships with the pupils and students. This is firm but friendly, and therefore behaviour is not a problem. All pupils and students are treated at an age appropriate level and are regarded as 'artists'. Lessons have a lively pace and this retains the pupils' motivation, and very good use is made of questioning both to assess pupils knowledge and encourage them to reflect upon their work. Pupils are never left without support for extreme periods; contact with the teacher is regular and time is used well both to question and to help pupils in their tasks. The criticism in the last report concerning over-reliance of pupils on adults did not occur in this inspection.

147. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and relevant to the pupils in the school. It includes a policy and has been well developed by the co-ordinator. It contains a well-planned framework, with examples of activities, for teachers at Key Stage 1 so that they can plan the integrated schemes of work. There is equality of access planned for within the curriculum, but

in reality not all the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have access to the art curriculum and experiences. There are opportunities for pupils to experiment with computer art, and a small amount is on display around the school, but the smallness of the art room limits this experience. Assessment is good and is well used by the co-ordinator to plan lessons and themes. These include the use of photographs to record developments over time, some opportunities for pupils' self-assessment, and a wealth annotated work on display, but no opportunities for external accreditation. The subject contributes very well to the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils.

148. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a very positive ethos about pupils' achievements and attainments, and there is a belief that all pupils can produce work that is creative and valued. Development planning has continued to take place even though the subject was a strength during the last inspection, and the co-ordinator is continually introducing new ideas in to the curriculum and using local art exhibitions to create interest. Monitoring and evaluation of work in Key Stage 1 takes place on an informal basis by the co-ordinator.

149. Staffing is excellent as a specialist teacher teaches the subject. Learning support assistants work well as a team with the teacher and give good support to pupils. Since the new building has been allocated to the Post 16 group of students, a room has been available for art, and for storage of art materials. However, it is a very small room, becomes very cramped for teaching, and is not large enough for some classes, for example, the Post 16 group. However it does provide sufficient storage and a place for work to dry and be stored. Resources for the teaching are good.

153. Design and technology

150. Throughout the school pupils are making good progress. The school has kept a vast range of pupils' work as evidence of attainment and coverage over the last three years, and all these contain evidence that pupils are given opportunities to interpret a design problem, create their own ideas and choose from a range of materials. There are excellent examples of pupils' planning supported by simple drawings, and self-evaluation.

151. Pupils, at Key Stage 1 make good progress where they are given opportunities to handle and use a range of simple tools and materials, such as, scissors, paper, card and modelling clay. For example, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they have made models of hands and designed a pattern for a sock. They use a variety of construction kits to build bridges, tunnels and models. During the one lesson seen at this key stage, pupils were working as a group on the preparation of a fruit salad, but the focus of the lesson dwelt too much on the names and characteristics of the fruit, and not on the design process. However, pupils were given opportunities to use knives for cutting and preparing the fruit, but were not given any opportunities to say how they would change the design.

152. At Key Stage 2, progress overtime is also good, but during the one lesson seen on the week of the inspection, progress was unsatisfactory. This was due to the unsatisfactory organisation of the lesson. Pupils sat for most of the lesson in a group around the teacher, who went over the sequence of work in the previous lesson, and this lack of variety in the activities had a negative impact on their behaviour. However, once they were able to work on the activities of making musical instruments they were enthusiastic. They can recall the materials they have chosen to work with, for example, papier-mâché and glue. They also make choices, such as, which material they are going to put inside the shakers according to the sound they want. From the scrutiny of work it can be seen that they have worked on activities which include designing and making a cage from balsa wood, a cover for a model bed, a model pestle and mortar from clay, road-signs, a picnic and a cover for a book.

153. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' progress is good as it can be seen that pupils are faced with more complex tasks that challenge their knowledge and abilities. They begin to use a much wider range of tools including hand tools. Examples of work demonstrate that they produced models connected with whole school topics, for example, a Viking brooch and boat, a litter bin, a design for a tap, and a picture frame. However, they are not at the stage of building models, which demonstrate their understanding of pulleys, levers or electrical circuits to provide solutions to a range of problems. Within the food technology aspect of the subject pupils, can design a fruit cocktail, choosing the ingredients and the decoration. They produce a design through simple drawing and compare their finished result with it.

154. At Key Stage 4, during the week of the inspection, pupils were in the process of making and dyeing a tunic for a carnival. They described the process and how they will change the colour. Scrutiny of their work shows that they have used computer assisted design to design a kitchen, designed a garden layout, designed and produced a model tap, spoons and a set of jugs.

155. Overall pupils' attitudes are good with some lessons where pupils show a very good attitude to learning. However, in the one lesson at Key Stage 2, pupils lost interest due to over long activities. Behaviour is generally very good and pupils show patience when others are taking their turn in using equipment or handling materials. They are confident in handling the materials and simple tools and enthusiastic in answering questions and making objects. In Key Stage 3 and 4, pupils display an increasing co-operative attitude. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are excellent.

156. During the week of the inspection design and technology at Key Stages 2, 3, and 4 was taught by a temporary teacher who is employed in the school until the permanent teacher can take up the post. Teaching is overall good. There is unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson at Key Stage 2, and is the result of unsatisfactory organisation of the activities. Pupils become bored and disinterested, and not enough time is allowed for pupils to work on their projects. Otherwise teaching is good with good planning and strong cross-curricular links. Teachers work hard at introducing a sense of enjoyment in working with a range of materials and designs, for example, when making fruit cocktail drinks. This has a positive effect upon the pupils' enthusiasm and keenness for the subject that impacts directly upon the good progress made by the pupils. The temporary teacher who is currently teaching most of the design and technology has very good subject knowledge, and in the short time she has been in the school has an understanding of pupils' capabilities and needs. Questioning is used well to elicit pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to encourage them to consider and evaluate their designs and work. This is an improvement from the last inspection when it was judged that the teachers did not make the most of questioning. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and to make judgements about the quality and effectiveness of their design.

157. The curriculum is well planned and has shown a marked improvement since the last inspection. There was an over emphasis on resistant materials and not enough emphasis on food technology. The new food technology room has partly remedied this, but during the week of the inspection the making of a fruit drink took place in the art room which is unsatisfactory for hygienic food preparation. However, the curriculum is balanced as it contains work with both food and textiles. The scheme of work developed is clearly linked to the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. For teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 there are identified tasks with clear links to all areas of the programmes of study to ensure progression and continuity. Assessment is in place to identify coverage within the curriculum and pieces of pupils' work are kept along with photographs as evidence.

158. Management of the subject has been good and at the present time the school is awaiting a new co-ordinator to take up the post in the school. Governors have appointed a well-qualified teacher who they hope will lead the developments in the subject. Records and

samples of work are well kept and documented evidence shows that the school monitors the progress that pupils are making. Accommodation for the teaching of design technology is unsatisfactory, especially for those pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. Most work takes place in the classroom, and some in the art room which is very small. The use of the food technology room in the Post 16 area has not yet become part of the food technology resources. The quality of resources available throughout the school and those provided by teachers themselves contributes to pupils' knowledge of materials and the role they play in construction. There is a wide range of different materials but the school lacks small power tools for use with the projects at Key Stages 3 and 4.

162. Geography

159. There has been an improvement in standards in geography since the last inspection. Pupils now make good progress overall, with some groups making very good progress, for example a group of ten Post 16 students who undertook a residential field trip to Betws-y-Coed in Wales.

160. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn about the local environment around the school area and can observe and identify changes in the weather from day to day. They know that fish is caught in the Caribbean and see examples of these on a visit to the Sea Life Centre. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 follow the schemes of work for Key Stage 1 and know that buildings are made from a range of materials and have different functions, such as schools, houses, shops and swimming pools. Older Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. They know that different parts of the world have different climates, for example that it is very hot in the Caribbean. They can name some fruits that are grown there, and know some of the customs and traditions of the area. They understand that fishing is a local industry.

161. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in their study of Jamaica. Some pupils make very good progress. They can recognise the island's flag and its outline. Higher attainers can find it on both a world map and a globe. Pupils know that the Caribbean has a hot climate. Lower attainers can differentiate between trees and fruits that grow in Britain and those that need tropical climates. All pupils are developing geographical skills of using maps, comparing different places and using source materials to answer geographical questions.

162. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make very good progress in geography. In their work on volcanoes, pupils understand that the Earth has a molten core and a crust and that there can be faults in the crust. They know that earthquakes can cause much damage in some places and the more able can describe the effects of hurricanes in the Caribbean area. Work linking information technology and geography gives considerable support to pupils' progress. For example, they use the Internet to find out about the weather in Bermuda and higher attainers know why it is dark there whilst seeing a direct real-time camera link. Pupils can print off still pictures of animals visiting an African water hole in another such link, increasing their knowledge of places around the world.

163. At Post 16, students study the same topics as pupils in Key Stage 4. In addition, they had an opportunity to go on a weeklong residential field trip to Betws-y-Coed. Work of a very good quality was produced. For example, they learned about the effects of glaciation, undertook a traffic survey, investigated water as a power source through looking at hydro-electric power and dams, and did a river study. They can record their work in a variety of ways, including drawings, sketch maps, plans, graphs, tables, tally sheets and weather charts. Written methods range from ticking the correct answer in a multiple choice or inserting missing words in a sentence to the more able recording their findings in report form.

164. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in learning

about different environments in a practical way. For example, in the whole-school topic on the Caribbean, they had planned visits to a garden centre to see and feel tropical plants and to botanical gardens to experience humidity. They also tasted tropical fruits and drinks and had the opportunity to take an imaginary trip to the seaside, where they put their bare feet in sand and 'sea' and felt shells.

165. Pupils' response to geography is very good. They are well behaved in lessons and concentrate hard on completing their work; even where sessions are particularly long, for example when they remain in school for a full afternoon when there is no planned visit. They use correct geographical vocabulary and are keen to answer questions. They show respect for the different cultures that they study, and geography makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the multi-cultural aspect.

166. Teaching of geography is good overall, with some examples of very good specialist teaching of older pupils. Non-specialist teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Specialist teaching shows high expectations of pupils, secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and outstanding levels of preparation of resources. Combined with an excellent range of geographical visits and field trips and effective deployment of non-teaching staff, use of this wide range of resources and teaching aids contributes directly to pupils' gains in geographical knowledge, skills and understanding and to their recall of what they have learned.

167. The geography curriculum is good overall but some integrated topics lack a sufficiently geographical focus, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, good use is made of special subject topics to fill in particular gaps in coverage of the National Curriculum, including the Literature topics. Assessment of the subject is good but is not yet linked to National Curriculum attainment levels, despite many pupils achieving these. Many older pupils and students produce work of a high quality in relation to their abilities, but there are no opportunities to have this achievement recognised through external accreditation.

168. There is very good management of the subject provided by the co-ordinator, who works extremely hard to ensure a very good range of practical experiences, supported by classroom activities and field trips, are available to pupils. There are plans to develop closer links with non-specialist teachers through further monitoring, and appropriate extension of the opportunities for residential field work to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4.

172. History

169. Due to the nature of the whole-school topic, no lessons of history were taught during the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and examination of teachers' planning and curriculum documentation, progress in history has improved since the last inspection. Pupils now make good progress overall, with some groups making very good progress, most notably those Post 16 students who attended a residential field trip to Betws-y-Coed in Wales.

170. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. They learn about the differences between old and new things and about how life in the past differs from our own through their studies of toys, school and transport. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils continue to follow the schemes of work for Key Stage 1. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 start to understand that there are different periods in history through their studies of other civilisations, including the Ancient Egyptians, the Romans and the Vikings. They can compare what life was like in the more recent past with our lives today when they study the Victorians, for example what it was like in a Victorian classroom.

171. At Key Stages 3, 4 and at Post 16, pupils and students cover the same topics but learn about different aspects of the study unit. There are opportunities for learning about the history of the local area around Tamworth through participating in the 'Adopt a Monument' scheme, where pupils investigate the past through studying a local church. Information from gravestones in the cemetery there is used as source material to find out about important local families, and pupils interview local residents about their memories of the area and about how things have changed. Best progress is made at Post 16, where a group of students had the opportunity to participate in a five-day residential field trip to Betws-y-Coed. For example, they studied the history of the slate-mining industry and investigated how and why it had declined.

They were also able to visit historical buildings and museums, for example, Conwy Castle. Their work during this week was of very good quality, and it is a pity that no external accreditation is available to pupils in this subject.

172.The quality of management and efficiency of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator works very hard to plan a range of exciting activities for pupils. This includes many visits to places of historical interest, for example to local castles, Shakespeare's House at Stratford, Roman Bath, a Victorian Schoolroom and the Black Country Museum. Evidence shows that pupils enjoy the visits and that the practical experiences gained make a good contribution to their learning.

173.The curriculum for history is good overall. Good use is made of specialist teaching from the middle of Key Stage 2 and above. However, teachers' planning shows that at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, and for pupils of all ages who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, the inclusion of history in the integrated schemes of work is sometimes not as clearly defined as for older pupils. Some whole-school topics have a clear history focus, whilst others do not give sufficient opportunities for history to be included, for example the study of the Caribbean. End of unit assessment is good, but there are no accreditation opportunities for older pupils and students. Assessment is not yet linked to National Curriculum attainment levels.

174.Resources for history are good. Topic boxes have been developed for the different units studied, and are supplemented by use of a loan service. History makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

178. Modern foreign language (French)

175.Pupils at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 make satisfactory progress in French overall. They make good progress in lessons but as they only have one lesson of thirty minutes each week and pupils at Post 16 have had no French in the previous year, their progress overall is satisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are still disapplied from French and only pupils with "appropriate skills in English" have access to a Modern Foreign Language. There is therefore no improvement since the last inspection.

176.Pupils are well motivated to speak French and this helps them to remember vocabulary. They are confident enough to speak and they understand simple sentences in familiar contexts. At Key Stage 4 and at Post 16, they greet the teacher confidently and without prompting when they say "Bonjour Carol". They are able to ask for fruit, for example they say "Un banane s'il vous plait". They play a game, which shows they can recognise colours and they begin to recognise places in France. For example a higher attaining pupil recognises the Eiffel Tower and can say that it is in Paris in France and that the river in Paris is the Seine. Students at Post 16, know the names of a range of fruit and vegetables, and can count to 10.

177.Pupils' response to French is good. They enjoy lessons and concentrate and behave well and are fully involved in the work. They listen very well to information about the culture of France and to spoken French. Their relationship with the teacher is good and they enjoy the humour and fun in the games they play. They take a pride in speaking another language and find opportunities to speak in French at other times in the week.

178.Teaching of French is good. Pupils are helped to understand by a good system of listening for the key words of "combien" (how many) and "couleur" (colour) to prompt their understanding. The target language is used well and the pupils are well managed. A good use is made of games and fun activities to motivate the pupils. Signing and real objects are used well to help pupils to understand and learn the language.

179.The curriculum is satisfactory. Appropriate topics are arranged, which focus on active learning with interesting and motivating activities and games. However the school does not provide the same opportunity for pupils to experience a Modern Foreign Language at Key Stage 3 as they would experience at other similar schools, as they are all disapplied. Similarly only pupils defined by the school as having "appropriate skills in English" are given the opportunity to learn a language. This means that there is not equal access for all pupils to awareness of another culture on a regular basis. The curriculum is also restricted for those pupils at Key Stage 4 and Post 16, as there is only thirty minutes a week on the timetable to study the subject. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils work towards Awards and the curriculum is planned around what they have learnt.

180.The subject is managed in a satisfactory way within the constraints of the small amount of curriculum time available. Staffing is satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator is not a specialist teacher she is enthusiastic about the subject and creates a positive ethos for the pupils who are well motivated to learn French. The accommodation is satisfactory, although there is not much room for more active activities such as role-play. The resources are satisfactory for what is taught but if the time and the curriculum were extended to Key Stage 3 pupils and to lower attaining pupils and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, more resources would be needed.

184. Music

181.Pupils make very good progress in music at all key stages and this maintains the position since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes and teaching have remained very good. A policy and schemes of work, including the National Curriculum, have now been developed. Music is also used very well in other lessons to support the children's learning in other subjects, for example in personal and social education pupils sing "Hello" songs.

182.Observation of lessons, watching videos and listening to audio taped material, shows that pupils' progress in music is very good at all key stages in musical appreciation, composition and performing. At Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils sing and do the actions of familiar songs such as "Incy-Wincy Spider", "Twinkle, twinkle Little Star" and "The Grand Old Duke of York". Lower attaining pupils anticipate parts of the songs and contribute some actions and the occasional word they know. At Key Stage 2, they learn the routines of the music lessons, for example they follow instructions given by familiar phrases of music to sit down or go back to their own piece of carpet. They step on and off small squares of carpet, keeping time to the music as it goes faster and slower. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils can sing a solo response to "hello" being sung on the piano or guitar. Higher attaining pupils conduct the group to play loudly and softly using words or signs. Lower attaining pupils who find group activities difficult are very well integrated into the group and follow the actions of the other pupils carefully.

183.At Key Stage 3, pupils show they have learnt the routines in music lessons and demonstrate that they are achieving self-discipline well. For example they take on the role of conductor. They respond to instructions to play their percussion instrument when their colour is called and they play loudly or softly according to flashcards showing symbols and words. At Key Stage 4, they play instruments to accompany the teacher reading a story "Where the Forest Meets the Sea" and suggest sounds that might be heard on a Caribbean beach. They select instruments to match the sounds and play them as the story is read, creating the appropriate atmosphere at different parts in the story. They prepare a performance they will present at the whole school Assembly. They play music to create a mood, for example they make a tape of playing instruments to create the sounds of pouring, and slopping to accompany the teacher on the piano when they compose music for the chocolate factory in Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory".

184.The progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is also very good. Pupils respond, for example by blinking or signing "please" or vocalising, to show they want a turn of listening to the instrument played very close to them. In addition learning support assistants provide very good "Musical Communication" sessions for these pupils. For example pupils reach up, give eye contact, take turns and dance by using their tongue, dancing on assistant's feet to the "Rhythm of the music" song on the tape and singing of the assistants. In music therapy pupils indicate a choice between two musical instruments and play along with a song. Most anticipate the beginning and end of the tune. Given cues some can play in time to the tune.

185.The response of pupils of all abilities to music is very good across the school. They enjoy the lessons thoroughly and are very well motivated throughout the lesson. Their behaviour is excellent aided by the fact that they feel a pride in knowing the routines of the lesson and responding to musical instructions. They show respect for the instruments and realise that they must be careful not to play them while they are waiting for their turn in a performance. They have good relationships with teachers and enjoy the humorous element in the teaching approach. They anticipate different parts of the lesson and choose games and activities they know well. They take a pride in being able to perform as a solo or part of a group and this raises their self-esteem. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties move to the music, smile, laugh in anticipation and reach up to the cloth over them.

186.Teaching of music, musical communication and music therapy is very good at all key stages. Some teaching on the week of the inspection was excellent. The teacher's knowledge of music is excellent. For example, the co-ordinator plays several instruments, including piano, guitar and accordion. He also composes music to support teachers in different lessons. The use of music to give instructions is excellent. The humorous elements of the lesson are very motivating for the pupils. The management of the pupils' behaviour is very good. For the younger pupils the match of activities is very suitable for the needs of the pupils and is very motivating for them. However, for older pupils, the approaches are not always age appropriate and are very similar to those used for the younger pupils. The very good methods ensures that pupils gain good self discipline and know the routines and expectations for the lessons at an early age. This is not always fully extended for the older pupils and higher attaining pupils who have mastered the routines are not always given opportunities to fully extend their creativity and musical ability. The teaching by learning support assistants in "Musical Communication is very good. The activities include a very good use of objects of reference and sensory stimuli. For example they have a colour activity that includes warm and cold objects, creams to smell and real flowers.

187.The curriculum is good with well planned, clear, schemes of work that includes all the National Curriculum elements of listening and appraising, performing and composing. Activities are well planned and continuity and progression is well demonstrated for the routines that are established to encourage pupils' self discipline. All pupils have an equal opportunity to experience music. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils also learn about music from other cultures, such as the Caribbean and other times such as medieval music. However planned opportunities to extend the achievements and musical creativity of higher attaining pupils, needs to be developed. There is a similar format for lessons for different key stages and once these routines have been established, pupils need to experience opportunities to demonstrate the self-discipline, skills and creativity with music that they have acquired. Assessment procedures are good and are used well to plan what the pupils will learn next. There is very good photographic evidence of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties working on musical communication.

188.The leadership and management of music are very good. The co-ordinator provides an excellent ethos for learning and has good relationships with the pupils. Music in the school

also has the valuable contribution of a music therapist for some lessons, and also the learning support assistants who provide musical communication.

189.The staffing for music is good. The music co-ordinator teaches music to all pupils, including to children under the age of five. A music therapist provides further teaching and the learning support assistants provide a very good addition to the musical experience for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The accommodation is satisfactory. The co-ordinator's room is small and does not allow for the pupils to move around sufficiently in the planned activities and equipment has to be moved in and out between lessons. The resources are good with a good range of high quality instruments, which are very efficiently organised.

193. **Physical education**

190.Pupils' progress is good throughout the school, both in individual lessons, and in the longer term of a year or a key stage. Pupils learn a good range of skills in each key stage, developing well as they grow through the school, with their actual progress varying according to their ability. The lower attaining pupils who have additional special needs make good progress in their mobility, their awareness of movement, and their water experiences in the Jacuzzi and the swimming pools. They develop well in rolling, sliding, rocking and moving when in soft play environments or with staff in one to one sessions throughout the school. On many occasions, they join the more physically able pupils in the lessons where they benefit from the social interactions as well as the actual physical activities.

191.In Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils continue their physical development from their Early Years beginnings in a good variety of areas. These include water experiences in the Jacuzzi; dance sessions in which they are beginning to move in different ways in time with music; jumping, running and throwing in athletics and moving in different ways in gymnastics. These activities are further extended as pupils learn greater confidence. They take part in a range of motor skills, and develop balance and strength on the outdoor apparatus. Younger pupils develop greater confidence and a sense of responsibility when riding on donkeys and looking after them. Similarly, older pupils develop the same skills with the horses that they ride. Pupils' skills are further developed through Key Stage 2, and by the end of the key stage they demonstrate greater water confidence and independence skills, more stamina and speed in athletics, and an improvement in throwing, catching and kicking skills. In dance, groups of pupils can move to different beats, twist, punch the air, swing their hips, salute and stop moving, all in synchrony.

192.Similarly in Key Stage 3, pupils develop well. By the end of the key stage, their swimming is better and more confident than previously. They understand more of the rules and spirit of games such as rounders and football. In dance lessons they cooperate well with their partners in group movements, and move in a structured sequence of different movements. The improvement of gymnastics skills is further enhanced through dance, by developing artistic movements on the floor and on the apparatus. Pupils in Key Stage 4 progress well in a widening range of skills, with team games such as basketball and cricket, and indoor games such as table tennis and snooker. Pupils who have been on residential weeks with the school at outdoor and adventure centres have successfully taken part in climbing a "cliff" wall, going down a cave, negotiating the ropes, walls and swings of an "army style" assault course, and orienteering through the woods. These residential occasions have the additional benefit of helping to develop pupils' social skills, particularly in the informal evening activities. The highest attaining pupils in the school, in Key Stage 4 and in Post 16, can run 60 metres in 13 seconds, jump one metre, and throw a ball overarm for ten metres. Pupils have received awards for their performances at international athletics events, and in regional swimming galas.

193.Pupils' attitudes are good, and they enjoy their lessons of physical education very much. They are attentive when being reminded of previous sessions, and instructed about the forthcoming activity. Most pupils concentrate well whilst taking part in the climbing, running, throwing or dancing, and they work together in teams and groups very co-operatively. The

donkey and horse riding helps to build up their sense of responsibility, and the residential

outdoor pursuits are invaluable in building up their self confidence by succeeding in activities they would not otherwise have taken part in.

194.The teaching of physical education is good. Throughout the school, it is taught by one specialist teacher who has good subject knowledge and high expectations of what the pupils might achieve, and how involved they will be. The planning is good for each lesson, and it is based on a scheme that covers all of the required aspects of the subject at a level appropriate to the pupils' skills and aptitudes. She is well organised and uses the resources well, whether in the hall with the large apparatus, in the Jacuzzi, or at the local swimming pool. Sometimes time is lost as pupils are slow to get changed, get settled, move to the hall, and wait whilst one or two need to be convinced that they will be taking part in the lesson. Pupils are well assessed during the lessons through praise, encouragement, correction of mistakes and demonstrations of how well each group has mastered a particular set of skills, in dancing or gymnastics, for example. In the longer term, written assessment is very good: pupils' performances are accurately graded on specific sets of skills, and are combined with individual comments. These are very well used to build up reports to parents, and to guide what is taught, and how it will be taught, the following year.

195.As the sole teacher of the subject, the co-ordinator is able to carefully plan all of the curriculum and the teaching through the school. She has a clear view of how the subject is developing with regard to resources, training and different activities that make up the subject. The resources are good; they include the large and small apparatus in school, the Jacuzzi, the outdoor play equipment, hard surfaces and grassed areas, and the access to facilities outside the school.

199. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

199. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

196. The inspection was undertaken by a team of six inspectors including a lay inspector, who were in school for a total of 23.5 days.

During the week 90 lessons or parts of lessons were observed, and these included lessons away from the school, such as, at a local college of further education.

The team also observed arrivals, assemblies, registrations, break-times and lunchtimes, and departures.

Interviews were held with the headteacher, the deputy head, curriculum co-ordinators, staff with specific responsibilities, the school administrator, the chair of the governing body, and the finance committee.

A forum was held to hear the views of physiotherapist, speech and language therapist, learning support assistants, the school nurse, and the careers officer.

Informal conversations were held with the pupils, drivers and escorts on the transport, and the caretaker.

Documentation, both before the inspection and during, was analysed. This included pupils' records, statements of Special Educational Need, reports to parents and individual educational and behavioural plans; school policies, curriculum and staff planning documents; minutes of the governing body and financial records.

Pupils' work was scrutinised, and members of the team listened to some pupils reading.

A parents' meeting was held before the inspection to hear the views of parents, which was attended by 25 parents.

197.DATA AND INDICATORS

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
N – Y14	84	84	84	44

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (N – Y14)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.4

Education support staff (N – Y14)

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked each week	543

Average teaching group size:	KS1	8
	KS2	8
	KS3	8
	KS4	9

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	646 775
Total Expenditure	614 050
Expenditure per pupil	7 310
Balance brought forward from previous year	76 650
Balance carried forward to next year	109 374

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	79
Number of questionnaires returned:	46

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	65	33	0	2	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	67	33	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	51	42	7	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	78	22	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	72	26	2	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	67	30	2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	70	26	4	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	44	41	5	10	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	74	22	4	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	80	17	3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	87	11	2	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents felt that the amount of therapy time allocated to the school was inadequate; especially the amount of speech and language therapy.
- Parents were concerned that when the school nurse is absent, the school is without medical support, and that some pupils with complex medical needs could be at risk.
- One parent was unhappy with the progress being made in reading, and felt that the school had a dismissive attitude.