

INSPECTION REPORT

WATERGATE SCHOOL

Lewisham

LEA area: London Borough of Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100766

Headteacher: Ms A Youd

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Last
17171

Dates of inspection: 17th January – 21st January 2000

Inspection number: 187670

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	12 Church Grove Lewisham
Postcode:	SE13 7UU
Telephone number:	0181 3141751
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. C Handley
Date of previous inspection:	1 st October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Last	Registered inspector	Geography History Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school Teaching and learning Other specified features
Ms J Buncher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr B Emery	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Physical education	Leadership and management
Ms L Wolstencroft	Team inspector	English Information technology Under-fives English as an additional language	
Mr G Watson	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Watergate School caters for 61 boys and girls aged between five and eleven years who have severe learning difficulties, autism, and/or challenging behaviour. Currently 17 of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and eight have autism. A special class is created for the autistic pupils during morning sessions. During the afternoons, they are dispersed with age-related classes. Thirteen pupils have English as an additional language. At the time of inspection, and as a result of the school's inclusion policy, seven pupils were on split placement at mainstream schools and most attend a link school on a more informal visit to work alongside their mainstream peers. All the pupils in the school have statements of special educational need. Pupils are drawn from throughout the Borough of Lewisham. Half the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in its work and enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons. Teaching is good overall with a strong team of staff who work together very effectively to support and manage pupils' learning. The strong links with mainstream schools enable pupils to visit and study effectively alongside their mainstream peers. The senior management team, governing body and staff share an understanding of the direction the school is going and work well to achieve its aims. The governors, headteacher and staff of the school have made very significant improvement in all issues raised by the last inspection with all round improvement demonstrated. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and staff provide a secure, supportive learning environment which enables pupils to make good gains in learning.
- Pupils make good progress against targets set in their individual education plans.
- Pupils with profound, multiple learning difficulties and those on the autistic continuum make good progress.
- Teaching is good; there were no unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection.
- The school provides a curriculum which is very relevant to the needs of all the pupils with a good range of learning opportunities.
- The headteacher and governing body provide very good leadership and management.
- The school very successfully extends pupils' learning through very good opportunities to study in mainstream schools.
- The staff manage and monitor challenging behaviour very well.
- The school provides good value for money.

What could be improved

There are no significant weaknesses in the school. However, the following are areas for development:

- Improve the quality of individual education plans by writing clearer, more precise targets for learning.
- Improve the range of strategies for involving parents in the life of the school.
- Continue to improve the quality and ambience of the poor accommodation to limit its negative impact on pupils' learning.

This is a very successful and improving school where strengths far outweigh weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has addressed all of the weaknesses identified in the last report successfully and continues to make good progress in raising standards. At the last inspection, pupils' achievements were unsatisfactory in over three out of ten lessons. Achievement is now at least satisfactory in all lessons with pupils making good progress in three out of ten lessons and very good progress in almost two out of ten. This improvement in standards is a direct result of improved coverage of the whole curriculum and a clearer system for identifying pupils' individual needs in lesson planning and implementation. At the last inspection, teaching was less than satisfactory in half of lessons. It is now at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in eight out of ten lessons. This is because the senior management team has provided very good support and training for teachers and improved teamwork throughout the school. Staff are well deployed and skilled to provide closely focused support in lessons enabling pupils to make good gains in learning. Teachers now have high expectations of their pupils and plan work which challenges them appropriately. Where some pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, the teachers manage it well through effective behaviour management plans and targets. This helps these pupils improve their attitudes to learning and their concentration.

At the last inspection, the leadership of the school was described as unsatisfactory - it is now very good and effective in raising standards. Since the last inspection, the new governing body, headteacher and re-structured senior management team have made very good progress in improving standards overall throughout the school. Roles and responsibilities are now clear and there is very good teamwork throughout the school with staff contributing to the school development plan and moving towards a self-critical culture. The curriculum is now good and is enhanced by a wide range of integration opportunities with higher attaining pupils able to move towards a return to mainstream school. The school now makes good use of its teaching time. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are good. The accommodation remains poor but the local authority is now planning to build a new school.

All pupils, regardless of ability and need, achieve well against the targets set for them in all subjects. English and literacy skills are targets for all pupils and they do well in developing their communication skills both through speaking and signing and use effective communication in all curriculum subjects.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
Speaking and listening	B	B			
Reading	B	B			
Writing	B	B			
Mathematics	B	B			
Personal, social and health education	B	B			
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B			

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

All pupils, regardless of ability and need, achieve well against the targets set for them in all the above areas. They make particularly good progress in personal, social and health education, developing good levels of confidence. English and literacy targets are provided for all pupils. Others do well in developing and using their communication skills both through speaking and signing, and use them effectively in all of their learning opportunities provided for them. This has a positive impact on their learning in all curriculum areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they enjoy coming to school and work hard. They concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Those with challenging behaviour respond well to skilled teacher intervention to ensure that learning for others is not unduly disrupted.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good gains in their personal and social development - relationships are very good at all times.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

This is a school where pupils enjoy their lessons and develop positive attitudes and improve their powers of concentration.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall: 58	Good	Good		

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

Teaching is good throughout the school and is effectively planned to meet the needs of all its pupils because teachers are very skilled and have a clear understanding of how to teach their subjects. They offer a wide range of activities and have high expectations which they make known to the pupils. There is a sensible emphasis on the teaching of communication, literacy and numeracy, all of which are taught well and reinforced in other lessons. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory and eight out of every ten were good or very good. This high quality teaching enables pupils to develop good attitudes to learning and, as a result, to make good progress. Support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning through skilled learning support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced and particularly relevant curriculum which meets the needs of all the pupils. It is effectively enhanced by good links with mainstream schools.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school recognises and caters effectively for the needs of pupils with English as an additional language enabling them to make good gains in learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides a secure, supportive environment where the welfare needs of the pupils are very effectively met. Provision is good for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. They learn right from wrong, to interact with others and gain in understanding of cultural differences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good opportunities for learning through its broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It provides a secure, supportive environment in which pupils flourish and achieve well.

The school has clearly established strategies for working with parents through home/school diaries, home visits and invitations to social events. It has recently appointed a teacher to strengthen and develop home/school liaison. However, it has only been partially successful in involving parents in the life of school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team are very effective and a strength of the school. This has already had a significant impact on standards.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body plays a full part in the life of the school, fulfils all its statutory duties and is very supportive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Clear and effective procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate performance and indicate required action.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all of its resources, including specific grants and other funds. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like the school. • That they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The leadership and management of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One third of parents thought the children did not receive sufficient homework.

Only three parents attended the inspection meeting but discussion with them and subsequent informal talks with parents during inspection week confirmed that parents were very pleased with the work of the school and their children's progress. A complaint which was brought to the attention of the registered inspector was efficiently and effectively dealt with by the headteacher.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are working towards Level 1, except in reading where one in every six pupils is working at Level 1. At Key Stage 2, all pupils are working towards Level 1 in all subjects. However, all the pupils have severe learning difficulties, as identified on their statements of special educational need. In addition, some pupils have additional complex needs, whilst others have additional communication difficulties. Comparison with national norms is, therefore, inappropriate and judgments regarding pupils' achievements reflect what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to targets identified on their individual education plans. The school is currently part of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) Project for Pupils Significantly Below Age Related Expectations which is investigating ways in which pupils' progress can be more effectively measured.
2. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This represents a significant improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection, and is directly related to improvements in leadership and management which have a focus on pupil achievement. Teaching, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the effectiveness of teachers' planning, and their management of pupils' behaviour have also made a considerable impact on standards. There is also a broader and better balanced curriculum, and improvements in the quality of pupils' individual education plans. Parents are generally pleased with the gains in learning made by their children, and recognise an improvement in progress over time since the last inspection.
3. Children who are under five make good gains in learning, against the recently introduced baseline assessment, in all areas of learning. In English, pupils achieve well, particularly at Key Stage 2, while in mathematics, science, religious education, humanities, and personal and social education, pupils make good gains in learning at both key stages. In information technology, art, design and technology and music, pupils' gains in learning are satisfactory at both key stages.
4. Pupils who are involved in split site placements or partially integrate into mainstream schools, make good gains in learning, particularly in respect of their personal and social development. The achievements of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are also good, particularly in respect of information control technology, where their gains in learning are good. Pupils with autism, in the communication support base, achieve well in relation to the school's baseline assessment, and their gains in learning are also good, as are those of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
5. The school has begun to set annual targets to measure gains in learning in areas such as literacy and numeracy which are realistic and are being achieved. A few targets however, such as those in information technology, have been set too low and have been achieved too readily. The school recognises this and is refining and extending its practice to improve flexibility in its target setting processes. Pupils throughout the school make good progress towards achieving the targets identified in their individual education plans, particularly in areas of communication, number, personal and social development and, for the relevant pupils, behaviour.
6. There are no significant variations in the levels of achievement of boys and girls, or in the gains in learning made by pupils of different ethnic or social backgrounds.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Attendance levels are good and pupils have good attitudes to school. They enjoy their lessons and are particularly enthusiastic in swimming lessons. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils behave well when waiting their turn for an activity and when listening to adults or other pupils. Pupils make good connections between things they have learnt in lessons and their own lives. For example, they are able to apply the story of the Monkey King sharing his mangoes to their own sharing of toys and equipment in the classroom.
8. Relationships are very good. Teachers provide good role models which help pupils to deepen their understanding of relationships and how to communicate with each other and with adults. For example, they applaud or praise the efforts of others and say 'please' and 'thank you' without being prompted. Pupils work co-operatively in team games and on the computer.
9. Pupils understand that their behaviour and response have an impact on other people and recognise the rules set for them, for example when they are required to sit quietly and listen. In religious education and around the school, they are making good progress in respecting other pupils' values and beliefs. This understanding is helped by reference to world religions in weekly assemblies. Pupils with challenging behaviour respond well to skilled adult intervention and by the end of Key Stage 2, show a marked improvement in their responses.
10. Pupils show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. They are pleased, for example, to take on the task of setting the table for school lunches and taking the registers to the school office.
11. Pupils' personal development is good and they make particularly effective gains in maturity during integrated lessons in mainstream schools. For example, they join in music lessons, singing alongside and in tune with their mainstream peers. In an art lesson, pupils worked co-operatively with ten pupils from a visiting mainstream school. Whilst making animal masks, they talked to each other when making decisions on colour and design. Some higher attaining pupils enjoy attending mainstream schools on a split placement in preparation for later full-time transfer. In lessons with mainstream pupils, they demonstrate good behaviour, attend to the teacher and take a full part in the lesson. This provision and the attitudes it develops are a strength of the school.
12. Children under five respond well to school, they enjoy their lessons and try hard to do well. With adult support, they are beginning to work co-operatively in groups. Whatever their levels of ability, there is no significant difference in standards of behaviour achieved by the pupils. Pupils with autism for example, make good gains in personal development by taking responsibility for their own timetable. They show a positive attitude to the range of activities and look at the symbols representing activities and remove them from the timetable as time passes. All pupils with English as an additional language also respond well and show attentive behaviour in class. Multicultural artefacts around the school provide a secure link to their own culture and teachers ensure that they look at these often and refer to them in their work. All pupils work together well, they co-operate in lessons when sharing computers, playing musical instruments or taking part in team games.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching is good overall throughout the school and enables all pupils to make good gains in learning. During the week of the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen. It was good or better in eight out of every ten lessons and very good in three out of every ten. This represents a very significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was less than satisfactory in half of lessons observed. There is no significant difference between pupils of different ages, abilities or learning difficulties. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, those on the autistic continuum and those with English as an additional language all make progress in line with that of other pupils in the school. This is as a result of teaching which identifies their individual needs and consistently addresses them. Teaching of children under five is always satisfactory and in over eight out of ten lessons it is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the under-fives' curriculum; they focus well on the individual needs of the pupils and deploy support staff very effectively to ensure pupils understand tasks and make progress.
14. Teachers are all trained effectively in how to teach literacy and numeracy and use their knowledge well to deliver the literacy and numeracy hours. This daily focus on basic skills helps pupils improve their basic skills as they reinforce and extend their learning. For example, in a very good literacy lesson, a small group of pupils were reading with symbols. The teacher built assessment into the conclusion of the lesson, challenging the pupils to identify the symbols they were familiar with but in a random order to match to pictures. This effectively tested their understanding and how they could apply what they had learnt. Similarly in the numeracy hour, the teacher changed activities frequently and used resources that helped the pupils understand. She used a variety of shapes to develop pupils' skills in identifying, counting and naming. Staff make good links between literacy and numeracy in other lessons. For example, they ensure that pupils count characters or articles in stories to reinforce their understanding. Pupils benefit from this good use of resources, for example in music, children are fascinated by the different sounds they can produce from a rainstick. In a geography lesson on directions, using a plan of the classroom, the teacher concluded the lesson with a short story which focused on similar concepts such as 'by', 'through', 'left' and 'right'. This helped pupils at a quiet time in the lesson, to reflect on what they had learnt and how it fitted into the story.
15. All teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and the requirements of the National Curriculum, religious education and the curriculum for children under five. They provide a variety of activities adapted carefully to meet the needs of all children.
16. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and good in all other lessons. A significant amount of very good teaching was seen in English, music and in lessons for pupils on the autistic continuum and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). In the very best teaching, teachers have very detailed plans for each pupil's learning which are closely linked to specific targets on their individual education plans (IEPs). This ensures that all pupils make good progress in lessons however small the steps might be. For example a pupil with PMLD demonstrated clear progress in awareness and anticipation, increasing his body movements, smiles and vocalisation when the teacher played a tambourine to signal the use of a fine water spray. He was still between activities and when it was repeated, his response was stronger as he anticipated the forthcoming experience. This finely structured and clearly focused teaching is of high quality and demonstrates how pupils learn and undertake the tasks set.

17. A significant contribution to the quality of teaching is made by therapists working in the school. They use their expertise well to work co-operatively with teachers ensuring that each pupil's needs are met. The contribution of the speech and language therapist makes a particularly effective impact upon the teachers' work. In co-operation, they set targets for communication for all pupils. Her direct intervention in the classroom also contributes to teachers' skills and therefore to the high quality gains in communication skills. This co-operative working is especially beneficial for pupils with early language needs as the therapist helps with the use and development of signing, symbols, switch use and other methods and resources.
18. Due time and attention is given to the teaching of personal, social and health education. Teachers weave aspects of the subject into other activities in the classroom such as giving pupils responsibility for giving out equipment or taking the register to the office. At the start and end of the day, pupils learn to greet one another appropriately, the older pupils, for example, shaking hands. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and provide good role models thus helping pupils in their personal and social development. Staff treat pupils with respect and use lunch, break and other informal times to very effectively underpin personal development such as independent toileting. Personal, social and health education targets are included in IEPs where appropriate, and are well addressed by staff, all of whom contribute to and are aware of each pupil's plans. As a result of this strong focus, pupils make good progress in their personal development and are confident in speaking to visitors at their own or their linked schools.
19. Teachers have high expectations in terms of learning and behaviour which are shared with the pupils, and this encourages pupils to try hard and do their best. Because teachers know the pupils well and have identified their learning needs through a good system for setting targets and assessing pupils' progress, they are able to gauge the tasks they set for pupils very carefully. Whilst this system is a strength, a minority of teachers do not write such well-focused targets and assessments. In these few instances, the direction of pupils' learning is less secure. For example, records are written in more general terms rather than as specific achievements of gains in learning. In the best assessment, there are specific details of what the pupil has achieved such as link three objects whilst counting 'one', 'two', 'three'.
20. Teachers and support staff are highly skilled in the support they give to pupils and the methods they use to ensure achievement. Lessons include a good range of varied activities such as speaking, listening, writing, practical activities and drawing. Support assistants and teachers work as well formed and effective teams. The learning support given by these staff makes a very positive contribution to pupils' progress as they reinforce or extend their learning. These support staff will challenge small groups of higher or lower attaining pupils by working with them on extension tasks following input from teachers. Staff working with pupils on the autistic continuum are particularly well skilled in moving swiftly and efficiently between activities and successfully implementing the principles of the Treatment of Autism and other related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH). This enables these pupils to work within a secure framework, understanding the routines of the day, whilst developing the very important social skills through group and paired work. Through this well developed team work and the consistent use of IEPs, all pupils, whatever their needs or abilities, make good gains in learning.
21. Where pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, staff manage it well and minimise the disruption caused. There are very effective behaviour management plans for such pupils which are effectively implemented by all adults. For example, when one pupil had trouble concentrating in a mathematics lesson, the teacher and support assistant

worked together to distract him. When this was unsuccessful, they moved him from the group for a short while then, finally, sat him with a new activity and he resumed work. Thus their persistence and determination restored the pupil's attention and enabled him to continue working on his counting skills.

22. Teaching for the youngest pupils in the school in Year R provides a good introduction to the earliest stages of learning. Pupils are well supported through skilled teaching by a knowledgeable team of adults. Many pupils show signs of immaturity, yet through effective intervention, they are developing their skills of turn taking, listening to others and working together. This Reception class teacher understands the needs of the pupils well and is particularly skilled in dealing with difficult behaviour. For example, in a music lesson, one pupil was rather disturbed and started to scream. This affected some of the other children who joined in. The teacher immediately abandoned the lively musical activity underway and replaced it with calming music, talking to the children in a quiet soothing voice. After a few moments, with calm restored, she resumed the music lesson almost seamlessly, ensuring that no time was lost and that the lesson objectives were achieved. The children's progress is regularly monitored against their individual education plans allowing teachers to identify even the smallest gains in learning and ensuring subsequent activities are well planned to challenge pupils effectively.
23. All staff use resources very imaginatively and effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and experience. These resources range from simple items like an inflatable bottle to be knocked over, to the use of computers to enhance many areas of learning such as reading and mathematics. Teachers adapt equipment such as toys and switches, to enable pupils to understand cause and effect and use peripherals, such as a concept keyboard, to maximise use of the computer. In an outstanding use of resources, a volunteer brought in her cat to help pupils extend their understanding of pet care. The teacher made a very good link to reading by the use of symbol cards to help pupils name the whole range of equipment needed by the cat - including the litter tray which caused great amusement. The climax of the lesson came when the cat emerged from his basket, was stroked by the pupils and then co-operated by eating a little of his food, despite the loud cries of enthusiasm from the pupils. Very good teaching then extended this experience as the teacher asked testing questions about similarities and differences between cats and humans. This very good practical work helped pupils understand how to handle a cat and to identify its needs. They gasped with wonder as the cat emerged from its basket and were very quiet and gentle as they reached to touch and then stroke the animal. Teachers and support staff maintained the pupils' interest levels in this lesson and the pupils were fascinated and focused for the duration of the hour's lesson as a direct result of this very good planning and stimulating activity.
24. Teachers do their very best to make good use of the poor accommodation. They use screens to lessen the impact of the thoroughfare through the hall, and in the autistic unit, create individual bays for learning. Every corner of the rooms and social areas is used effectively to promote pupils' interest and learning.
25. All pupils have home/school diaries and teachers use these effectively and regularly to inform parents of their children's activities at home and suggest ways they might work together at home. Pupils regularly take reading books home and a home/school liaison teacher is also developing resource boxes to enhance the benefits of homework.
26. The good teaching in the school was recognised last year by the award of Teacher of the Year in a Special School to a teacher who was unfortunately absent during the inspection. Nevertheless, the school has achieved very high standards of teaching

reflecting the interest and commitment shown by staff to raising the quality of teaching in an improving school.

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

27. In developing a curriculum that provides a broad range of good quality learning opportunities for all pupils, the school has been highly effective in responding to the findings of the last inspection. Early Learning Goals for children under five, and all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education, now receive appropriate consideration in ways which allow the pupils to build upon their previous knowledge as they grow up and progress through the school. The content within these subject areas has been extended, and is now good in English, science, religious education, art, humanities and physical education, and satisfactory elsewhere. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is implicit within the work of the school and effectively incorporated into all subjects of the curriculum.
28. These learning opportunities are also highly relevant to the pupils' needs. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, where the development of a coherent, consistent and effective approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy actively promotes good communication skills and life skills amongst the pupils. It is also the case in physical education, where a good range of opportunities, both in school and in the wider community, actively fosters good personal and social development. The school has developed a three-year cycle of units of study which provides a good variety of contexts through which to deliver the curriculum. This is generally well planned, although the contributions made by some subjects are not always explored in sufficient detail to allow their potential to be fully realised.
29. Equality of access to, and opportunity within, the curriculum has a high profile in the school. Pupils with more complex needs, and those with communication difficulties, are successfully supported in classes, alongside their peers, for significant periods of time. Arrangements and activities which are woven into the basic curriculum, such as school visits, integration programmes and therapy programmes, are carefully planned, monitored and adjusted so that an appropriate balance is maintained between addressing the individual needs of the pupils and their right of access to a broad and balanced curriculum. In these ways, the school reinforces the relevance of its provision to individual pupils very effectively.
30. The school has continued to strengthen its links with mainstream school. It currently supports pupils on split-site placements; it has also developed a good range of opportunities, for example in English, design and technology and physical education, whereby Watergate pupils visit neighbouring schools for regular weekly sessions, and mainstream pupils are welcomed into Watergate classes in return. All these opportunities are carefully planned to ensure that all pupils still have access to the full breadth of the curriculum, and they play a significant part in promoting the very good social development of the pupils. The high quality of these links has been recognised in the School Curriculum Award 2000.
31. There is effective provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, embedded in the relevant contexts of necessary daily routines such as registration, preparation for lessons, lunch times and end-of-day activities. These occasions are well organised, and underpinned by very good relationships between all concerned. Pupils learn to exercise choice regarding drinks and snacks. They take turns and share. They learn to handle cutlery properly and are successfully encouraged to develop good self-discipline during meal times, with the result that the social behaviour

of the older higher attaining pupils is highly appropriate. The start and finish of physical education lessons are used to good effect to teach undressing and dressing skills, and older pupils show increasing independence in this respect, notably at the local community swimming pool. Sex education is taught in discrete lessons, in line with the governing body's policy, and the school is developing an appropriate foundation for drug education by focusing on factors that contribute to healthy living, such as diet and personal hygiene.

32. Staff provide very positive role models which effectively enable pupils to distinguish between right and wrong, and their expectations regarding what is and is not acceptable are considerate, clear and consistent. Pupils, including those on behavioural programmes, are successfully encouraged to reflect on their actions, and are often very considerate to one another. Staff also encourage and welcome pupils' contributions in lessons; they are often successful in creating an atmosphere of respect in which ideas and beliefs are treated with due sensitivity, and in this sense, the provision embodies the aims of the school well. A good example occurred in a Key Stage 1 lesson on the traditions of Islam when artefacts, such as the Koran, were handled carefully and considerately by the pupils. The provision is reinforced by well-planned assemblies, both whole-school and class-based, which both celebrate the achievements of individual pupils and reflect the multi-faith context of the local community.
33. Whilst the school makes every effort to lessen its impact, the poor quality accommodation limits curriculum delivery. For example, physical education lessons have to be carefully planned to ensure the safety of pupils passing through the hall. In the autistic unit screens are effectively used to create study areas but this results in limited working areas. Design and technology, art and science do not benefit from specialist areas and it is only due to the careful planning by staff that the effect on the curriculum is minimised.
34. The ability of the school to promote extra-curricular activities is severely restricted by inadequacies of the school site, and by the dictates of home/school transport. However, the school makes good use of the local community by using, for example, the library, shops and leisure facilities such as the swimming pool and adventure playgrounds. Visits further afield have included zoos and the Heathrow Youth Games. All have been carefully planned to reinforce specific areas of the curriculum, and provision is further enhanced by the presence of visiting musicians and performing artists who make a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school promotes good standards of care for its pupils. Health and safety and the pupils' welfare are at the forefront of its work and are embedded into the ethos of the school. Child protection procedures are enshrined in a very good policy which is enhanced by clear guidelines for all staff.
36. The school has at its forefront, the dignity of its pupils and stresses the need to talk and treat pupils as developing and valued young people. Good teamwork within the school ensures consistent approaches to the management of pupils and to strategies for ensuring their health and safety. When addressing pupils' personal needs, staff ensure their dignity by providing privacy in toileting and advising the pupils when they are about to be moved. For example, the teacher will say, 'It's time to lift you now, are you ready? One, two three....'. This enables the pupils to understand what is about to happen and, although they may not be able to participate, they can anticipate the next action and thus deepen their understanding of the routines of the school day.

37. Attendance is monitored regularly and the school has good systems for checking on occasional unauthorised absences. This helps to ensure the good level of attendance achieved by the school. Instances of challenging behaviour are well monitored and individual plans set up for those children who need them; these pupils respond well to the structured management and parents report improved behaviour at home. There have been no reports of bullying.
38. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress by all teaching and non-teaching staff are good. The procedure for setting and reviewing targets on children's individual education plans are consistent and well understood. There is a clear process for feeding information into the target setting process. This involves teachers, other professionals, especially the speech and language therapist, and parents. Although the process is well organised, individual targets are not always sharp and may continue over more than one review period. This may occasionally result in a slight pause between the achievement of one target and the setting of the next. In the best practice, individual targets are small and measurable and reviewed and reset at regular intervals.
39. The school pays due regard to all statutory requirements concerning the curriculum. Annual reviews are well organised, regular records kept and procedures concerning the Code of Practice are well implemented. Specialist curricular input is regularly provided by visiting specialist teachers and therapists, such as teachers of hearing or visually impaired pupils. The input of these specialist staff to pupils' learning plans and classroom activities have a positive effect upon their gains in learning.
40. Baseline assessment is in place for new pupils and provides clear guidance to staff on pupils' skills and knowledge on entry to the school. The information is then used to set targets within individual education plans for all pupils so that they may make relevant and steady progress. All children have records of achievement which document progress and attainment through photographs and samples of work. Children are encouraged to contribute to their own assessment. This was evident from a number of lessons observed. The use of video recording to record the progress of pupils with more complex learning difficulties is developing. This medium is also beginning to be used to document gains in learning in specific curriculum areas, particularly mathematics. Pupils' involvement in their own assessment is a great help in enabling them to identify what they have learnt and to celebrate their own achievements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents are very pleased with the work of the school. Eighteen questionnaires were returned and demonstrated that all parents were very pleased with the work of the school and the progress made by their children. They welcome the opportunity to approach the school with queries and difficulties and feel supported by the open and friendly nature of the staff. The school provides a wide range of good quality information; this includes the use of home/school books which outline activities undertaken in classes and any specific difficulties or achievements. Parents use these books very effectively to describe, for example, what children have done at weekends so that staff can build upon these activities in classes. Pupils are therefore able to link their experiences both in and out of school and to understand how one can support another. For example, they can transfer skills they have learnt in shopping with the school to shopping with parents at the weekend. Regular newsletters are provided which ensure parents are well informed about all aspects of the school's activities. Documentation is attractive and of high quality and translation services are available if necessary.

42. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. Parental attendance is particularly good at annual reviews where their views and suggestions are taken fully into account when assessing individual education plan targets. This effective system helps parents understand what they can do at home to support their children's learning and how to ensure a consistent approach between home and school. Parents report significant improvement in behaviour at home as a result of this guidance.
43. The Parents', Staff and Friends' Association regularly organises social events which are generally well attended. However, despite continued good efforts to involve the parents fully in the life of the school, only a minority respond. The school recognises the need to persevere in its efforts to encourage all parents to be active in the life of the school and their children's education. In response to this issue, the school has recently identified a teacher to be responsible for home/school liaison. Provision for homework is overall satisfactory but parents indicated that they would welcome more opportunities for pupils to do some school work at home. The home/school liaison teacher will also address this issue and is currently preparing topic boxes for home-based activities. Almost all parents have signed the home/school agreement.
44. The school has good links with the parents of children under five. Members of the teaching, therapy and health teams visit children at home before they start school and staff regularly share videos and photographs with parents to enable them to see what their children have achieved during the school day, showing that they settle quickly and make good progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. One of the main reasons for the success and improvement in the school is the very good leadership of the senior managers and the governors and, particularly, by the headteacher. The headteacher has great clarity in her understanding of what kind of school Watergate should be. She has successfully communicated her views of the direction in which the school should be heading in its development to all those involved. Her views are shared by governors, the deputy headteacher and by the senior management team. At the time of the last inspection, leadership was described as weak. Very significant improvement has occurred to the point where it is now very good and this very good leadership ensures that staff and parents are committed to the school, pupils' achievement is good and there is an atmosphere or ethos of quality and high expectation across everything the school does. The improvement in the achievement of pupils, the quality of the teaching and the curriculum offered to pupils are some measures of how successfully the school achieves its aims. The senior management team is very effective. Managers have clear roles which reflect the principal aims, priorities and vision of the school. Central to the work of the senior management team is a commitment to raising standards in all aspects of school life and, particularly, to pupil achievement. Strong and effective measures are in place to ensure this, including monitoring pupil progress against targets set in individual education plans and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Members of the senior management team spend time in classrooms observing and supporting teachers and pupils. This is very effective. As a result of the high quality leadership and support given to staff, morale in the school is high.
46. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties. Governors, by regular visits to the school, the degree of interest they show and their commitment to quality, are very well informed. They have a good understanding of the aims and vision of the school which they fully subscribe to. They can articulate the school's strengths and the areas for development and in their role of critical friend, they provide the headteacher with both challenge and support. Through practical involvement in formulating the school

development plan, governors have had a very clear influence on shaping the direction the school is taking.

47. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are comprehensive and very effective. Since the last report, teaching has improved significantly and the teachers' understanding and approach to the curriculum now have a much wider focus. This is in no small measure due to the support and guidance which the senior management team has provided as a result of formal and informal observations of teacher performance and pupils' learning. Although no formal appraisal is in place, all staff have the opportunity for a professional dialogue with the headteacher or other member of the senior management team. This, along with peer observation and the headteacher and senior management team modelling of good practice, has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
48. Sound arrangements for inducting new members of staff are in place. Professional development needs and wishes are discussed with all staff, and measures are now in place to ensure that staff needs are always supported and staff are aware of developments outside of the school and in mainstream. Visits to other schools by Watergate staff address this well. The level of quality in the school generally, along with the clear focus on evaluation and improvement at all levels, indicates that the school could be an effective provider of initial teacher training.
49. Arrangements whereby the school knows of its strengths and weaknesses are very good. Audits of a wide range of aspects of the school's performance are carried out regularly and appropriate targets for improvement are set. Currently, the senior management team has identified a range of areas which it feels are in need of development or, as a result of new initiatives, will require attention. Staff leading initiatives are required to regularly produce progress reports for governors.
50. The school makes good use of the resources available to it. Financial planning and management are now of high quality. The senior management team, working with the bursar and the school administration officer, has very effective procedures in place to ensure that the priorities and targets the school is addressing are appropriately and efficiently supported. Budgeting arrangements are very systematic and all developments are carefully costed, an example being the detailed expenditure analysis in the current school development plan. All financial decision making is monitored by the governing body and is informed by a rigorous focus on best value. For example, by establishing alternative arrangements for the cleaning of the school, significant savings have been made. The very efficient financial administration means that teachers have little involvement in this aspect of the school and this allows them to focus on their own roles. Any budget surpluses are small and well accounted for. Given the very good leadership, the good teaching and the high standards achieved by pupils, value for money is good.
51. The school makes good use of information technology both in the classrooms to further pupils' learning and also for administrative purposes. The school has a good number of computers and, additionally, of many specialist switches and other communication equipment which enable pupils, particularly those with more complex needs, to demonstrate their understanding.
52. The school is making good use of additional funding and grants. For example, funding provided for the Headlamp programme was used efficiently and the governors carefully monitor the Standards Fund. Monies allocated for numeracy and literacy projects have been used wisely and contributed to significant improvement in standards in these areas.

53. The school is generously but appropriately staffed with teachers and support staff to meet the complex needs of the current school population. Subject responsibilities are now better matched to qualifications and experience than at the time of the last inspection. Responsibilities for all staff are now much more clearly specified through job descriptions. All staff have a good understanding of their role and of the senior management team's expectations of them. Staff deployment is always efficient. The nature of the pupils' needs means that supervision is essential at all times and this is organised efficiently; at break times rigorous procedures ensure that pupil safety and care is assured and disruption to learning is minimised. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Support staff provide very good support for teachers. Teachers and support staff work well together in a strong team work ethic; support staff report they appreciate the feeling of value and worth which emanates from the leadership of the school through all levels. A wide range of other professionals works in the school, for example the speech and language therapists and physiotherapists and medical personnel. They make a valuable contribution and are part of a valued team work approach.
54. The accommodation of the school is poor. The hall is used for a range of activities, notably physical education, and is a thoroughfare. Given the lack of space, many areas are inevitably cluttered with large resources and physiotherapy equipment and many classrooms act as thoroughfares to others. Only due to the careful and sensitive approach of staff, does this not affect the quality of teaching and learning although even so, physical education is sometimes disrupted. There are few specialist areas, for example, none exist for design and technology, art or science. The premises officer is effective in maintaining a safe and clear working and learning environment which is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. Outdoors there are insufficient hard-play areas but no sports field. Learning resources are good. Most subjects have a good range of appropriate equipment, and resources for mathematics, art and geography have improved since the last inspection. The school has a good range of information and communication equipment and its use to support the curriculum is now good. An adequate and attractive library area supports pupils' learning in literacy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of individual education plans by writing clear, precise targets for learning.
- Improve the range of strategies for involving parents in the life of the school.
- Continue to improve the quality and ambience of the poor accommodation to limit its impact on pupils' learning.

This is a very successful and improving school where strengths far outweigh weaknesses.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.1	27.1	54.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	61
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	14
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	8

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size	8.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	602

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	749065
Total expenditure	733929
Expenditure per pupil	11291
Balance brought forward from previous year	14625
Balance carried forward to next year	29761

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	65
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	0	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	50	0	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	22	17	17	33
The teaching is good.	56	28	6	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	33	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	22	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	50	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	44	50	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	56	0	6	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	28	0	11	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. Gains in learning in this area are satisfactory and in some instances, good. Children are encouraged to participate in activities and they understand when they are praised for good work. When participating in activities at other schools, they gain confidence when mixing with other children. Early Years education provides a good introduction to school life and prepares children well for progression to more formal education at the age of five.

Language and literacy

56. Children's progress in literacy is good. They are developing an understanding of how books work and with prompts are able to follow the story. Some children work on word recognition. Others are able to put actions in the correct place in the story. In one lesson observed, children were able to 'put Teddy in the bin' at the correct place in the story. Pupils are able to sit in a circle and listen well to adults and watch other children. They are making good progress in understanding that books include text which carries meaning through these activities. Children's language development is a priority; some communicate through spoken language and others are beginning to use signs, all are able to make their needs known.

Mathematical development

57. Children make good gains in learning in mathematics. Whilst many have little understanding of 1:1 correspondence, they generally know their numbers. Children with complex learning difficulties are able to indicate '1' in response to being shown one object. Children enjoy working with brightly coloured apparatus and are beginning to recognise colours. They anticipate some routines of the school day such as drink time and all have an awareness of when it is 'home time'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Children make satisfactory progress in this area. On visits to a mainstream nursery, one pupil uses Plasticine for modelling whilst another is excited by the journey, anticipating the visit. In a session in the hydro-pool, children show a good understanding of how to survive in water. Children have a good sense of the layout of the school and understand where they are going although they all still need adult help to get there. Children use outdoor apparatus to explore the environment and are beginning to know which they prefer. All children enjoy experimenting with paint, sand and water.

Physical development

59. In swimming lessons, children are able to splash when asked, to push and to turn in the water. They move around the classroom with confidence and safety. Several benefit from physiotherapy which enables them to move more freely and develop their independence. All children enjoy playing games in the classroom.

Creative development

60. Children's progress is good. Children are introduced to rhythm, beat and sequence and gain great enjoyment from experimenting with a range of musical instruments such as a rainstick or glockenspiel. Higher attaining pupils are developing the ability to reproduce a rhythmic pattern. Pupils enjoy using paint to develop their understanding of colours and shape; they choose their favourite colours and some can interpret their paintings for visitors.

ENGLISH

61. Standards in English are good. Pupils achieve well against targets set for them in individual education plans. The very youngest children enjoy listening to stories and participate by using props to retell elements of a story. By the end of the key stage, lower attaining pupils can operate switches to punctuate a story correctly with sound effects. Higher attaining pupils can read their own and other pupils' names. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 know that information is contained in a book, how pages are turned and can match words and symbols. Older pupils can choose words beginning with 'b' and 'm' and can read a range of individual words and simple sentences. These achievements represent a good introduction to the world of reading and provide a good foundation for later work.
62. Teaching is always satisfactory and in eight out of every ten lessons, it is good or very good. Lessons are well planned and objectives are clear. Good resources are used well. Where teaching is very good, expectations of pupils are high and activities are differentiated for a range of abilities. Attainment in speaking and listening is good and skills are developed through group activities. Many pupils are supported in the development of these skills by the use of switches. In one lesson observed, pupils operated switches independently to alert adults to their wish to contribute to the session. Vocabulary is developed using signs to support children's expressive and receptive language.
63. Attainment in reading is good and reading skills continue to develop across the key stages. The youngest children are able to join in stories and can anticipate the next activity. One child can tell a story with support from an adult vocalising some words by making appropriate actions, such as pretending to knock at the door at the right time. In Key Stage 2, children can read simple and familiar books from the reading scheme and use Makaton sign to support their reading.
64. Attainment in writing is satisfactory. The youngest pupils begin early mark making and by early in the next key stage, can confidently trace over letters and copy an adult's writing. Word processing is used to support children's writing although this remains a developing area.
65. Teaching is often lively and the teachers' imaginative approach to activities motivates pupils and maintains their interest and attention. Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy their lessons and listen well, trying hard to complete tasks. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, for example, try very hard to activate a switch or a 'Big Mac' to indicate their response to the register or a question.
66. The subject is managed well and there is a clear direction for the work. There is a monitoring process in place, which with collaborative teaching, enables the co-ordinator to identify in-service training needs and areas for development.

67. The close involvement of the speech and language therapist makes a good contribution to the school's procedures for monitoring progress.
68. Whilst children's achievements in reading are good, a shared process for recording reading progress and involving parents is not yet in place. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly embedded and there is good practice across both key stages, particularly in shared story work. The range of texts in use, however, is limited and needs to be extended.
69. English contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are encouraged to take turns, to support one another and to work together. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy. This has impacted well on the quality of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

70. There have been significant improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics since the last inspection. Standards in the subject are now good, both with children under five and at the end of Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, the amount of time pupils spend on mathematics activities has increased significantly and they undertake a much wider range of activities which are very relevant and closely aligned with the requirements of the National Curriculum.
71. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good in relation to what can be expected of them. Children under five achieve good pre-number skills, for example, one group were able to indicate the number of large objects the teacher presented them with, indicating by various means of communication, whether it was 'one' or 'two'. They could also identify 'one' note on a tambourine. Indicating that they understood the beginning of 1:1 correspondence, they made numerically equivalent sets and could associate, for example, two teddies with two notes on a drum.
72. In Years 1 and 2, pupils can undertake counting exercises further developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in Attainment Target 1. Some pupils can count, for example, three fingers; others can indicate one or two in response to teacher questioning.
73. By the end of Key Stage 2, the highest ability pupils can group articles by size, colour and shape. For example, they are able to place plastic squares and circles on a worksheet in the correct position. They can identify a small red circle from large, other coloured circles and with the help of signing, can name the object. Some indicate they know that triangles have three sides. Some pupils have attained Level 1 in mathematics though most are working towards that level. Displays of pupils' work indicate work on other aspects of number work including simple data handling exercises, for example graphs of popular toys and names. In all mathematics lessons, the range of activities is broad and covers all aspects of the mathematics curriculum although often in a modified form. In numeracy strategy sessions, pupils achieve well in mathematics start activities and through plenary work, indicate appropriate levels of understanding and knowledge. Information and communications technology is used effectively in mathematics lessons, for example in some counting work.
74. Teaching in mathematics lessons is never less than satisfactory, is good in six out of ten lessons and very good in three out of ten lessons. Teachers' understanding of the subject, particularly the way that activities need to be modified for pupils working towards Level 1, is very good. This, together with their extensive knowledge of the

pupils, has a significantly positive impact on pupils' achievement and the positive response which most pupils make to the high quality teaching. Teachers' understanding and delivery of the numeracy strategy is very good, particularly at the start and conclusions of lessons where intentions and outcomes are shared with the pupils. Teachers have high expectations, they regularly persevere with a focus on a task which pupils are finding challenging. This impacts on pupils' learning particularly as teachers adopt a wide range of appropriate methods which they know will enable pupils to succeed. A major strength of the high quality teaching in mathematics is the very effective management of pupils' behaviour by teachers. In most lessons, teachers have to deal with incidents of challenging behaviour. This they do with sensitivity and success. Support staff make a major contribution to mathematics lessons. They understand the lesson targets and they work effectively as a team with teachers. Focus in numeracy targets on pupils' individual education plans is very good.

75. The management of the subject has improved significantly since the last inspection. A very good policy and scheme of work have been developed which all teachers are familiar with and follow closely. This policy is currently being reviewed. The subject co-ordinator is very effective in leading development, supporting and evaluating teaching and learning developments and generating resources. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly their social development. For example, pupils were noted listening carefully and valuing each other's responses to teacher questioning. The good teaching, resources and support of other staff mean that all pupils have good access to mathematics work, and opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding are very good.

SCIENCE

76. Pupils achieve well in science throughout the school. This is a significant improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection, and reflects developments in the curriculum that allow teachers' planning to be more effective in extending the pupils' knowledge.
77. Pupils make good gains in knowledge as they grow up and move through the school, and have a satisfactory understanding of how to approach things in a scientific way. They behave well in science lessons; they are co-operative, work hard both on their own and in small groups, and higher attaining pupils answer questions readily. At Key Stage 1, pupils know that birds are different from animals, such as horses, and how they feed. They use play activities to gain a simple understanding of the properties of water and how the forces involved drive a waterwheel round. They are aware that materials have different qualities, such as the noise they make when they are dropped on the floor, and learn to record their findings in simple charts. They also find out which materials are most waterproof as part of their work on the topic of 'The Weather', and can locate and name the main parts of the human body. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 make simple electrical circuits, and can distinguish different materials such as plastic and wood in furniture, whilst those with more complex learning difficulties access science through sensory activities, recognising materials by their textures or by the sounds they make when crumpled. They are surprised and delighted by the effects they create when using such devices as light switches, and in this respect, science makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development. Pupils make predictions regarding what they think birds would like to eat as part of their work on the topic of 'Animals'. They learn what animals need in order to live, when learning how to care for pets; they are gentle with animals such as cats and rabbits in the classroom, and they have a simple understanding of how babies grow into adults. In these respects, the subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

78. Teaching in science at both key stages, is never less than satisfactory and is usually good, occasionally very good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are well organised and relationships are good. There is a calm, consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour, and all staff work well as a team. In the most successful lessons, planning reflects the needs of individual pupils and relates well to the theme under consideration, with the result that all pupils, including those with communication difficulties or more complex needs, make good gains in scientific knowledge. A good range of good quality resources including, for example, pet animals such as cats and rabbits, is used to good effect. However, where teaching is less successful, teachers do not clearly establish a scientific approach to the planned activities, and opportunities for pupils to predict, record and explain events, though created, are not fully exploited.
79. The co-ordinator for science is new to the role, but effective liaison with the previous post-holder has ensured that the monitoring and development of the subject continues to be effective. There is a good policy document which recognises all elements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and, in developing a comprehensive whole-school scheme of work which identifies where these elements may be found and in what contexts they will be taught, the school has made a positive response to the findings of the last inspection. The part science plays in the unit of study cycle is recognised, and opportunities for scientific enquiry in other subject areas, such as design and technology and physical education, are acknowledged, although not always identified in detail. There is no specialist area for science but the classrooms are adequate for the purpose and are well equipped with a good range of good quality resources. These are generally used to good effect although the part played by such specialist teaching areas as the interactive room is underdeveloped. The grounds are limited, but the school has successfully developed a small garden area, winning a local 'London in Bloom' award for the initiative.

ART

80. Due to timetabling arrangements, only one art lesson was observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school show that pupils' achievement in art is good and teaching and learning are effective. In the one lesson seen, ten pupils joined with mainstream pupils in activities making animal masks using card, paste, paint and crayon. Pupils' skills and understanding were developed well by working alongside mainstream pupils and many social skills were developed, including co-operation and fine motor skills in cutting and gluing. The mainstream pupils gave much valuable help and support and the lesson was a very successful example of the many excellent links the school enjoys with the mainstream as part of its policy of inclusion. Art currently has no co-ordinator but scrutiny of documentation shows that the subject has been well led and pupils' achievements and learning are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. The school's provision for design and technology is at least satisfactory and in some respects it is good. This reflects a positive response to the findings of the last inspection. There were, however, few opportunities to observe design and technology being taught during the inspection period and judgements are, therefore, heavily dependent upon the examination of teachers' plans and other documents, including examples of pupils' work and photographic records.
82. Pupils throughout the school show good development in the practical skills of making and assembling, and make satisfactory gains in learning how to plan what they are going to do, and in evaluating what they have achieved. At Key Stage 1, pupils with more complex learning difficulties work hard when mixing the ingredients for

peppermint creams with adult support, and sample the results with evident pleasure. Higher attaining pupils enjoy using cartons and other junk materials to construct towers, and handle rigid and flexible plastic when manufacturing flip-flop sandals. Pupils at Key Stage 2 develop these practical craft skills when making junk monsters alongside their peers from a neighbouring mainstream school as part of an integration link, and cat masks as part of their work on 'Animals'. They construct umbrellas from straws and fabric as part of their work on 'The Weather', make simple drums from cardboard and plastic, and use tools such as hammers and rolling pins appropriately. Pupils also draw lively designs for such items as T-shirts and puppets, but the planning stage is sometimes restricted to such criteria as the choice of materials, and does not ensure that the pupils are clear as to whether or not the designs have succeeded.

83. The provision for design and technology has been disrupted by the long-term illness of staff, but the new co-ordinator has been able to ensure that the subject continues to make a satisfactory contribution to the learning opportunities available to the pupils. There is now a satisfactory scheme of work that reflects all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and opportunities for the subject to reinforce other curricular areas, such as science and art, are clearly acknowledged though not always fully developed. Design and technology is well represented in the cycle of whole-school units of study, although not always with sufficient focus or precision to ensure that all aspects of the subject are considered in sufficient detail. However, it is also represented in the programme of integration links with mainstream schools and, as such, makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.
84. Some design and technology activities, though planned by teachers, are supervised by classroom assistants due to the teachers' involvement in other lessons, some of which are part of the integration programme. This is an appropriate arrangement, but one which requires more detailed planning to ensure that pupils have access to the full breadth of the subject and are not restricted to practising their craft skills. However, the support staff work well as a team, relationships with the pupils are very positive and, on the one occasion where a teacher is observed, the teaching is good. The activities are well organised, resources are used to good effect, and the teacher's lively, encouraging style is effective in enabling all pupils to participate, including those with communication difficulties.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

85. Geography and history are taught as units of study throughout the year. During the inspection, therefore, only three lessons in geography were observed. However, during initial visits to the school and through scrutiny of work good coverage of history was also identified. Pupils make good gains in learning in geography lessons. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are consolidating their understanding of positional prepositions by placing animals, the current curriculum focus, in an appropriate place, e.g. on the straw, by the grass, in the mud. In all lessons, teachers use a lively style and a good range of resources to ensure pupils' understanding is developed. They stimulate the pupils' interest by good use of questioning and expect a response from each. This focused teaching challenges pupils, and they respond well because they want to answer correctly.
86. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have deepened their understanding of direction and positioning by studying a plan of the classroom displayed on an overhead transparency. With the help of staff, they moved to various positions in the room using terms such as 'forwards', 'backwards', 'left' and 'right'. Adults also developed pupils' independence by asking for pupils to guide them when it was the adult's turn. All pupils

take part in the activity, one in a wheelchair practising her driving skills as she participates.

87. Standards and teaching in the humanities have improved since the last inspection. There are now detailed schemes of work which identify the range and purpose of pupils' learning bringing together all activities, including visits to and use of the local community and environment.
88. There is currently no permanent co-ordinator for the humanities but members of the senior management team are monitoring the situation meanwhile.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

89. The use of information and communications technology was observed during lessons in a number of subject areas. There were few opportunities to observe the teaching of information and communications technology as a discrete subject. Additional evidence was gained from the wide variety of display material around the school. Computers are available in all classrooms and are used to support and develop learning in addition to allowing access to the curriculum for a number of pupils with complex learning difficulties. Teachers' planning is good and resources are well used to reinforce pupils' understanding in many subjects.
90. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and skills in information and communications technology and use these effectively to develop pupils' skills and understanding. With this skilled help, pupils have learnt how to manipulate the mouse and use the keyboard to write sentences or transfer other work. They can use symbols to print their own work. Switches are used well to ensure children have access to the curriculum. The well-developed use of these switches enables pupils to contribute to group activities and to participate in storytelling.
91. The use made of information and communications technology by higher attaining pupils is still developing whilst the use made by those children with more complex needs has a higher profile and is well integrated into the curriculum. For example, these pupils are better able to respond to their names during registration and show their enjoyment in this activity by increased smiles and body movements.
92. There is a recording system in place, which documents children's experiences in information and communications technology. However, the information in this system does not always enable teachers to build on what a child knows, understands and can do. The needs of pupils with more complex difficulties are assessed well and the information ensures that children have access to the most appropriate equipment.
93. The subject is well led and there is a clear scheme of work and an appropriate plan for developing the area in the light of the National Grid for Learning. Work has been undertaken to support mainstream schools in developing access to the curriculum. Resources are good and are well distributed throughout the school.

MUSIC

94. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and many are achieving well in learning songs, developing a sense of rhythm and learning to play untuned percussion instruments. None is yet achieving in line with national standards although some higher attaining Reception age pupils are able to copy a simple rhythm in common time with rests. Pupils' learning was good or very good in four out of six lessons as they built upon their

previous knowledge as teachers introduced known songs, melodies and a good range of instruments to stimulate and inspire them.

95. The quality of teaching is predominantly good. Teachers competently lead the singing with strong voices and ensure the pupils listen carefully to them and to each other. All adults support the singing by signing which is a great help to pupils in understanding the meanings of the songs. Where teaching is very good, teachers provide a wide range of activities such as listening, singing and playing to develop pupils' understanding and experience. Even in the less effective lessons, pupils have an enjoyable experience. However, in such cases the teacher places less emphasis on good performance and misses opportunities for the pupils to listen to the quality of the sounds that they make. Pupils behave well in music; they enjoy singing and playing instruments and try hard to join in using aids such as a Big Mac to interact appropriately with the song. The music curriculum is enhanced by many visitors to school, helping pupils to see how other people gain enjoyment from performing. For example, one member of staff brought her choir to perform and there have been many visits by instrumentalists. Music is used well to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in assemblies and at school concerts and drama productions. The school has recognised the need to develop the curriculum for music and to introduce assessment procedures. The co-ordinator is a practising musician and has established plans to focus on curriculum development next year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education has improved since the last inspection and the impact of this has been to improve pupils' achievements in the subject. Across all year groups and both key stages, pupils make good progress in their skills and understanding. Achievement in physical education activities and tasks is good, often very good relative to pupils' ability. In gymnastics, pupils, some with mobility problems, are improving in a wide range of movement and travelling skills. One group of pupils is developing the ability to jump from a stand and have learned the effectiveness of swinging their arms to improve distance. Other pupils can balance along a line and explore different methods of travelling, for example, when asked to think of ways of crossing the gym other than by walking or running, one pupil rolled and another crawled. This demonstrates that they understand the possibilities of movement and travelling. A group of lower ability pupils successfully propel a ball to each other at the right pace and direction and have learned about the force and effort required. In all physical education lessons seen, pupils are learning the importance of listening to instructions, sometimes with more than one component, for example one group were able to 'run across the gym and walk back'.
97. Pupils' social skills show improvement in most aspects of physical education work; pupils share equipment and work well in pairs in gymnastics. In swimming, pupils are making good gains in confidence and in exploring ways they can propel themselves in a different environment. Although few, if any, can swim, some are very close to achieving basic strokes and are close to independence. Much of the confidence and achievement the pupils demonstrate is due to the high quality of teaching they enjoy in the subject. The quality of teaching was either good or very good in all lessons seen.
98. The quality of teaching in physical education is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use appropriate methods and adapt the National Curriculum requirements very successfully. They have high expectation; the level of challenge they present the pupils with is significant. Pupils respond very positively, make great effort and show great enthusiasm for the subject. This pupil keenness and the good teaching impacts very positively on learning. Since the last inspection, teachers' skills and confidence in

teaching physical education and swimming have improved and all staff now use a range of effective strategies which explore the wide range of opportunities in the physical education curriculum, for example developing pupils' confidence and decision-making skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

99. The school makes good provision for religious education. This represents a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection.
100. Pupils achieve well in religious education. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 make good gains in their knowledge of Christianity and other religions; they learn of artefacts, such as the Qur'an and the prayer mat, that are special to Islamic people, and make simple Eid Mubarak cards. Some pupils with more complex needs handle these artefacts carefully, and use a simple range of craft materials to make cheerful, colourful wedding garlands; others extend their knowledge well through a sensory approach, showing interest in the smell of incense and the feel of vestments when visiting places of worship in the local community. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build upon their knowledge, and start to apply it spontaneously to their own circumstances. A very good example of this occurred during a lesson on Buddhism, when one pupil realised that the principle of sharing, lying at the heart of the story about 'The Monkey King', was relevant to the activity he was engaged in, that of dividing a mango amongst the class so that all pupils could have a taste. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good understanding of friendship and caring for others. They also respond well to opportunities for quiet reflection that are created both in lessons and in assemblies, focusing well on such symbols as the candle. In all these respects, the pupils show very good personal and social development.
101. Teaching in religious education is good, occasionally very good. Teachers carefully create an appropriate mood for the lesson, for example one of respect in a Key Stage 1 lesson on the five pillars of Islam, and a lively one in a Key Stage 2 lesson on Chinese New Year. Activities are carefully planned in ways that allow all pupils to participate. There is usually a sensible balance between practical, bustling activity and quiet reflection, and the good relationships that exist between all concerned reinforce the central teaching points. Opportunities to promote the pupils' personal and social development are both created and exploited, and a wide range of well-chosen resources and artefacts are used to good effect.
102. The school has developed a comprehensive, well-balanced scheme of work that is based on the locally agreed syllabus. It has a broadly Christian base, but very good account is taken of other world religions, many of which are represented in the local community. The subject makes a positive contribution both to the cycle of termly units of study and to collective worship, and plays a significant part both in the pupils' personal and social education, and in their spiritual, moral and cultural development. It also makes a dignified, respectful contribution to the life of the school, and embodies the school's aims and values particularly well.