

# INSPECTION REPORT

## FOSSE WAY SCHOOL

Radstock

LEA area: Avon and North East Somerset

Unique reference number: 109405

Headteacher: Mr D Gregory

Reporting inspector: Ian Naylor  
20906

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 188114

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Severe and complex learning difficulties
Age range of pupils:	3-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Longfellow Road Radstock Bath
Postcode:	BA3 3AL
Telephone number:	0171 412199
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Bodman
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Naylor	<i>Registered inspector</i>	History.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further
Bob Miller	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Integration.
Graham Todd	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information technology.	Special educational needs Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	How well does the school care for its pupils? Twenty-four hour curriculum.
Gill Lawson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Modern foreign languages.	English as an additional language; Assessment.
Sylvia Innes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology; Physical education; Geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered by the school?
Geoff Kitchen	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Autistic Resource Base.	How well is the school led and managed?
Nick Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music; Religious Education; Personal and social education.	Equal opportunities; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fosse Way is a school for 120 boys and girls aged three to nineteen with severe and complex learning difficulties. Currently 53 pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD) 32 have severe (SLD), or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), and 22 have autism. Only one pupil does not have English as a first language, and is from a minority ethnic group. There is a base for autistic pupils and another for pupils with profound learning needs. Each group has pupils across the key stages. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. There is five-day a week residential provision for autistic pupils, and currently there are 10 resident pupils. Six local education authorities currently place pupils in the autistic base.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very effective school in which outstanding teaching promotes very good achievements, learning, attitudes and behaviour. There is very good leadership and management from the headteacher and governors. The school provides good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well at each key stage and are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- Teaching and learning are consistently of a very high quality.
- Attitudes, personal development and behaviour are very good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities is good, with very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school cares for its pupils very well, including those in the hostel.
- The school is held in good regard by parents.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- Pupils with profound and multiple learning needs, particularly those with some communication skills, have limited access to their peer group, and there are an insufficient number of learning support assistants to support pupils' learning and integration with other classes.
- Homework is insufficient in quantity to enhance pupils' learning or progress.
- The accommodation in the hostel is unsatisfactory, and does not provide staff or pupils with a home-like environment.
- Information and communications technology across the school is not fully supported by a scheme of work, and is not taught with sufficient regularity in the base for pupils with profound learning difficulties.
- There are no technicians to assist with science or information technology.

*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 made considerable improvements and has addressed all the issues that were raised by the previous inspection. Teaching has improved in many subjects, and teaching overall has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching (previously 15 per cent), and 40 per cent is good or better (previously 11 per cent). Achievement, learning and progress of pupils in each phase and age group have improved from satisfactory overall to good overall. Accommodation provided for split phases of pupils MLD, PMLD, SLD, and enhancement of specialist subject areas for art, design and technology, music, and for pupils with autism. The curriculum has been improved by the introduction of schemes of work, and better long, medium and short term planning. The leadership and management of the school have improved with identification of clear areas of responsibility, delegation, appraisal, induction of staff, and a well defined leadership role for the governing body. Development planning has improved with the introduction of a well-balanced school development plan that is regularly monitored by governors, and includes responsibilities for action, and sets amounts that should be spent.

## STANDARDS

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

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by age 11</b>	<b>by age 16</b>	<b>by age 19</b>	<b>Key</b>	
speaking and listening	B	B	B	very good	A
reading	B	B	B	good	B
writing	C	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	A	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in individual education plans*	B	B	B		

The school is good at meeting the individual targets of pupils set at annual reviews. Governors have set whole school targets for standards of attainment and the school is on course to meet these by summer 2000.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good attitudes are a strong feature of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and whilst on integration visits to other schools, visits offsite, during playtime, lunchtime and in the hostel, is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good across the school. Pupils are well prepared for life outside school. Relationships with each other and with staff are very good
Attendance	Good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good	-
Personal, social and health education	Good	Very 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.*

Forty per cent of teaching is very good or excellent. Fifty per cent is good. The rest is satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is very good in mathematics by age seven and good elsewhere, very good at each age in physical education and in music. It is good overall across the age range in all the other subjects, except in information technology. In the base for pupils with autism, teaching of information technology is satisfactory, and in the base for pupils with profound learning difficulties there was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. The best features of teaching are very good planning, subject knowledge, behaviour management, knowledge of pupils needs, effective use of individual education plans, and excellent use of visitors and specialists.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Strengths: It provides good experiences for pupils, relevant to their needs. Rich and varied experience because lessons are planned well by teachers. Basic skills well taught. Very good use of visiting specialists. Very good extra-curricular activities. Well structured personal and social education programme. Very good links with schools and further education. Schemes of work for most subjects. Weakness: Scheme of work absent for information technology; insufficient use of information technology in PMLD class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for the one pupil with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All are very good. Pupils learn about themselves, respect the feelings of others and behave very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and makes good provision for their general welfare. Procedures are particularly effective for promoting good behaviour. No oppressive behaviour or bullying. Code of Practice Procedures followed well. Child protection procedures in place. Good recording procedures to monitor attendance. Individual education plan targets regularly reviewed and annual reviews involve parents. Weakness: Homework is dependent upon teachers' discretion and parental request.

Over ninety per cent of parents view Fosse Way as a good school, providing good standards of education through good teaching. A significant minority is not satisfied with the amount of work brought home by their child or the school's provision for after school activities. The school has started to involve parents in their child's learning but this has still to be developed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors provides very effective leadership. He is working effectively with the governors to identify priorities, act upon them and evaluate the effects. A range of improvements has been effected that have had considerable impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Sound application of principles of best value. Very positive audit report reflecting financial management of a high standard. Good delegation to staff. Weaknesses: Further development of information technology planned but not yet completed. Governing body's systematic procedures for gathering performance data still developing.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very accurate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is made by the senior management team.
The strategic use of resources	All funds, from whatever source, are sensibly spent and help to promote the well being and achievement of pupils.

Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation since 1998. Currently, although the accommodation for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is of good quality, the teaching area is too small for its current use.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good teaching.</li> <li>• Good behaviour, and relationships.</li> <li>• Staff discuss individual education plans with parents.</li> <li>• Children happy, polite and friendly.</li> <li>• Staff manage behaviour well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed ability and wide age range does not help progress of some pupils.</li> <li>• Insufficient homework.</li> <li>• Few opportunities for parents to talk to one another.</li> <li>• No additional unit for students Post 16.</li> <li>• More learning support assistants required.</li> <li>• More after school activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents that the wide age range in classes does restrict some pupils' access to a wider curriculum, although the quality of teaching is good. There is insufficient attention given to homework and many older higher attaining pupils in particular could benefit from a more consistent and structured approach. There are insufficient learning support assistants to support the integration of PMLD pupils. Inspectors agree that there are no after-school activities, but this is the consequence of complex home-school transport arrangements, and the school does compensate by offering other good extra-curricular activities. Inspectors concur with parents about those things they are happy with.

## HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

### The school's results and achievements

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement, progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and in annual reviews.*
2. Statistics for Standard Assessment Tests, and teachers' assessment show a decline in comparative levels of attainment over the past four years. Inspectors are of the view that this is entirely due to the change in the pupil population that has occurred during that same period. Under the newer classification of the school, as one for moderate and severe learning difficulties, the school actually has better levels of attainment than other similar schools.
3. Due to the re-organisation of the school from two to one site it is difficult to gauge accurately the relative progress of pupils reported at the last inspection with the current situation. From evidence in annual reports, pupils were making satisfactory progress over time at the last inspection. At the same time, the school has changed its character and intake of pupils. Currently a greater proportion of pupils on admission have more complex learning difficulties, or autism. Despite the disruption caused by the building work and relocation, and the change in the pupil population, staff have managed to sustain, or improve significantly, the achievement and progress of pupils.
4. Analysis of pupils' work, annual reviews, reports, individual education plans and information from lesson observations now show that pupils' achievement is mostly good across the school.
5. Since the previous report, a range of nationally recognised accredited courses have been introduced to the school for pupils in Key Stage 4 and Post 16. Initial results from the first cohort of pupils are very encouraging, with good results. There are very clear indicators that the expected results for the current cohort, which should appear in summer 2000, will be equally good.
6. In the subjects, achievement and progress is very good in physical education. It is good in all the other subjects, except for information technology. In information technology, although achievement and progress is good for most pupils, for those with autism it is satisfactory, and for pupils with profound learning difficulties it is unsatisfactory because communications skills are not fully supported.
7. Pupils make good progress against targets set in their individual education plans in speaking and listening, and reading at each key stage. In writing many pupils make better progress at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 as they practice and develop better skills. In mathematics make good progress at each key stage. In personal and social education, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2, and 3 and Post 16, and very good progress at Key Stage 4, due to the provision of work-related learning, and college link courses. Pupils make very good progress in literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.

8. The school has set whole school targets to be reached for pupils by the end of Years 2000 and 2001 in English, mathematics, accreditation at Key Stage 4 and attendance. These are realistic and achievable.

9. There are some very good examples of pupils' standard of work. In English at Key Stage 3, pupils know and understand the imagery in a poem and can give an example of a 'simile'. In history pupils know what they have to do to improve and make progress in their work. At Key Stage 4 in mathematics, pupils understand the terms horizontal, and vertical. In science pupils take part in experiments successfully. Pupils are challenged and motivated in information technology by the task to design and layout their work. Pupils with autism know and understand the importance of warm-up exercises in physical education. In music pupils from all key stages learn new skills in singing in the school choir.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Overall, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development continue to be a strength of the school.

11. Pupils have very good attitudes towards the school and their learning. Parents say their children love to come to school and miss it during the holidays. When pupils arrive at the school they are happy and eager to learn. Despite their difficulties, they try very hard and work to the best of their ability. They show great empathy towards other pupils and are quick to celebrate each other's successes and join in all activities fully. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate for extended periods, and persevere with tasks. Pupils have adequate opportunity to enhance their personal development and independence skills by attending work experience placements on their own and performing school tasks such as using the photocopier and returning class registers to the office. Some older pupils look after the younger ones during play-times. Behaviour in the residential area is of the same very high standard as in the school setting. Relationships between pupils and care staff are very good. Pupils with autism successfully extend their independence and social skills. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There are very few exclusions, and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Attendance remains good, and above the national average for this type of school. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons, which start and finish on time.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

12. Teaching is very good overall because it is consistently good with a high proportion of teaching that is very good or excellent. It is very good or better in 40 per cent of lessons and good in 50 per cent. The remainder is satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.

13. Teaching is very good in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and good elsewhere, very good at each key stage in physical education and in music. It is good overall across the key stages, in all the other subjects, except in information technology. In the base for pupils with autism, teaching of information technology is satisfactory, and in the base for pupils with profound learning difficulties there was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. Literacy and numeracy is taught well through the school's literacy and numeracy strategies particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2, and within each ability group. Effective strategies to teach literacy and numeracy skills in the other subjects are well implemented by teachers who take opportunities to develop them in most lessons, for example by ensuring that pupils understand subject related vocabulary or calculate the costs of projects in design and technology.

14. Lessons are very well planned, prepared and organised, with a relevant range of activities that challenge and interest pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very detailed knowledge and understanding of pupils' abilities and needs. Individual education plans are used very effectively, and contain realistic and relevant targets, which promote pupils' progress and achievement. Most lessons are lively, and often they are fun. Pupils enjoy the tasks, and are well motivated to work hard and sustain concentration for what they are doing. Warm relationships between staff and pupils further support a good learning environment in classrooms. Teachers use learning support assistants very effectively to provide individual help to pupils. Learning support assistants are often given responsibility for teaching groups, and this works very well. Teachers generally manage the sometimes very difficult behaviour of pupils very effectively, often by careful anticipation of what might happen, or by skilful re-direction of inappropriate responses from pupils. Learning is very well supported in many lessons by the skilful and pertinent use of questioning to check pupils' understanding, diligent assessment of pupils' attainment, and by encouraging pupil self-assessment. Carefully planned, structured teaching methods are used for pupils with autism that help them to concentrate and learn. Similarly, pupils with profound learning difficulties benefit from skilful and sympathetic teaching that interprets the requirements of the National Curriculum in a constructive and positive way.

15. There are many examples of excellent and very good teaching that not only have the former qualities, but they also frequently feature examples of outstanding co-operation. These are between school staff, visitors with specialist skills, and teachers from outside organisations. They include excellent swimming lessons at the local sports centre where the liaison and skills used by all teachers and pool instructors, mean that pupils are expertly taught in small groups according to their swimming ability. In one very good physical education lesson on indoor cricket and badminton pupils made very good progress in self-esteem and confidence, as well as learning the skills of the games. This was due to the dynamic partnership between a visiting sports coach and the class teacher, which made the lesson very interesting and motivating for pupils, with lots of fun and praise for achievement. Similar enthusiasm was created by the visiting music and movement workshop. This stimulated pupils' intellectually, physically and creatively, and promoted very good learning for pupils across a wide range of abilities. In an environmental science lesson in the autistic base with pupils at Years 10 and 11, pupils were involved in a project that helped them understand, and experience at first hand, the local environment. Teachers ensure that pupils

know what is expected of them, and check that they are fully engaged in the activities provided. Careful matching of pupils' needs to the syllabus enables them to achieve nationally recognised accreditation for their work. This provides pupils with an added incentive to work hard.

16. Teachers make very good use of local schools and the college of further education to extend learning opportunities to pupils. A great deal of thought and preparation goes into ensuring that pupils can experience lessons alongside pupils their peer groups when they integrate in these situations. A number of pupils with autism have their learning experiences extended by the successful integration into the other classes of the school. This can only work because teachers and learning support assistants have the knowledge and insight of pupils' learning needs and have the flexibility and expertise within their lesson planning to make this happen successfully.

17. Although there is no unsatisfactory teaching, there are some relatively weaker areas of teaching. The full impact of teaching in a few lessons is lessened when too long is taken over changing between types of activity. For example, when the focus changes from oral work to written work. Occasionally lessons are knocked off-track by the poor behaviour of a few pupils, where there has not been sufficient anticipation that this might happen. Homework is not used frequently enough in lessons, and, when it does occur, it is generally focussed on reading skills. Consequently, opportunities for further promoting learning and progress in areas such as investigation, retrieval and recall of information, particularly for higher attaining pupils, are lost. Generally pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are well taught, but there are some who are not sufficiently challenged because they are not with their peer group and are therefore not achieving their potential.

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

18. The curriculum has good breadth, balance and relevance to the needs of pupils. Pupils study all the subjects of the National Curriculum and are provided with a rich and varied experience. Existing schemes of work for subjects are well structured to build skills and knowledge and, because teachers know their pupils very well, they provide relevant and often inspiring lessons that are highly motivating and rewarding for pupils. Sound opportunities are provided at the end of Key Stage 4 for pupils to gain accreditation through the nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement in mathematics English, French and food technology.

19. The curriculum for pupils with autism is good. The curriculum offered to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is satisfactory, but could be extended and improved by giving pupils opportunities for better interaction with their peer groups. This would increase opportunities for social and communication skills. Parents expressed concerns about the wide age range for PMLD pupils. The school development plan shows the intention to integrate these pupils far more into mainstream classes in the school. Until this happens there will be the problem of pupils remaining in one class for several years. Because of this issue the curriculum for PMLD pupils is rather narrow. Part of the problem is



that there are not enough learning support assistants to help with the process of integration. The curriculum offered to each of these groups has a good balance between entitlement to Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and a therapeutic approach that emphasises daily living patterns and strategies for learning in the world beyond school.

20. Provision of extra-curricular activities is good, considering the constraints of home-school transport arrangements. Opportunities include a choir, visits to the theatre and residential visits. Sporting activities include leisure pursuits and competitive sports. The curriculum is considerably enriched by contributions from visiting experts in physical education, visiting theatre and music groups and provision such as riding for the disabled.

21. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The main world faiths are covered in religious education lessons and in most other lessons and displays. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain a real understanding of other people's lives and beliefs; for example there is a fine collection of work based on life in Kenya and India. There are many visits to places of worship and a carefully considered range of opportunities for pupils to learn to appreciate and fully understand the beliefs and traditions of other people. Pupils are reminded of the need for good behaviour on a very regular basis. Most teachers have high expectations of behaviour in lessons and around the school. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to consider moral issues, some of a personal nature and others on a wider scale, such as the environment and human life. Pupils regularly work in pairs or in small groups, helping them to co-operate with others. Many older and more able pupils help and support those less able. Staff have high expectations of pupils' social behaviour on visits. Respect for others, courtesy and politeness is well promoted. At meal times there are very high expectations of pupils behaviour set by adults, and pupils respond accordingly. Teachers plan for cultural development very well in their lessons in every subject. There are visits to theatres and to musical events. The school welcomes musicians, actors and artists on a regular basis.

22. The school has developed very good, and in some cases, excellent links with colleges, mainstream schools and businesses in the area. These provide accredited courses and appropriate work placements that are based locally. This aspect of school life is an improvement on the previous inspection. A number of pupils from Year 11, with autism, severe and moderate learning difficulties, attend local colleges of further education, where they undertake a variety of courses include information technology, catering and horticulture. A number of these courses lead to national accreditation. Pupils from Year 10 have attended science and physical education lessons at nearby secondary schools and had the use of their learning resources. The school has built up an impressive list of local employers willing to engage pupils in work experience placements. These include a sports centre, garage and building company.

23. There is a well thought out and appropriate personal and social education programme that is a strength of the school. It includes health education, sex education and careers education. Visiting speakers such as the school nurse, doctor and dentist as well as regular contact with the careers service enriches the programme. There is a close liaison with the careers service. Provision for careers education begins in Key Stage 2 with pupils learning about the jobs people do and the concept of work. Later, in Key Stage 3, they begin more

formal careers lessons that culminate in work experience for more than half the pupils in Key Stage 4. For those who cannot undertake work experience, tutors provide work-simulation exercises. From the end of Year 9, careers guidance is closely linked to pupils' transitional review when careers plans are put into place which take pupils through to their next stage of education, training or employment.

24. Links with further education colleges and nearby primary and secondary schools are very good with a well-planned integration programme. Visits to other institutions are very well organised and pupils arrive and depart punctually and know what is expected of them. Targets are set for pupils and progress monitored. Other links with the local community are good. For example, with the local church where pupils attend services for major festivals.

25. Pupils with autism and those with severe and moderate learning difficulties are given the opportunity for inclusion into a mainstream local primary school. Some autistic pupils are integrated into classes in the main part of the school for specific subjects, such as mathematics, French and science. Where appropriate individuals may share a significant part of their timetable with their peer group in the main part of the school. These sessions are well planned with clear objectives understood by all staff concerned. Assessment and reviews of the integration placements are held at regular intervals. These inclusions are all very successful and have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour, social interaction, self-esteem and communication.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

26. Overall the procedures for child protection and ensuring the pupils' welfare are good. Class teachers, learning support assistants and hostel staff know the pupils in their groups particularly well. Health and safety issues are addressed as they arise. All staff have received training, are aware of recently updated child protection arrangements and know who is the responsible person. There are good relationships with a range of other agencies in order to ensure that pupils receive the entitlement set out in the Statements of Special Educational Need.

27. Staff ensure that all pupils work in a happy and safe environment which is free from harassment and bullying. Personal, social and health education is very good and effectively promotes the very good attitudes and behaviour displayed by the pupils. Pupils are given responsibilities that promote self-esteem and foster self-reliance. Procedures for monitoring attendance, following up and reducing unauthorised absences are good.

28. The school has made considerable improvement since the last inspection in devising systematic and more accurate procedures, including formal testing, for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress, though it recognises that further development is required in most subjects. The best practice is in mathematics where assessment processes are set out distinctly in the scheme of work and where records are carefully maintained to show National Curriculum attainment levels.

29. Staff know pupils' abilities and needs very well and set targets for them which are realistic and achievable. Procedures for individual education plans and annual reviews are well established, and records of achievement are now an integral part of the school approach to

assessment. There are good systems in school for record keeping and these are used well to provide assessment of pupils' progress. However assessment is not used consistently across all subjects. Teachers use baseline assessment successfully for the youngest pupils on entering the school and use this to gauge their progress over time. Where assessment is used, it is done well and forms an accurate picture of pupils' abilities and achievements. However assessment has still to be developed in some subjects.

30. Residential care for autistic pupils is good. It offers an extremely caring, very stable, supportive, and safe environment. Staff provide a good variety of activities in the evening that help to extend and promote pupils' experiences and interests. They promote self-esteem, self-confidence, positive behaviour and actions and increase pupils' personal and social development, and thereby enrich the curriculum.

31. Residential staff contribute well to annual reviews. There is a daily log that records incidents. Exchange of information between residential and teaching staff is satisfactory, although at times pupils' link booklets and the incident log are completed more thoroughly by care staff than by staff in the school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

32. Nine out of ten parents are satisfied with the standards achieved and what the school provides and have no major concerns. Their view is that it is a good school. A significant minority, however, are not satisfied with the amount of work their child is expected to do at home. The school has a homework policy but this has not been understood by a number of parents and homework is inconsistent and applied infrequently across all year groups.

33. A minority of parents feel there should be a range of activities outside of lessons. Whilst there are no after school clubs currently taking place, the school does offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips, that does help to compensate. Parents are encouraged from time to time, to come and help in school and a small number do. They help individual pupils with swimming or make costumes for school plays. Generally, however, there has been a minimal response to the school requests for help in school. Parents do play a valuable role in the Friends of Fosse Way organisation, which runs a number of social and fund-raising events.

34. Pupils' academic reports are of good quality and adequately inform parents of what their children know, understand and can do. This is an improvement on the previous inspection report, which indicated that they did not follow a common format or meet statutory requirements. Teachers supplement annual reports with meetings three times a year to discuss with parents their child's progress. Reviews of statements of special educational needs and individual education plans take place regularly. Home-school diaries are generally well used and continue to be developed across all year groups. Parents are consulted on appropriate matters, such as the recently implemented home-school agreement and feel the school is very responsive to their suggestions and complaints.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

35. The school is very well led. The headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, provides very effective leadership. The headteacher works very well with the governing body and very good use is made of the resources available to the school. Consultation is used appropriately by senior management to address and agree priorities for improvement. The Investors in People Award given recently is a clear indication of the very good standards achieved in management. To achieve this award the school needed to ensure that all staff are provided with relevant training; there are clear roles and well-defined expectations for the governing body, subject leaders, senior managers and administrative support staff.

36. As a result of good leadership, staff know how their contribution is valued and are given appropriate credit for improvements to which they contribute. Staff show a commitment to improvement. Senior staff communicate well to others what needs to be done and give good guidance on how to do it. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders all have agreed roles in assessing performance and for dealing with any poor performance. Governors are aware, however, that gathering information about how well the school performs in a systematic way is an area for further improvement. The school has made a good start at setting targets in special schools and follows guidance from central government effectively.

37. The school provides good value for money through procedures that reflect best value principles. Spending has been wisely targeted and is effectively linked to priorities in the school development plan that covers three years. The strength of this plan lies in the simple monitoring and evaluation processes for each target. These are clear, specific, realistic and linked to a named person or committee of the governing body. How this data, once generated, is analysed and used to secure further improvement, is an area for more development. The local authority has supported the school well in its agenda for improvement and change, particularly in bidding for central funds through the 'New Deal for Schools' initiative.

38. Staff are well qualified and nearly half have further qualifications in special education. Their qualifications and experience are well matched to the subjects they teach and they are well deployed. Induction for new staff and training to meet the national priorities of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology is good and the results of this are reflected in the good standard of teaching seen during the inspection. The school has some well trained and very experienced learning support assistants, who use signing well and provide very good support for all pupils, particularly those with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and with autism

39. However, there are too few learning support assistants for pupils with profound learning difficulties. This restricts the school's ability to ensure that all pupils receive the individual attention they require during lessons, and reduces opportunities for these pupils to integrate with their peers. More, well-trained support assistants would help to speed up the integration process. This judgement supports the view of parents. There are no technicians to assist with science, information and communications technology, and design and technology. This lessens the time available to teachers for other aspects of their teaching.

40. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation since 1998. There are now specialist teaching areas for science, art, design and technology and there is a specialist teaching facility for autistic pupils. The playground has been resurfaced and provides very good play space, but the grassed areas in the new courtyard and the play space for autistic pupils become muddy and are unusable after it has rained. Better and safer access to the site for buses transporting pupils has been provided. Improvements were made to the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties following the move from the Hilltop site and in the future the school is hoping to develop this provision on the lines of the autistic resource base. Currently, although the accommodation for profound and multiple learning difficulties is of good quality, the teaching area is too small for the current numbers of pupils and all the equipment such as wheelchairs that they require. The school has good plans to further develop facilities. These include providing a hydrotherapy and light stimulation room, because at present pupils have no access to these facilities. Also a considerable amount of money has been raised towards the building of the hydrotherapy pool and a sensory garden is currently under development.

41. The residential accommodation for autistic pupils does not adequately meet the individual needs of the pupils. Pupils have reasonable personal space but very few pupils have individual bedrooms. Bedroom areas have been personalised by some pupils and lounge areas have television, video and information technology facilities. Even so, there is an institutional feel about the present layout of the residential wing and the school development plan itemises necessary changes to give residential pupils more home-like facilities.

42. Resources are satisfactory apart from peripheral devices for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties which reduces their opportunities for communication.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the curriculum for PMLD pupils by extending opportunities for them to socialise and communicate with their peers through integration into the other classes of the school.  
*(Paragraph: 19)*
- Introduce more extensive and rigorous arrangements for homework in conjunction with the wishes of parents.  
*(Paragraphs: 17, 51, 64, 67, 79)*
- Improve the accommodation for resident pupils in the school hostel to secure a more home-like environment.  
*(Paragraph: 41)*
- Complete the scheme of work for information and communications technology. Make more extensive and consistent use of Information and communications technology in the base for pupils with profound learning difficulties.  
*(Paragraphs: 81, 85)*
- Appoint a technician to support science, information technology, and design and technology, and increase the number of learning support assistants to support PMLD pupils.  
*(Paragraphs: 19, 39, 65, 71, 85)*

*Other relatively minor weaknesses referred to in paragraphs numbers ( ) should be addressed as follows:*

- \* The governors should continue to develop ways of gathering information about how the school performs and use this data to effect further improvement.  
*(Paragraph: 36)*
- \* Continue to develop a consistent approach to record keeping and assessment using the example of best practice available in the school.  
*(Paragraphs: 29, 67, 85)*
- \* Introduce portfolios for pupils' artwork in each key stage.  
*(Paragraph: 67)*
- \* Ensure consistency in the completion of incident logbooks and pupil link books.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	110
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	70

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	34	50	10	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	106
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	6.5	School data	0.2

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

## Results of National Curriculum assessments 1999

Pupils were assessed in line with statutory requirements at Key Stages 1, 2, and 3.

No pupils reached the Level requirements at each key stage.

The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age-related national expectations or averages.

## National Awards and Accreditation

ASDAN: Youth Award Scheme

1998/1999

Year 11 Bronze Award 7 pupils

Year 12 Bronze Award 1 pupil

OCR: National skills Profile

1998/1999

Eleven pupils were awarded certificates covering a range of modules.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	97
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### *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	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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



### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 - Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.0
Average class size	7.5

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	589

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	910079.00
Total expenditure	896711.00
Expenditure per pupil	8623.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	12266.00
Balance carried forward to next year	25634.00

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	105
Number of questionnaires returned	12

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	22	9	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	17	14	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	17	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	4	11	7	3	5
The teaching is good.	22	11	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	14	2	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	21	11	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	20	12	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	14	12	5	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	17	13	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	17	12	2	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	2	3	8	6

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

### **ENGLISH**

43. Pupils achieve well in English. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, mainly due to the introduction of the Literacy Hour, careful planning and organisation and the introduction of accreditation.

44. At all key stages progress overall is good. Many pupils enter the school with little or no communication and by the age seven they listen carefully, use speech, signing gestures or communicate through pictures (PECs). Through patient meticulous teaching and planning, they begin to acquire reading skills. They learn to make marks on paper in the correct direction and develop initial skills in writing.

45. At 11, achievement and progress in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen carefully and respond appropriately in a variety of situations. Many pupils are confident, speak clearly and some use a varied vocabulary. They work enthusiastically on letters and sounds and have a developing recognition of moods and feelings in prose and poetry. A few have some difficulties with communication and their speech is indistinct. Pupils answer questions and join in discussion, generally using short sentences. Some need to be prompted by their teachers' questions and reply with single words. Generally, pupils listen well to each other, show interest and make sensible contributions.

46. Achievement and progress in reading is good. Pupils read familiar, early books from a reading scheme enthusiastically and with some accuracy. They enjoy shared reading and whole class sessions with the 'Big Book'. They can identify the title, author and select patterns. For example, higher attaining pupils can select words that rhyme and can name and understand some imagery in poetry. Pupils enjoy books, make deliberate choices and can indicate their favourite parts. They have developing word recognition skills and choose words to put into simple sentences, which they read accurately. Progress in writing skills is satisfactory. Some lower attaining pupils complete simple sentences with support. They try hard to write accurately with the correct punctuation. A few pupils over-write or copy the sentences they dictate to adults and some, with support, use word processing to write with symbols. Higher attaining pupils can retell stories in their own words paying careful attention to simple punctuation, for example capital letters and full stops.

47. At 14 pupils can follow simple verbal instructions. A few can cope with more than one instruction by listening carefully to their teacher. In discussion pupils listen to each other with interest and work well together in pairs. Higher attaining pupils explain clearly what they are doing and the reasons for it. For example, Year 9 pupils, in considering words used to persuade people to buy training shoes, showed a good understanding of adjectives and their use. They recognised the purpose of logos and slogans in advertising and could select appropriate ones to use in writing their own advert. Similarly, pupils with more severe learning difficulties can match logos and appropriate slogans and show a good understanding of the process of persuasive writing, particularly when applied to chocolate! With support, they can complete a logo and slogan about the chocolate, and show a good recognition of several logos e.g. Macdonald's. Many pupils are reading a widening range of books and recognising familiar words. Higher attaining pupils can retell the story of their book

accurately, showing a simple understanding of plot and character. Some are fluent and accurate readers and can select books and talk about their selection with enthusiasm and confidence. They enjoy poetry, and recognise similes and patterns and say why they find the poem effective.

48. Pupils begin to write for a range of purposes. They draft and redraft their work with support and they pay great attention to the presentation of work. They are more aware of the audience they write for and some begin to write creatively, for example in their response to the books they read. Many develop good skills in pencil control and letter formation and use the computer with increased confidence.

49. At 16, pupils talk confidently and use language appropriately in formal and informal situations. For example, they give directions clearly and politely. A few are less confident in speaking, but with support are successful in making themselves understood. Pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with more complex needs respond well in lessons with signs, eye movements or gestures. Some successfully use augmentative aids to communication. Several pupils read books, at their appropriate level, accurately and fluently. They show a good understanding of the plot and characters. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. They complete projects for the Youth Award Scheme accurately. They are able to give a talk to their class and answer questions on their chosen topic confidently. Pupils work in teams to produce their own fiction and non-fiction books, beautifully presented and of very high quality. There is good use of word-processing and illustrations to enhance the quality of pupils' writing. Handwriting is sometimes joined up and often neat. A few older pupils develop a handwriting style and take pride in writing in a cursive script with evenly formed letters. They are developing sound skills in functional writing, and a capacity for a creative and enthusiastic response to literature. Many pupils are able to respond thoughtfully and sensitively to poetry and text. This has been supported well by the new curriculum planning and the validated, accredited courses for pupils at 16 are now following.

50. At all ages pupils' attitudes to work are very positive. They are enthusiastic and highly motivated by the lively and imaginative teaching in the department. In the majority of lessons they are keen to answer questions, settle to work very quickly and persevere with work which is quite hard. They listen to each other carefully, take turns and are proud of their work. Pupils develop a genuine interest in books and enjoy sharing them with adults. They value each other and the work that is displayed and they are proud of their successes. They have very good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are pleasant to one another, work hard and are generally co-operative.

51. Teaching is never less than good and in almost one third of lessons, it is very good. In the best lessons, a brisk pace, together with a high but realistic level of challenge, ensures that all pupils are strongly motivated and are eager to achieve. In these lessons teachers are confident with secure knowledge of their subject and they make sure that pupils are learning the right things. Teachers' preparation and organisation is good with clear learning objectives which pupils know and understand. Teachers know their pupils well and have good experience in working with those pupils with complex needs, those on the autistic continuum and those with severe learning difficulties. Lessons are carefully structured. They go to great lengths to adapt material and resources for and are creative and flexible in their

implementation of the Literacy Hour and the National Curriculum programmes of study. Management of the pupils is consistently good and unobtrusive which cuts short any challenging behaviour. Teachers work successfully in close collaboration with the speech and language therapist to support individual pupils with difficulties in communication. Apart from reading, little use is made of homework to extend pupils learning and skills.

52. In most lessons teachers keep detailed, useful records of pupils' progress to ensure that pupils are learning the right things and their needs are being met. There is good assessment of pupils' standards. Where teachers are less confident teaching is just satisfactory, the pace of the lesson is not well matched to pupils needs, and expectations of learning are lower. Pupils become more restless in these lessons and their progress is slower.

53. The co-ordinator gives clear leadership and manages the department effectively with energy and enthusiasm. There is good collaboration with colleagues to ensure all the groups of pupils' needs are met and developments are carefully evaluated and monitored. The subject schemes of work are now in place, linked to the National Curriculum, giving a broad and balanced range of experiences. The good progress in reading at all key stages is in part due to the implementation of the National Literacy Hour Strategy, appropriately adapted to meet pupils' needs, careful whole school planning and the targeting of key skills, all of which are beginning to have an impact. Older pupils follow courses appropriate to their needs including the Youth Award Scheme with other appropriate accreditation at Key Stage 4 through the AQA/AEB Certificates of Achievement. Assessment of specific skills, standardised testing and teacher assessment at end of Key Stage 2 and 3 are all in place.

54. Pupils at all key stages use their English skills well in other areas of the curriculum. They are encouraged to listen attentively and follow instructions in most subjects, and they do this particularly well in physical education and mathematics. The majority of lessons include a reading and writing task and teachers are aware of pupils' literacy targets and reinforce learning in these areas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

55. Pupils' achievement in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding in mathematics is good. In lessons, pupils' achievement ranges between very good and satisfactory. Achievement at seven is very good and it is good in all other key stages. Most pupils have few or no number skills on entry. By age seven some pupils can count to ten in unison with their teacher and copy some numbers. They learn and play counting games such as snakes and ladders. Others can recognise a triangle and circle. They use a pictorial communication system very well to aid understanding. At age 11 higher attaining pupils learn number facts to ten and some are able to learn two, three, five and ten times tables. They can do simple addition and subtraction with tens and units to thirty. At 14 higher attaining pupils recognise place value to thousands and simple sequences. They recognise two-dimensional shapes such as square, rectangle, triangle and circle. They can calculate the area of small regular shapes by counting squares. At 16 higher attaining pupils can calculate percentages such as 60 per cent, 80 per cent, and know that 25 per cent of £200 is £50. They can use TV timetables to calculate length of programmes and know the days of the week and months of

the year. They can interpret and draw simple bar graphs. Higher attaining pupils complete some of the mathematical modules in the National Skills Profile and Youth Award Scheme and higher attaining pupils will, for the first time this year, enter for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in mathematics with a high likelihood of success.

56. At Post 16, SLD pupils use some mathematical language such as over, under, middle, corner, and can name numerals to 6.

57. There are good examples of the use of numeracy in other subjects including counting the syllables in Haiku poetry in an English lesson, measuring changes in temperature in science.

58. Pupils are keen to learn. They settle quickly to their lessons and enjoy the stimulus of the short mental session that begins most mathematics lessons. Behaviour is nearly always good and, in some lessons, exemplary. They have a good rapport with their teachers and work in a mutually supportive atmosphere. They are keen for others as well as themselves to do well. As pupils progress through the school they take greater pride in the presentation of their work.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good and ranges between excellent and satisfactory. It is very good at Key Stage 1 and good in all other Key Stages. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is at least satisfactory and usually good. This combined with the very good knowledge that both teachers and the learning support assistants have of the pupils enables a range of appropriate learning opportunities to be presented to the pupils. Planning is generally in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and carefully detail objectives and activities that will lead to the achievement over time of pupil's individual education plan targets in numeracy. Teachers have high expectations of both work rate and behaviour and this enables lessons to move along well, with little time wasted. By making exercises progressively demanding, pupils are continually challenged to make better progress. For example, when a pupil writing a numeral from memory without the aid of a template, was expected to continue to do so for the rest of the lesson, which she did almost without fault. Another pupil, knowing the rule for multiplying by ten and a hundred, was asked to formulate a rule for multiplying by a thousand, which she did successfully. Much of the teaching is oral, with the pupils making mental calculations, using counters, such as coins when adding money and working out change. Written exercises are made as enjoyable as possible for the pupils, which encourages them to work hard. Teachers manage pupils very effectively, which enables lessons to proceed with little or no time wasted. Teachers use assessment frequently and keep good records of progress towards meeting pupils' individual targets. A weakness of teaching, especially with the older higher attaining pupils, is the absence of a regular, structured homework routine to support learning and further extend progress.

60. There has been considerable improvement in mathematics since the previous report. The subject is very well led and teachers now have the benefit of a whole school scheme of work, and an assessment and recording schedule, which leads to the appropriate accreditation route for all pupils. In-service training has been used well to enable the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school and the subject development plan continues to promote high standards through the establishment of pupil achievement targets.

## **SCIENCE**

61. The achievement and progress of the majority of pupils at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good when measured against their prior understanding and knowledge of science. During the inspection no lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, but the analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils' achievement and progress is good and consistent with their performance in English and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

62. At 11, pupils studying friction join in the investigation enthusiastically and rub two pieces of wood together to generate heat. They follow up this work in their classroom and relate the work they have been doing in science to geography and the way in which African tribesmen light a fire. Pupils with severe learning difficulties look at a range of footwear and know that we wear different types of shoes for different occasions, but do not fully understand the reasons for this. They enjoy feeling the soles of footwear and comparing rough to smooth. Other pupils at 14 learn how changes in temperature can cause water to boil or freeze. Through experimentation they realise how these changes are reversible and apply practical mathematical skills when weighing ice and using a thermometer to record different temperatures. Pupils by 16 follow an externally accredited course in science. They talk with confidence about some of the basic properties and uses of metals. With assistance they carry out an investigation to find out how calcium, sodium and potassium react with water and then understand the resulting gas produced is called hydrogen. When they reach Year 11, the majority of pupils are capable of working more independently when carrying out investigations. Their skills of prediction and fair testing are much better developed. Most pupils are developing a good understanding of the need for accuracy when measuring quantities and recording results. Investigations are carefully and systematically recorded but the quality of pupils' writing is not as good as their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. Pupils are careful to use the scientific language they have been taught and the higher-attaining pupils show they have a clear understanding of the meaning of words such as *translucent* and *alkali*.

63. Pupils enjoy science and have very good attitudes towards work. They respond to their teachers with enthusiasm and co-operate well together. Many pupils display a genuine interest in science. They ask questions, show a real curiosity and realise that first hand evidence gathered through investigation may cause them to change their minds.

64. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good at Key Stage 4 and good at Key Stage 3. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. Teaching is very good in four out of ten lessons. The best lessons are characterised by teachers having high expectations of pupils and asking probing questions to ensure they understand and develop enquiry skills. Teachers manage pupils well and this enables lessons to proceed at a good pace and makes effective use of time. Teachers insist upon the use of good scientific language. An example of this was an effective lesson where the teacher constantly reinforced the word *reaction* and *reactionary*, when studying properties of materials. Teachers plan well for each year group, and learning objectives for lessons are very clear. There are good links with subjects such as mathematics and geography. Information and communications technology is starting to be used well to support the work in science. A very good example of data logging was observed when pupils

inserted a probe into an insulated beaker of ice, and placed another probe in the same quantity of ice left at room temperature. From the resulting graph on the computer pupils could clearly illustrate the changes in temperature that were taking place. Teachers are very conscious of safety and take all necessary precautions when carrying out investigations. Little use is made of homework to support learning.

65. The subject is well managed by the science co-ordinator. Since the last inspection a good scheme of work has been introduced. Pupils at 16 now have the opportunity of obtaining external accreditation in science. The curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, although improved since the last inspection, is underdeveloped. The school recognises this and is taking steps to improve it. Assessment is developing satisfactorily throughout the school. The new science laboratory and good quality teaching for most classes by the specialist science teacher is helping to raise standards. Investigative science has improved significantly since the last inspection and is good. Lessons for most classes are now much better structured to meet the needs of lower and higher-attaining pupils. Visits to places such as an arboretum, zoo and power station are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Resources for science are well used but there is no technician to help with the preparation of materials for lessons and cleaning of laboratory equipment, which is not an effective use of teachers' time.

## **ART**

66. Overall, pupils' achievements in art are good. By 11, higher attaining pupils work well with a good range of materials, are familiar with an appropriate range of techniques and have acquired some skills in applying them. Lower attaining pupils are able to experiment with materials and explore a good range of special effects. Those with the most profound difficulties make sound progress within a multi-sensory approach. At 14, 16 and 19, pupils' achievements are good. Pupils can look at Kenyan landscapes and sunsets and produce their own work inspired by this theme. Older pupils consider diverse land and townscapes by studying artists such as Claude Monet and L.S. Lowry. Pupils use these studies to produce very imaginative work of their own. Most pupils show very good levels of interest, concentration and independence in their learning.

67. Teaching in art is good overall and at each key stage. Since the previous report the provision of a specialist art room and the development of a detailed scheme of work for art have contributed to very good improvement in teaching and ensure better planning across the key stages. Very good management of pupils matches this planning. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. Imaginative themes, such as *Landscapes*, bring continuity to pupils' learning because they overlap the key stages. Whilst the provision of sketchbooks for pupils is a very good improvement, the arrangements for pupils to store their work in portfolios is inconsistent. Use of information technology and homework is unsatisfactory. The use of assessment and recording is weak. The subject leader is aware of areas for improvement and is prioritising these very well.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

68. Achievements in design and technology are good in relation to pupils' age and abilities. By 11, pupils who have severe communication difficulties respond with pleasure and enthusiasm to the colour and texture of puppet heads and the materials being used to clothe them. They help to select materials by gesturing their approval or disapproval. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make simple snacks such as pizza buns, for which they select toppings and prepare them. For example, they chop peppers; slice mushrooms and arrange a variety of things to make an attractive product. They use knives and other equipment safely. In resistant materials lessons, they construct simple circuits and use a range of basic hand tools safely to make products from wood. By 14, pupils use a variety of methods to prepare simple meals and bake cakes such as rock buns to a good standard. They are aware of and follow safety and hygiene rules. Pupils make wooden toys with cam mechanisms. They use machine and hand-tools safely and confidently and use finishing techniques to produce attractive working models. By 16 pupils follow their own plans to make healthy snacks. They select appropriate equipment to prepare fruit and vegetables, for example to fill pitta bread. As part of their life-skills course, pupils with severe learning difficulties at 16 make simple meals and cakes such as rock buns. These meals are made to a satisfactory standard with support from staff.

69. The quality of teaching is good overall and at each key stage. Teachers have good subject knowledge that they use effectively to plan interesting and relevant lessons, which pupils respond to with clear enjoyment and enthusiasm. Very good relationships lead to high levels of co-operation and very good behaviour by pupils. Subject related vocabulary is carefully introduced to assist pupils' understanding. Teachers take opportunities to support progress in numeracy. For example, by calculating the cost of projects with pupils. Information technology is not satisfactorily used. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work. Pupils respond well because they enjoy the success of their achievements and trust teachers to help them to make good quality products. Because teachers include a variety of activities in lessons and conduct them at a good pace, pupils maintain good levels of concentration, remain interested and work purposefully.

70. The quality of learning is good and often very good in lessons because pupils are well motivated and are involved in work they feel confident with and they are very well managed and supported by teachers. Pupils listen to instructions carefully and follow them so make good progress in lessons and over time and they are developing new skills and acquiring knowledge. They make particularly good progress with practical skills lessons because the quality of teaching is strongest in these aspects. Pupils are learning to make decisions about the design of their products and following their own plans when they are engaged in practical work. They make good progress in evaluating their completed work because this task is presented in a relevant and interesting way, when pupils taste food products, for example. In food technology lessons in particular, pupils make good progress with social skills and eat food at a table in a sociable manner.

71. There is effective co-ordination with good improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum meets pupils' needs, and the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a good scheme of work that allows skills and knowledge to build systematically over the key stages. Additionally more design activities are included in lessons and the study of electricity is effectively incorporated into practical projects. The quality of teaching has improved. The

department is well placed to make further improvements. These include developing the curriculum for pupils with profound learning difficulties, more extensive use of information technology, and the further development of design work. There is no technician to support the subject and this detracts from teachers' efficiency.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

72. Achievement in geography is good in relation to the age and abilities of pupils. By seven, pupils gain an understanding of their immediate environment in the classroom and around the school. By 11, they can locate Africa on a large-scale map and point to Kenya. They compare the differences and similarities between the life-styles of children in Kenya and their own. They know that they live in the south west of England and where their school is located on the map. By 14 higher attaining pupils know the points of the compass. They name the countries that make up the United Kingdom and can locate the County of Somerset on map. By 16 they recognise features on a map such as mountains and they can name some of the more famous ones such as Ben Nevis. They know that Vesuvius is a volcanic mountain. Pupils with severe learning difficulties in Key Stage 4 are aware of some geographical features of India, the wild life and the climate.

73. The quality of teaching is good overall and at each key stage. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very good relationships with pupils that they use effectively to plan lessons and these are well matched to the needs and interests of pupils. Teachers are successful in providing pupils, as they get older, with an insight into their own environment. They raise pupils' awareness of national and global issues, such as the importance of water, by linking the information to pupils' own knowledge or experience. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. Teachers encourage pupils to take an interest in the news, particularly that which is related to geographical issues such as natural disasters and their causes. Homework tasks are effectively used to extend class work and to stimulate interest. Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities, and conducted at a good pace to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons because they enjoy the experience of finding out about their own and other countries. Occasionally pupils show unsatisfactory behaviour but teachers manage this very well so that effective learning is continued.

74. The quality of learning is good and because of the structured approach to lessons and the overall plan of work, pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. Pupils learn effectively because they are learning things that are suitable for their age and interest and the quality of teaching is good. They understand what they are required to do in lessons and are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers relate previous learning to current lessons to enable pupils build on their knowledge over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the quality of teaching has improved.

75. The subject leader has made a good start to co-ordinating the subject since taking on the role at the beginning of the year. Well structured schemes of work, which are relevant to the needs of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum, have been introduced, and are being followed by teachers this term. Since the previous inspection, there have been more interactions between teachers to share ideas and to monitor the effectiveness of provision.

## **HISTORY**

76. Pupils achieve well at each key stage. At 11, 16, and 19, pupils have made good progress in relation to their abilities.

77. Lower attaining pupils at 11 recognise pictures of a baby, child and an adult and know the difference. They know and understand 'then' and 'now' and begin to build a concept of time. At 16 they investigate areas of interest around the school and have some understanding of old and new when on visits to places of historical interest outside the school. Pupils with profound learning needs show some self-awareness and can recognise favourite toys.

78. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 can name several differences between a medieval house and a modern one. They know that 'wattle and daub' is used for making the walls in a medieval cottage. In Year 8, pupils know that conditions in factories and schools in the nineteenth century were very poor. In Year 9, in a topic on the Roman Empire, pupils can identify Italy and Rome on a map of the world, and recall the story of Romulus and Remus.

79. Teaching overall and at each key stage is good because lessons are well prepared with interesting activities that make pupils think. Pupils respond well to the tasks that are set. Good use is made of visits to museums and other places of historical interest. Teaching improves pupils' learning very effectively. Pupils know what they have to do succeed. They are engaged and challenged by the content of lessons. For example, when watching a video programme, on the lives of factory workers in the nineteenth century, they follow the story very well and answer questions accurately about what they have seen. Good links are made with English when pupils learn key words. Weaker areas in teaching include the limited assessment opportunities available and inconsistent use of homework. Neither of these gives sufficient support to pupils' progress and learning.

80. Pupils behave well in lessons, often showing keen interest in their work. They concentrate for significant periods of time. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has introduced satisfactory schemes of work, and procedures for checking the quality and range of teaching in the subject across the school, both of which have helped to improve the management of the subject since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

81. Only a few lessons were observed, at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, during the inspection. However, conversations with pupils, analysis of their work and teachers' planning and records shows that achievement and progress by the substantial majority of pupils is good when compared to their prior knowledge and understanding of information and communications technology. A few of the higher attaining pupils make very good progress and develop more advanced skills by age 16. Pupils in Year 11, attending a link course to a local college of further education, follow an externally accredited course and make good progress. Progress by pupils with autism is satisfactory. Progress by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is unsatisfactory and they do not have access to peripheral devices such as touch, pressure, pull, sound or voice activated switches and touch screens. This limits opportunities to increase their progress in communication skills.

82. Information and communications technology is currently a major focus for the school and is a developing subject. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The main reason for the improvement and recent good progress is the replacement of outdated hardware and the introduction of a new computer suite purchased with funding from the National Grid for Learning. Pupils are now getting much more 'hands-on' experience with computers. At 14, they use a modelling program to design a bedroom. They use the mouse effectively to select items of furniture from the toolbar and drag them into position on their plans. Most switch with confidence from their plans to three-dimensional pictures. In another class pupils open the relevant file and used a number square to reinforce work in mathematics. They colour odd and even numbers whilst higher attaining pupils mark multiples of four and five. By 16, pupils are following an externally accredited course and are working towards independence. They work with the minimum of help on a survey and home management task and are willing to find things out for themselves. Pupils at college use a desktop publishing program and import graphics into text whilst others are able to load a database and use the search facility effectively to find information. By the time they leave school most pupils have developed basic skills of loading, saving and printing and they have the skills to use the majority of the programs utilised by the school. Their mouse skills are much better than their keyboard skills.

83. Pupils enjoy using computers; they respond well to their teachers and work co-operatively together. They are able to concentrate for surprisingly long periods of time, their behaviour is good and they can be trusted to use the computers sensibly.

84. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons observed during the inspection was consistently good. Teachers are confident when teaching information and communications technology and the impact of recent staff training is seen in the improved use of data handling, control, modelling and monitoring programs which were identified as weaknesses at the time of the last inspection. All these are now satisfactorily in place. However, there are some training needs for staff that have not yet been addressed such as the use of the Internet, digital camera, scanner and the use of peripheral devices for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

85. Although pupils are making good progress since the new computer suite has been introduced there is no scheme of work or uniform way of assessing pupils' skills. Some good examples of computers being used were observed. For example, in English pupils were designing a poster and integrating text with graphics; in geography they were locating different countries; in mathematics pupils were recording their pulse rates on a bar chart. These are isolated examples, and the school is fully aware of the need to use its new resources to establish information and communication technology as an integral part of the school's curriculum. Resources have been improved significantly since the last inspection. The funds received from the National Grid for Learning has been well spent, and the new resources are providing exciting new learning opportunities for pupils. The school has experienced some problems with the network, but has no technician to offer immediate assistance. This reduces the use of the system by teachers.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

86. Overall, pupils achieve well in French, and make good progress. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. More time has been allocated to the subject, long term planning has been further developed and pupils now follow accredited examination courses.

87. By the age of 14, higher attaining pupils are confident in reciting French words that are familiar to them, numbers and colours, for example. They listen carefully to one another and their teacher, and follow instructions successfully. Higher attaining pupils can answer a limited range of questions in French. They begin to build up a vocabulary of French words and short phrases, which they read and write correctly, taking care with pronunciation. Younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 are consolidating the vocabulary associated with the classroom and can identify every day objects for example '*un stylo*' '*la maison*', and name them using the correct grammar. Lower attaining pupils in the key stage understand and respond to greetings and some everyday phrases. By the time they are 14, higher attaining pupils are able to speak some familiar, well-rehearsed sentences confidently. For example they respond to '*Ça va?*' appropriately and can answer the question '*Quelle couleur?*' with '*C'est blanc*' or '*Le poisson est orange*'.

88. By 16, pupils build on previous learning and combine phrases together into longer sentences. They study a variety of topics and are able to select and speak relevant sentences based on illustrations. For example, in selecting pictures to depict the weather they are able to talk about the weather shown and, with some support, write it accurately. They enjoy French songs and games and steadily build up their vocabulary. By selecting one of four given words they build sentences and ask each other questions answering in complete sentences, for example '*Je m'appelle Craig*', '*J'habite dans une maison*'.

89. Pupils at both key stages achieve well and make good progress. They begin the course with no knowledge of French and are self conscious in speaking. In Year 11, pupils broaden their vocabulary and increase the accuracy of their pronunciation and writing.

90. Pupils enjoy French lessons. They are curious about France and its culture and are enthusiastic and stay on task. They listen carefully and persevere in their attempts to pronounce words correctly. They work sensibly together, with higher attaining pupils often helping their partners.

91. Teaching is good at both Key Stage 3 and 4. Teaching expertise is sound and good use is made of the French language skills in the better lessons. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils enable pupils to participate confidently, and persevere with their efforts. In the best lessons, French is spoken for a good proportion of the lesson and the teacher is consistent in requiring and encouraging pupils to use and understand it. Where teaching is just satisfactory, pupils make slower progress because there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practice and hear spoken French.

92. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is now more balanced, and has been extended to include a broader coverage of the programmes of study. Assessment procedures are now in place and appropriate accreditation has been introduced for Key Stage 4 pupils. Unfortunately there is still a lack of training to develop subject expertise and it is important that this takes place.

## MUSIC

93. Pupils achieve very well in music and it is good overall. The subject successfully enhances the whole school curriculum, permeating the school day through songs in assembly, in choirs, in classrooms and in specific music lessons. By age 14 pupils' achievement is very good. Many pupils are using skills and understanding from previous lessons effectively. Regular practice in singing and playing consolidates their sense of rhythm and pitch.

94. Younger pupils with profound learning needs have developed listening skills and are able to indicate which instruments they want to hear.

95. Pupils at seven are using the correct musical language in lessons, and the more adventurous are playing their first notes on brass instruments. By 11, they are aware of differences in major and minor scales, sing well, and know how to stop and start together. This proves useful in the instrumental work at Key Stage 3, where pupils are able to play a number of percussion instruments of the Gamalan. All pupils are growing in their confidence to perform in a group or on their own. All pupils develop listening and concentration skills; they take part in musical appreciation exercises and know that there are many different types of music.

96. Pupils' response to their lessons pupils is always very good, sometimes it is excellent. They are enthusiastic, attentive and show good concentration. They follow instructions and are appreciative of others' playing. They particularly enjoy group singing in the choir and in class. All of them are happy in school and like to celebrate when their friends do well. Their enjoyment is greatest when they are performing in class, in the choir, or in public.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is very good at each key stage and good overall. It is very good because teachers plan well, they match the input to individual needs and because they have the highest expectations. The management of pupils is also very good as a result of each teacher's understanding of the very special needs of pupils. Pupils listen to the music of brass bands, music from India and Israel, and can play Javanese tunes. Excellent team work between teachers and learning support assistants make the delivery very impressive, it ensures that pupils make progress in lessons. Teaching is further supported and enhanced by the provision of a regular peripatetic music teacher and the availability of a music therapist.

98. The subject is well led and managed. Resources are very good, most of them are new, and of good quality. The range and variety is excellent, and this enables learning to be enhanced and enriched. Music is enhanced in the school by both visiting musicians, and by the school's own performances. Music has been of great value in school over the years. It is now one of its' strengths. It offers significant support to the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Achievement is very good in relation to pupils' age and abilities because they have opportunities to develop the full range of skills of planning, performing and evaluating. By age seven, pupils with communication difficulties, plan their activities using picture sequences involving throwing, catching and hitting a ball and higher attaining pupils work in pairs to perform them. Lower attaining pupils choose single symbols and work with adult helpers to throw and catch a ball. Pupils with profound learning difficulties are helped with exercises, set to music, to stimulate muscles. They attend riding lessons at the nearby indoor riding school and show their enjoyment by verbal expression, smiles, and use of their eyes and head movements.

100. By 11, pupils change and dress for swimming with little help. Non swimmers are gaining confidence, beginners confidently float on their backs with buoyancy supports, and higher attaining pupils swim confidently in deep water, using a variety of strokes over distances of 25 to 50 metres. By 14, pupils co-operate with others to perform shadow sequences and use appropriate action to bowl a ball during cricket practice exercises. Pupils in wheelchairs participate fully and connect with the ball almost always when batting. During warm-up exercises, pupils quickly react to instructions and carry out exercises with a parachute silk with great enthusiasm. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils take part in a good range of competitive sport and last year won the under thirteen and under fifteen football competition against other special schools in the region.

101. The quality of teaching is very good at each key stage and it is never less than good. In a few lessons it is excellent when teachers collaborate with other professionals and make very effective use of experts in cricket coaching and riding for example, to provide more specific expertise to pupils. Teachers have very high expectations and pupils respond with great enthusiasm. Gasps of delight and spontaneous applause punctuate lessons as pupils demonstrate their appreciation of their own success and that of others. Teachers plan challenging activities use clear demonstrations and explanations to enable pupils to perform confidently and successfully. Imaginative warm-up activities lead pupils into their main activities physically well prepared and with positive attitudes. Teachers have very good and often excellent subject knowledge. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of pupils and provide activities that match individual needs to enable pupils make optimum progress. Excellent relationships lead to very high levels of co-operation, including those pupils who often have difficulty to working with others collaboratively.

102. The quality of learning is very good and often excellent. Pupils make very good progress with learning to plan their own activities and with performing them to an audience. They make good progress with learning to evaluate what they have done and commenting on the performance of others. They are developing good ball skills for throwing, catching and hitting and their reactions are becoming faster as they practise exercises and learn to remain alert and concentrate for longer periods. Their very positive attitudes towards improving their skills, and their competitive spirit, are powerful motivators and they enjoy their successes. They listen attentively, and, even when excited by activities, they perform them carefully and safely.

103. The department is very well co-ordinated and there is a very good spirit of co-operation between staff. Very clear documentation, appropriate and thorough schemes of work effectively guide teachers in their lesson planning. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement is higher, teaching is significantly better, there is more challenge for pupils, both intellectually and physically and there are effective systems to evaluate and monitor the progress and provision for pupils. The department is well placed to continue with this level of improvement because of the expertise and positive attitudes of staff and pupils.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

104. Achievement by pupils is good. Only a few lessons were observed but from an analysis of pupils' work, subject documents teachers' assessment and records, it is evident that pupils are learning a great deal about themselves and religion. Teaching occurs in a cross-curricular work and in religious education lessons. The curriculum offered meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are introduced to religious ideas through links with many topics. For example, during the inspection there were lessons on the 'milestones of birth', the Nativity, and pupils had recently completed work on self-awareness.

105. At age seven, pupils are able to consider people who may help them. They know the symbols for doctor, policeman, teacher and nurse. Pupils with profound learning needs enjoy the activity presented and make suitable responses by gesture or sign.

106. Pupils at 11 and 14 make good progress over time and understand the importance of the birth of Jesus, they tell stories about it and write about them as if for a newspaper of the day, and include such questions as 'How do you think I felt when she told me she was pregnant?' They use good previous knowledge and discussion to develop the story. Pupil workbooks, records and displays of their work show good awareness of other cultures and faiths.

107. Pupils' attitude and response is very good. They show keen interest in lessons and are happy to take part. They use humour to illustrate points, behave well and ask good questions. All are pleased to applaud the successes of others and work hard to please. Pupils respect the views of others. In assembly pupils all take part with great gusto, volunteering their ideas and often participating directly. There is a climate of trust and respect between pupils themselves and with staff.

108. The quality of teaching is good at each key stage. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a series of themes to deliver effective lessons. Behaviour management is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, involvement and participation. Cross-curricular work encompasses a study of many countries and religions, with lessons enriched with artefacts and music. Pupils' learning is good and they well respond to the challenges and tasks set. The co-ordinator has successfully developed a scheme of work, disseminating information to colleagues with good effect. Teaching is well enhanced by visits to churches and by visitors to the school. Staff are very good role models



for pupils. Religious education is well co-ordinated, and taught using the locally Agreed Syllabus. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection. The subject makes a vital and valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

109. Pupils' achievement is good at age 11, 14 and for SLD pupils at 19. It is very good for pupils at age 16. Evidence from lessons and analysis of pupils' files indicate good progress over a widening range of topics, including health and hygiene, family and feelings, sex and drugs education. At seven, pupils work on topics about 'self and hygiene' and are aware of the need for safety. By 11 they know about the parts of the body, and for example, take part in assembly that illustrates this knowledge. Pupils with profound learning needs use signs and gesture to give appropriate responses. Pupils with severe learning difficulties understand how to greet people in a friendly manner. By 16 they have a greater awareness of self-help, and independence skills. They have good knowledge and understanding of their social environment.

110. By 16, higher attaining pupils know about the world of work and are able to carry out simple surveys and complete action plans that analyse skills that will be necessary at work as part of the modules in the Youth Award Scheme (YAS). Pupils know about healthy pregnancies, contraception, the effects of drugs on babies and can make choices in difficult situations. They also know where to go for help. Pupils make significant progress towards YAS Bronze or Silver Awards, complete National Skills Profiles and take part in discussions about leaving school.

111. Pupils' behaviour and personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils show a lively interest in their work. They are polite and cheerful and enjoy coming to school. Good attitudes prevail in school, at work, in college or on outings. They are sensible and well behaved. They learn many life skills and share these with all their school friends. They are responsible, and at ease with adults and their peers. Their manner when dealing with difficult issues is mature and highly commendable. At times the behaviour of pupils in the school is excellent. A fine example is to be found in the demeanour of pupils at lunchtime, it is exemplary.

112. Teaching is good overall. Teaching in a few lessons is very good. When it is very good, teachers recording and preparation are very thorough; understanding of pupils' needs is strongly featured. Work is well prepared and good use is made of resources. Classroom displays are made very attractive to celebrate pupils' good work. Teachers use a wide range of activities to enable pupils to learn, and on occasion use information technology to illustrate results. Staff have a strong commitment to encouraging good behaviour and pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Other professionals, such as nurse, and drugs awareness personnel, assist in the teaching of sex and drugs education and this provides the necessary expertise. Teamwork with support staff is outstanding. The subject is very well co-ordinated and led with a good scheme of work and good resources.

## **Autistic Resource Base (ARB)**

113. The ARB very successfully caters for just over 20 pupils of secondary school age who have learning difficulties associated with the Autistic Spectrum of Disorders (ASD). Six local education authorities currently place pupils in the ARB. Some pupils have residential placements four nights a week during term time which effectively helps them to increase their social and independence skills.

114. Pupils show good achievement and progress across all subjects and key stages, except for information technology where it is satisfactory. Good use is made of symbols, photographs, well known logos and social signs to support the printed word. Higher attaining pupils extend literacy work into a modern foreign language where they express their basic vocabulary of French words such as colours in short phrases. This they do with confidence and a justified sense of pride. Pupils respond well in personal and social education to exploration of moods and emotions, (an area that pupils with ASD generally find particularly difficult).

115. Overall, teaching in the ARB is very good with some that is excellent. Teaching is never less than good. Staff operate very well as a team and have an extensive understanding of ASD and how to intervene successfully. Behaviour management is very good and is partly the result of very well structured, broad ranging experiences offered to pupils that are planned in detail, thus ensuring very good attitudes to learning from all pupils. Higher attaining pupils have an extensive individual timetable of inclusive opportunities in the main body of the school and in links with other schools locally. Teaching is well supported by very good assessment of pupil responses to individual targets. Staff successfully use strategies and methods associated with Training and Education of Autistic and Communication Challenged Children (TEACCH), and these help to promote progress. For example, they facilitate transition from one activity to another, and contribute well to pupils' ability to pay attention and follow instructions. Staff help pupils to understand and know what is expected of them, by reference to symbols and key phrases that link to anticipated events. It makes a significant impact upon pupils' learning, because not time is lost in moving from one activity to another. Staff outside the ARB are less confident in using these approaches. More extensive use of information technology is identified as an area for improvement.

116. An appropriately balanced and broad curriculum is offered to all pupils while suitable consideration is taken of appropriately structured therapeutic approaches. A good example of this was seen in a physical education lesson where the advice of an occupational therapist helped develop a session which included some opportunity to pattern every day living skills and develop social communication. National initiatives for improving numeracy and literacy have been embraced by the ARB. A modified structured session is included in the timetable for all pupils. Challenging individual targets are worked towards using an appropriate mix of whole class rote learning and individually set tasks.

117. Parents greatly value the work of the ARB and links with them are very good. Home visits, social events and telephone conversations are used to good effect to ensure gains made are maintained and consistent expectations are shared with everyone involved in the pupils' lives. Work in school is well supported by sessions in the community, residential opportunities in other parts of the county and through participation in activity holidays. The accommodation for day pupils is of a high quality and contributes well to the structure and schedules successfully followed by pupils.

118. Overall, the ARB is an efficiently and effectively led resource base, with a high degree of professionalism expected from, and given by, a well motivated staff team.