

INSPECTION REPORT

FIVEWAYS SCHOOL

Yeovil

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123944

Headteacher: Mr M Collis

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 17th – 21st January 2000

Inspection number: 188795

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Victoria Road Yeovil Somerset
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Malcolm Gulliver
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector	Religious education	School improvement School's results and pupils' achievements Quality of teaching and learning Leadership and management Efficiency
Ms M Saunders	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Attendance Welfare, health and safety Links with parents/carers
Ms P Potheary	Team inspector	English Art Modern foreign languages	Quality and range of the curriculum Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Assessment Equal opportunities
Mr D Hughes	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education	Under-fives
Mr R Lund	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Special educational needs	
Mr N Northcliffe	Team inspector	Geography History Music	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Integration

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fiveways School is designated to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties. Included within this population there are pupils with autism and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are 67 pupils on roll aged 4–19, the average size for a school of this type. There are significantly more boys than girls. Only one pupil comes from an ethnic minority background. The pupils are drawn from the full range of social/economic backgrounds found throughout the South Somerset region. There are 10 pupils eligible for free school meals. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The governors have made a nil return to the local education authority in respect of statutory targets to raise standards because of the special educational needs of the pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Fiveways School is a very good school. Very effective leadership creates a climate in which pupils are keen to learn. Demanding teaching for all pupils and excellent inclusion opportunities both within the school and in other mainstream schools lead to high standards of achievement. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good teaching influences the very good learning and high standards
- Provision for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and for those with autism is very good
- The Early Years provision is very good
- The post-16 provision is very good with some outstanding features
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good
- There are excellent inclusion opportunities for pupils and students
- The headteacher provides very good and effective leadership

What could be improved

- The toilet facilities in the portable classrooms are unsatisfactory
- There is no provision for drugs misuse education
- There is insufficient provision for work experience
- A few post-16 pupils cannot gain entry to the kitchen at Carr Cottage because of the absence of wheelchair access
- The procedures for reporting accidents
- The school's child protection policy is unsatisfactory and does not reflect the good practice in the school

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very significant improvements since the last inspection in April 1996. The capacity for further improvement is very good. There have been significant improvements in the provision for and standards achieved in English and science. The provision for information and communications technology and religious education has improved. Improvements in the provision for pupils with complex needs have been quite remarkable. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation and the sports hall is excellent.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By age 5	By age 11	By age 16	By age 19	Key
Speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	Very good A
Reading	A	A	A	A	Good B
Writing	A	A	A	A	Satisfactory C
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	Unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	Poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

Achievement in communication is very good across the school. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good eye contact with their teacher. Pupils with autism communicate informed and independent choices. Achievement in the use and application of number skills is very good. By post-16 students are able to shop using real money. Higher achievers make rapid gains with reading and writing. By the time students leave the school they are well prepared to cope with the demands of adult life.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good and contributes to pupils very good learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	Aged 5-11	Aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

The quality of teaching is consistently very good in English, mathematics and personal and social education across the school. In science it is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16 and

good in Key Stages 3 and 4. High expectations, challenging activities and teachers' expertise in working with pupils with special educational needs lead to pupils learning at a very good rate. Teaching was satisfactory in all lessons seen. It was very good or better in 47 per cent and good in a further 46 per cent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All children, pupils and students have a broad and balanced Programme of Study.
Partnership with parents	The partnership with parents is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment procedures are good. Pupils are well cared for.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body lead the school very well and are very good at long-term planning. Governors are fully involved in the school and are very effective.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors meet their statutory responsibilities well except for the reporting of accidents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and administration are very good. Resources are used very well. The principles of best value are applied very well.

There is sufficient well-qualified staff. The sports hall is excellent. The lack of specialist science accommodation limits the delivery of the science curriculum. The range of learning resources is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approachability of the headteacher The parents like the sports hall Their children enjoy coming to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved arrangements for toilets Improvements to the changing room used for swimming

Inspectors' judgements support parents' very positive views. Parents' concerns about toilet facilities

and the changing room used for swimming are justified.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. *It is inappropriate to judge the achievement of pupils for whom the school caters against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does however give clear examples of pupils' achievements seen against their prior attainment. There are examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and standards achieved take account of expectations based on information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.* Outstanding achievements such as the standards achieved in swimming by the end of Key Stage 2 are recognised and celebrated by the inspection team.
2. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of learning and rapid gains made by pupils and students throughout the school in most subjects since the last inspection. Pupils and students make consistently very good progress in their communication and independence skills across the school and achieve high standards given the poor skills they have in these very important areas when they enter the school. Learning is consistently very good in most lessons. Progress over time is consistent with the pattern of progress seen in lessons. This good and often very good progress mirrors the good and often very good teaching throughout the school.
3. The excellent support given by the inclusion teacher to pupils and students on integrated placements in mainstream schools and the local college of further education makes a significant contribution to the very good standards of achievement for these pupils/students. One pupil with autism and poor social imagination integrates well with his peers in a mainstream school and is beginning to interact with them very well including during playtimes. Achievements in communication for most pupils with complex speech and language difficulties is outstandingly good due to the excellent use of the Picture Exchange Communication (PECS) method used to enable these pupils to make independent and informed choices. The parent of a child in the Early Years class (the class with children under five) is 'over the moon' with the progress that her child has made in communicating what he wants on his own.
4. Seen against their prior attainment children under five make very good progress and achieve well in relation to the Desirable Learning Outcomes (the six areas of learning for the under fives). Through experience of using their senses and engaging in exciting role-play they make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Imaginative and energetic teaching results in these children developing an awareness of the importance of putting on a warm coat in winter and of the need to protect their heads by wearing a cap when it is sunny. Through the introduction of the literacy hour they develop very good communication skills. The high quality teaching enables these children to achieve high standards of communication through signing, vocalisation and the use of PECS. Through persistent and creative reinforcement children are enabled to achieve basic sorting skills on the basis of one criterion such as colour. By imaginative and exciting play they achieve very good social skills such as waiting their turn and respecting the space of others.
5. Post-16 students make very good progress and by the time they leave school they are well equipped for adult life. Their achievement in independence skills and the confidence they have gained in making their requests known in a shop are very impressive. They can plan, prepare and cook meals and the highest achievers handle money with confidence. By post-16 students seen in the context of their severe learning difficulties are confident and secure adults. Integration experiences for them at mainstream schools and a college of further education

enable many of them to make rapid progress and achieve good standards in a range of subjects, for example in performing arts.

6. Pupils and students with additional complex special educational needs achieve good standards in communication and mobility. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good eye contact with their teacher as a result of the excellent stimuli provided for them. Achievement in using their hands is good and enhanced by the skilful hand rubbing/massage given by the teacher and her dedicated learning support assistants prior to practical activities, such as making tepees in their topic work in history. Their mobility is enhanced very considerably through the MOVE programme and their achievement in simple stretches and hand grasps is good. These pupils use large switches to experience cause and effect and take delight in the consequences of their action. In religious education a pupil in Year 8 with severe autism made a clear statement that he no longer wished to watch a candle but would rather blow it out! This was a remarkable breakthrough in communication for this pupil with complex speech and language difficulties and associated behavioural difficulties.
7. Achievements in English are very good throughout the school seen in the context of pupils low attainment in communication on entry. Pupils make very good progress in their communication skills at all key stages. Achievement in listening is very good. Pupils and students watch their teachers carefully when they use Makaton signs and they listen carefully to the instructions spoken by their teachers. Progress in writing is very good throughout the school and by the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils write simple sentences. Reading skills develop as pupils move up through the school and by Key Stages 3 and 4 many can read books with support and this is very good achievement seen against the context of their prior achievement. Those with complex speech and language needs communicate independent choices using PECS and large switches and this is very good achievement for these pupils.
8. Achievement in mathematics is very good throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils understand the idea of 'sets' and sort objects into groups by single attributes, for example colour or size. They understand the idea of 'same' or 'different' and many recognise numbers up to 5 both as sets of objects and by the symbol 5. They understand that 2 sets of 5 fingers make 10. By Key Stage 2 pupils sort objects into groups by more complex criteria, for example objects with wheels or no wheels and many count up to 10. By Key Stage 3 many pupils can both add and subtract by using a number line. In Key Stage 4 pupils understand the function of money and select correct coins to buy snacks at playtime. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties clap out simple numbers, for example two claps.
9. In science standards of achievement are very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Achievement in information and communications technology is good throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop basic computer skills and begin to use the mouse and keyboard with increased confidence and accuracy to control the screen. In Key Stage 2 pupils gain in confidence in using computers to match, form letters and begin to develop basic word processing skills. As pupils move up through Key Stages 3 and 4 they are introduced to specific design and word processing programs and their printed work progresses well. In Key Stage 4 pupils operate word-processing programs independently. By post-16 students produce documents using artwork and text. The highest achievers use a CD-ROM to research information, for example in the work on Hinduism in religious education. Achievement in religious education is good. As a result of good teaching pupils and students explore their feelings about friendship and experience awe and wonder through exploring the world of nature. By Key Stage 4 and in post-16 they begin to make very good gains in their understanding of moral issues and also of the world faiths such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
10. Achievements in personal and social skills are good. In the Early Years pupils learn to take turns and to share their toys. Very good gains are made in table manners. Pupils become increasingly independent in using the toilet. By post-16 they have gained very important life skills such as handling money and looking after themselves by preparing and cooking nutritious meals.
11. Achievements in art and design and technology are consistently good throughout the school. In geography pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world and relate this knowledge to their own experience. In history achievements are at least good throughout the school. In Key Stages 3 and 4 achievements are very good with instances of excellent achievement. Standards in French in Key Stages 3 and 4 and at post-16 are very

good. Pupils discuss important features in Paris using key French words. In music standards are good in Key Stage 1 and very good throughout the rest of the school. Music enables pupils with complex behavioural difficulties to concentrate and the calming effect results in very good learning. Standards achieved in physical education are good throughout the school. In swimming standards are excellent. Excellent progress is made in swimming because of the outstandingly good teaching and many pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 achieve standards close to the national expectation.

12. Across all subjects children, pupils and students achieve high standards in communication and the use and application of number skills. Good achievement in communication occurs in mathematics, science, history, geography, music and religious education. Pupils achieve good and often very good standards in sorting and grouping activities in physical education and science. In science they develop measuring and weighing skills. In the post-16 ASDAN curriculum, communication skills and the use of number is central to the course. Achievements in talking about their work with their peers and in managing real money are very good. Information and communications technology is used well across the curriculum to support pupils in making independent choices as well as to make gains in their studies.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Children, pupils and students have very good attitudes to their learning. They show enthusiasm during their lessons and parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are keen to explain what they are doing and respond extremely well to the high expectations of the teaching and support staff. They show great interest in all their activities and are able to concentrate well to complete tasks; and they work well individually and show a high level of awareness of each other, readily celebrating not only their own successes, but those of others too. A delightful example of this was seen in a Key Stage 2 class when pupils shared their art work with each other at the end of a lesson, using adjectives such as 'perfect' and 'splendid' to describe the drawings.
14. Children, pupils and students behaviour overall, both in lessons and around the school, is very good taking into account some very challenging behaviours associated with special educational needs and is seen by parents as a strength of the school. On many occasions behaviour was excellent, including when pupils attended other schools, such as for drama at the local comprehensive school. Pupils are extremely courteous, holding open doors for both adults and each other whenever possible, and have due regard to both personal belongings and school resources. When pupils do show challenging behaviour, staff respond consistently and according to behaviour management plans and with minimum disruption. Girls and boys work and play well together and there was no evidence of any individual or group of pupils being stigmatised.
15. Pupils' personal development and the quality of their relationships is very good. In the reception class, children take responsibility for putting on aprons for painting and help with clearing away cups following a drink. Registers are returned to the office by pupils and by the time students' reach post-16, they collect orders for dinners and undertake a range of duties around the school, for example helping younger pupils, demonstrating excellent levels of maturity and independence. Pupils' respect for the feelings and values of others is good. They listen well to each other and to their teachers. They are aware when friends are upset and frequent acts of kindness toward each other were observed, for example helping to put on a coat or picking up a dropped pencil. The very good relationships throughout the school have a clear impact upon pupils' willingness to learn and co-operate. For those pupils with complex learning disabilities this is a major factor in their good progress.
16. Attendance at the school remains good. The attendance rate for 1998/99 was 93.6 per cent with 0.01 per cent unauthorised attendance. Any unexplained absence is investigated quickly. The good attendance makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is consistently very good throughout the school. There are examples of inspirational teaching for the under-fives, throughout Key Stages 1 to 4 and in post-16. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and the influence that it has on the very good learning and high standards achieved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. In 47 per cent of lessons teaching is very good or better and in a further 46 per cent it is good.
18. The very skilful teaching enables the school's aim, to promote pupils'/students' independence to be realised in practice. A very significant strength is teachers' knowledge and understanding of the special educational needs of each pupil/student. This expertise enables them to plan activities so that each individual pupil/student make very good gains in their learning and so achieve high standards.
19. The high quality teaching focuses on improving pupils' communication and independence skills through the successful delivery of the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The use of PECS to empower pupils with autism to become effective communicators is very successful. These pupils with complex speech and associated behavioural difficulties are beginning to make informed and independent choices as a result of this teaching method. For example, a Year 8 pupil with autism made an independent choice about blowing out a candle during a well structured and resourced stilling activity using his sophisticated PECS folder. The use of Makaton signing in a total communication environment to augment communication for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties results in these pupils being sufficiently stimulated to make very good eye contact with their teacher and also to express gorgeous smiles in recognition of their achievements.
20. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is very good and makes a significant contribution to children's very good learning of important social skills. The excellent teamwork between the teacher and the learning support assistant enables these children to learn to take turns, work with a partner and to communicate their needs effectively. The energy put into developing independent feeding and toilet skills by the teacher contributes to the independence achieved by these children. Children also make very good gains in communication skills through well-structured activities that enable them to choose the drink and biscuit they want at snack time.
21. The quality of teaching is consistently very good throughout Key Stages 1 to 4. In the specialist class for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties the teaching is always very good and often inspirational. The 1:1 teaching support provided for the pupil with autism is excellent.
22. In post-16, the quality of teaching is very good and enables students to shop independently and with confidence and to develop important life skills such as planning and preparing nutritious meals. The excellent integration experiences offered to pupils and students are managed exceptionally well. The inclusion teacher supports these pupils and students very well in their placements and the experiences they encounter in mainstream schools contribute significantly to the improvements they make in communication, numeracy and social skills. One pupil with autism with a placement in a mainstream school relates well to his peers and manages his challenging behaviour with the outstandingly good support given by his inclusion teacher.
23. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum subjects is very good and contributes to the very good learning that pupils and students make. However, not all teachers are secure in their subject knowledge of religious education and this very occasionally impedes the quality of learning for a few pupils. Teachers have expertise of the range of special educational needs of their pupils, for example, the use of the MOVE programme together with the advice given by the physiotherapist, enables pupils with profound and multiple difficulties to make good gains in independent movement. The teaching of physical education makes a very significant contribution to pupils' outstandingly good achievement in independent movement.
24. The quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy across all subjects is very good and successfully contributes to the high standards of communication and the independent skills of using money and weighing ingredients for making a meal that students have by the time that

they reach 18 years of age.

25. A good example of teaching literacy skills occurred in a Key Stage 3 history lesson on Ancient Greece when extremely skilful questioning on the part of the teacher, combining signing and good use of key words, enabled pupils of all abilities to respond and put forward suggestions. By using word prompts, the teacher drew out correct answers and allowed the pupils to suggest various ways of finding out information from books, visiting sites and 'digging'. Numeracy skills are taught well across the curriculum, for example in science where pupils are encouraged to sort objects into groups and to develop the skills of measuring and weighing. Information and communications technology skills are taught well and enable pupils with complex language difficulties to make independent and informed choices by, for example, using a switch to control music or light. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are given outstandingly good opportunities to make a statement about what they want and do not want using large switches. They have 'hands-on' experience of cause and effect and express large grins when they make independent choices. Computers are used well to support the teaching of post-16 students and enable them to develop their writing skills. They also begin to develop research skills, for example when they used a CD-ROM to explore Hinduism as part of their religious education lesson.
26. Teachers' planning is very good for the under-fives and consistently good throughout the school. Clear learning objectives are determined at pupils'/students' annual reviews and are used to devise very specific learning targets on individual education plans. Teachers use these planned learning outcomes for each individual in their short-term planning and so successfully challenge all pupils/students to learn effectively. Expectations of all pupils and students are excellent. There is a commitment to ensure that all achieve the highest standards and that by the time students leave school they can cope independently in an adult world. By post-16 students are expected to manage money, shop and cook independently and feel confident/secure about communicating their needs in public places. The higher achievers are expected to read, write and manage arithmetic at the highest level of which they are capable. All, including non-ambulant students, are expected to move independently as far as possible. Teaching promotes dignity through a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all. The high quality teaching ensures that these aspirations on the part of a dedicated and hard working staff are met except for in the tragic instance of regression on the part of a student because of deterioration in a medical condition.
27. Teaching methods and the management of pupils and students are consistently very good. The best facets of TEACCH and the use of PECS support pupils with autism to achieve high standards in communication and social interaction. The commitment to a total communication environment results in dignity for each individual. When appropriate signing is used and when appropriate it is not used for the same individual. All teaching focuses on building children's, pupils' and students' confidence and self-esteem to prepare them to cope with a robust and demanding world. Challenging behaviours are managed expertly throughout the school including those of children under five and also of post-16 students. The excellent teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties does not shy away from managing challenging behaviours and this is dignity of the highest order.
28. Teaching is conducted at a very brisk pace and learning support assistants are used very effectively and efficiently and so impact very well on the high quality learning of pupils. Good resources are used very well to support the teaching and so influence the very good quality learning. Very good use is made of 'feely'/tactile resources, particularly in the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The teacher skilfully rubs the hands of these pupils before practical activities so that they receive the maximum benefit from their experiences. They are encouraged to use their hands independently in design and technology when making objects and to handle artefacts in religious education.
29. Teachers regularly assess pupils during lessons against the specific targets on their individual education plans. The information gained from these assessments is used to inform teachers' planning and so raise standards further. The 'P' scales (differentiated performance criteria for special schools) are being piloted and it is intended following evaluation to link them carefully to curriculum planning.

30. Parents are trained and encouraged to re-enforce methods used in school, such as PECS, at home and so work in partnership with the school to provide the richest possible learning experiences for their children and by so doing, enable their children to achieve the highest standards possible.
31. Very good learning in lessons and over time mirrors the very good teaching. The very good teaching results in pupils acquiring outstandingly good independence skills and this successfully prepares them to face the demands of adult life. Their gains in confidence and self-esteem are excellent, as they become secure and effective communicators as a result of attending this very good school. Higher achievers make rapid gains in the acquisition of writing and reading skills. The high quality teaching results in pupils taking an exciting interest in their learning. They concentrate very well and so are very focused on their learning. They are very proud of their achievements as shown by the delightful expressions on the faces of post-16 students when inspectors told them how much they enjoyed the meal they prepared and cooked for them.
32. In all subjects there are examples of good, very good and sometimes inspirational teaching. A few examples of outstanding teaching are outlined in this paragraph. In mathematics, teaching is excellent for pupils who have difficulty in conceptualising shape. These pupils are encouraged to feel a variety of different shaped objects and move their limbs to the contours of the shapes. The sensory approach to teaching in science, geography, history and religious education promotes very good learning. In French encouraging pupils to perform a role-play in a café with real food promotes exceptionally good learning. Excellent use is made of music to develop calm behaviour when working with a pupil with severe autism. In an outstandingly good music lesson the teacher gently encouraged this pupil to focus and concentrate on the music played and so brought about a remarkable improvement in his listening and imitation skills. The pupil listened to a sound effect of rain and was able to recreate the effect when the teacher provided a 'rain-tube'. This was part of a very well organised series of musical activities which linked into geography work on the weather.

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

33. There is a very good, broad and varied curriculum offered to all children, pupils and students. The curriculum for children under five, pupils in Key Stages 1 to 4 and post-16 students is very good. The curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple disabilities is also very good. There is also excellent curriculum provision for pupils with autism. A key feature of the curriculum is that it is carefully adjusted to meet the quite different needs of each individual pupil whilst ensuring that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. The curriculum includes new initiatives since the last inspection to improve communication (PECS) and mobility (MOVE). These exciting curriculum developments have had a very positive impact on the very good learning in communication and independent movement for the pupils for whom they have been designed. It also provides pupils with regular residential experiences including trips abroad. The planning of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good and cross-curricular provision for encouraging increased communication skills is a strength of the school. This is improved since the last inspection. The very good curriculum planned in accordance to the needs of the pupils contributes very successfully to the very good gains they make in developing independence skills. It also enables them to become more confident communicators using signing and speech.
34. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, and all pupils now receive their full curriculum entitlement. All National Curriculum subjects are delivered. Religious education is delivered in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus but there is more emphasis on the teaching of religious experience rather than facts about world religions.
35. The extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school are sufficient and include regular special Olympics as well as overnight stays in Carr Cottage for post-16 students. An emphasis on supporting pupils to join in with local community leisure and recreational activities including scouts and holiday schemes meets the needs of the pupils well. These opportunities support the

development of pupils' independence skills very well.

36. Provision for pupils to enjoy equal opportunities is very good. The school is instrumental in developing some excellent initiatives to increase inclusion of pupils within the local mainstream schools as well as the community and local colleges. Pupils within the school are also included in other school groups where this will benefit them and this provision is a strength of the school. However, for some post-16 students with complex additional special educational needs there is not an equal opportunity to enjoy an environment which is more suited to their age and the distinction between school and the post-16 surroundings for these pupils is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this and plans to create a more appropriate learning environment for these post-16 students. The school's links with the community are strong and include visits to local places of interest and visits by local religious leaders. The partnerships with other schools and the local college are excellent including collaborative initiatives between pupils and teachers that improve the educational opportunities of all the pupils involved and contribute very significantly to their very good learning.
37. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education, taking great care to involve pupils in making their own decisions and helping them very successfully to relate well to others. However, the school does not teach pupils about the dangers of misusing drugs and this is unsatisfactory.
38. The satisfactory careers education begins in Year 9 and ensures that pupils and students post-16 are aware of the opportunities available to them, enabling them to make informed choices. The curriculum for post-16 students provides some vocationally based activities and links with the local college provide some limited work experience through 'snapshot visits'. The school recognises this as insufficient and is currently planning to increase work experience for pupils in the school. Nonetheless, the mini-enterprise run by the students is a very good contribution to their careers experience.
39. The school does not provide courses that are accredited at Key Stage 4. However, the school has accreditation centre status for the awarding of modules in the ASDANS 'Towards Independence Scheme' for post-16 students.
40. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. It includes some excellent opportunities to promote spiritual and moral development in assemblies and religious education. These experiences encourage pupils to reflect on the beliefs of others. There is general encouragement in a number of subjects to experience the wonder of events such as when the Native American Shaman 'appeared' in the context of a history lesson there was discussion linking this to modern medicine. This involvement of other subjects represents an improvement since the last inspection.
41. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Throughout the school pupils are consistently encouraged to behave in a mature fashion reflecting the care that teachers take to treat them maturely. They are taught to show concern for others by opening doors, fetching chairs and being encouraged to ask if they can do anything to help. All pupils are given responsibilities for helping in the classroom as well as carrying out duties in the dining hall and assembly. The programme begins with an emphasis on pupils being able to choose for themselves and then assert their needs, and it continues throughout their schooling. The environment and curriculum at Carr Cottage for post-16 students is particularly successful in achieving this independence and mature social awareness in pupils. In a religious education lesson a pupil with severe autism was empowered to communicate a real and independent choice as a result of the excellent 1:1 support that he was given. Through this situation the teacher reflected on her own practice and developed a brand new PECS symbol for 'blow out' and this is a wonderful example of pupil and teacher learning together.
42. The school has improved provision for the cultural development of pupils since the last inspection. It is now good. The experiences of their own culture and those of others include museum visits, theatre groups, visiting artists and musicians, and the study of classical poetry and works of literature. Work in religious education and assemblies brings the religious cultures of others such as Muslims and Hindus to life. In physical education pupils learn dances from

other cultures including the Chinese dragon dance of the new year and in geography and English work on the Native Americans, and Chinese culture is currently taking place. All of these very rich experiences contribute very successfully to pupils' cultural development and also help develop their social skills well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Assessment practices are good throughout the school. All pupils have individual education plans that detail their achievements and set realistic targets for behaviour and social development as well as for academic achievement. For pupils under five and at Key Stage 1 their progress and achievement is monitored using the areas for development as outlined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. At Key Stages 2 to 4, the school is developing curriculum access documents which are effective in allowing teachers to track pupils' progress in the full range of subject skills. At post-16 assessment is determined by the requirements of the ASDAN programme.
44. In the class for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties the new 'P' Scales are being trialled which enable teachers to monitor and assess development in the core subjects of English and mathematics and also in personal and social development. Post-16 students are also taking the ASDAN accredited courses that record their achievements as they progress. Teachers know what their pupils/students are achieving and develop and adjust their teaching methods accordingly to raise standards for their pupils. The communication and social interaction of pupils with autism is regularly recorded and the information gained is used to inform planning to raise standards even further. The current number of assessment systems is a reflection of the school's thoughtful work towards developing a more efficient system with greater continuity between subjects and classes. Assessment is tailored to the needs of the children, pupils and students.
45. The main targets on annual reviews and individual education plans are broken down into individual pupil records that allow teachers to work on smaller steps on a weekly or daily basis. In addition to these systems, all pupils have records of achievement, although the current format is lacking in sufficient detail to give a full picture of what pupils can do.
46. A strong feature of the school is that all teachers and learning support staff are aware of the detailed learning, personal and social needs of the pupils in their class and have prepared the work to suit those needs exactly and are able to help pupils to make the good and very good progress seen. This detailed knowledge of pupils'/students' prior achievement enables teachers to challenge pupils and so raise their standards even further.
47. Children, pupils and students are well supervised throughout the school day and the working environment is safe. The clear routines provided for children, pupils and students and the high expectations of their behaviour contribute to the relaxed and caring environment experienced throughout. Lunchtimes are a social occasion and pupils' table manners are exemplary. The school has eradicated all of the issues arising from the previous report in relation to the welfare and guidance of pupils, although the final stage of the work relating to security is awaiting completion. Whilst the school has a satisfactory health and safety policy, there are some areas which are not adhered to and there is non-compliance with the requirements for reporting accidents. The school's child protection policy is unsatisfactory and does not reflect the good practice which occurs within the school.
48. The school now has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and a very good behaviour policy that is consistently applied throughout the school, both of which are improvements since the last inspection. Staff have recently received training in behaviour management and restraint techniques and this has had a very positive impact upon their confidence and ability to manage challenging behaviour. Pupils respond very well to the daily awards for good behaviour and there are suitable staffing levels to ensure that pupils receive individual attention if necessary.
49. Through the very good relationships within the school and the frequent practice of retaining the

same class teacher for more than one year, pupils receive very good personal and educational support. This is formalised through the very detailed targets on the individual development plans which are followed through, and against which progress is recorded to devise future plans and targets. The close contact with parents through the home/school book provides for very good continuity of care between home and school which significantly enhances pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has very effective links with parents who make a very good contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. Parents participate fully in the annual reviews and receive high quality information concerning their child's achievements and targets for the coming year. However not all these reports contain the full statutory information required of annual reports of pupils' progress. Religious education is not reported nor is attendance. Each year, pupils receive a record of achievement, which provides an interesting and informative record of many of the year's activities, and achievements using photographs and examples of pupils' work. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report are informative and produced to a high standard.
51. Parents have a high level of satisfaction with the school's provision and are particularly pleased at the open-door philosophy which enables parents to discuss any concerns as they arise. The home-school contact book is well used to transmit both achievements and concerns between home and school. Information concerning the curriculum is also provided regularly.
52. Good liaison between the school and other agencies such as health and social services also has a positive impact upon the way that the school works in partnership with parents. The physiotherapist working with pupils at the school maintains contact with families during the holiday periods and a family aid from the social services department attends some of the parents' coffee mornings held in the school. Parents actively support the school through the Parent Teacher Association and through helping with swimming and on some school outings. Parents have been well involved in the drawing up of the home-school policy and were consulted about the behaviour policy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of leadership and management is very good with a number of outstanding features. There have been a number of very significant improvements brought about by the governors and headteacher since the last inspection. For example, the provision for pupils with complex additional needs has been improved and there have been significant improvements to the curriculum to ensure breadth and balance for all pupils/students. These very good improvements have made a very significant improvement to the quality of learning for all children, pupils and students. Never complacent, the school is keen to improve further and the goal of all stakeholders involved in the school is to create a centre of excellence for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The headteacher is also keen to provide expertise and support throughout Yeovil and the surrounding area of Somerset in enabling fuller and better inclusion for these pupils in mainstream schools.
54. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work as a very effective team and provide a clear educational direction for the school. Together they have, with the help of a dedicated team of teachers, support staff, as well as a very efficient school administrator and hard working site manager, created a school committed to very high standards and care for all pupils. The parents/carers are rightly proud of this very good school. The headteacher and his deputy provide very good and effective leadership. The headteacher is visionary and consultative and parents and staff value his open-door policy. He has facilitated the development of an exciting curriculum tailored to the needs of the pupils. The curriculum enables the school's aim to promote independence to be fulfilled. His vision, to create a centre of excellence for pupils with severe and learning difficulties within a school that promotes the maximum inclusion opportunities for all pupils, is dependent on the preparation and

implementation of a strategic plan for special educational needs across the local education authority, particularly in the area of special school provision. The headteacher sits on a strategic working party for the provision of special educational needs within Somerset.

55. There have been significant improvements in the management of the curriculum, particularly in the provision for pupils with complex special educational needs. All pupils/students now access a very good curriculum that provides breadth and balance and promotes the development of communication and independence skills. A good system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has been developed by the deputy headteacher in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It is planned to develop this model across all subjects. Governors are involved in monitoring and there is a plan to involve them more in this activity and so improve standards even further. Individual governors have been allocated to a core subject area and are taking on an increasing responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Good systems are in place for monitoring the quality of provision in literacy and numeracy. These systems are currently being evaluated and refined to improve the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. The sensitive way in which a self-review/evaluation model has been introduced in this school has created a climate where this approach to monitoring is seen as the next step in improving the quality of education provided for pupils. There is a culture of acceptance of monitoring in the classroom as a normal procedure and there is no fear associated with this activity. There is a commitment to an improved model for monitoring teaching and learning and recognition that the deputy headteacher requires training to carry this out well. Challenging behaviours are monitored very carefully before plans are put into effect to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The management of additional special educational needs is very good and careful and sensitive changes are constantly being made. The introduction of PECS is greatly appreciated by parents of pupils with autism.
56. The school's aims and values are excellent. The overarching aim: 'to promote independence' is transparent and open for all to see in all of the important whole-school documentation. There is a commitment to ensure that this aim is realised in practice through the delivery of a curriculum tailored to promote the maximum independence for each pupil. The school's development plan is good. It is an effective tool to manage change sensitively. This plan provides a clear focus for the whole school staff who know what is in it and the part they have to play in making the plan work. In this school the plan drives the budget. This good plan has clearly set out long-term and short-term priorities. All priorities have been carefully costed and the link with the budget is outlined in detail on a page attached to the end of the plan. The plan is regularly monitored and evaluated to see the impact that the priorities within it have had on improving the quality of education for pupils and students. The headteacher and governors recognise the need to improve the success criteria in the plan so that they can evaluate more effectively the impact of the priorities on the quality of teaching and learning and the learning pupils make. Since the last inspection the school development plan has enabled the school's accommodation to be transformed, for example the Reception class and the learning resource area.
57. The school's ethos is very good. Relationships are the obvious success in this very good school. There is a deep commitment to challenging and extending all pupils to achieve their highest academic standards and maximum independence in an environment in which it is safe to take risks. Staff work hard in building up the confidence and self-esteem of every pupil and student in a range of imaginative ways, such as enabling them to shop for and prepare a meal independently.
58. The newly constituted governing body since September 1999 is effective and supportive. The chair of governors visits the school regularly, at least fortnightly, and is kept well informed about what is happening in the school. There is a good structure of sub-committees to enable governors to meet their statutory responsibilities very effectively. They meet all of their responsibilities except for ensuring the correct procedures for monitoring the reporting of accidents.
59. Financial planning is very good. There is a long-term plan linked to budget. The headteacher involves all staff and the governing body in setting the annual budget. Very good use is made of staff and learning resources to provide a high quality education for pupils. Grants are very effectively targeted. The literacy and numeracy funding has been appropriately targeted and has led to significant improvements in standards. The school can give an account of the reasons for the high carry forward last year and is on target to carry forward far less this year.

Financial control is very good. The principles of best value are applied very well as seen in the model used to tender for the construction of the school's office.

60. The number of teachers is sufficient and they are well qualified by training, experience and expertise to meet the range of special educational needs within the school. They also have a good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus. In addition they have expertise in TEACCH, PECS and the ASDAN curriculum delivered at post-16. The teachers who work with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are trained in the MOVE programme which is used so successfully to improve the mobility of these pupils. Learning support assistants are also very well qualified and work effectively in partnership with the teachers to provide a high quality education for pupils/students. The excellent teamwork in this school contributes very successfully to the high quality learning and high standards achieved.
61. The policy for staff development is very good. Staff development is closely linked to the school development plan and supports teachers in improving the quality of education provided for the pupils/students. All teaching staff and learning support assistants have received training in behaviour management and this contributes very successfully to the calm manner in which they respond to challenging behaviour. The calm approach to challenging behaviours minimises the disruption to lessons and so contributes to pupils' very good learning. The staff handbook provides valuable guidance to staff and supports them well in their work. Induction procedures for new members of staff are very good. Supply teachers are very well briefed and well supported when they come to work in the school. This reduces the disruption to learning and development brought about by any absence of regular staff members. Teacher appraisal is in place but is currently under review in relation to the government's performance management scheme.
62. The school's accommodation is in a good state of repair and enhances pupils' learning. All classrooms are well organised by teachers to meet the special educational needs of the pupils. They are very tidy and the learning equipment and resources are well organised. Classrooms and corridors are decorated with attractive and stimulating displays of pupils' work and educational exhibits. These displays convey an appreciation of pupils' work and give a very positive message about the very good ethos in this school. This contributes greatly to developing and encouraging the sense of pride and ownership pupils take in their school and their own work.
63. The sports hall provides excellent accommodation for games, dance and drama activities. All pupils have access to it. It provides pupils with very good opportunities to improve their mobility, co-ordination skills and their general physical development. The soft playroom enables pupils to exercise through fun. Areas are provided with large switches to enable pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to make independent choices about having a light on or off. Excellent light/sensory areas are created in classrooms to support the development of these pupils.
64. Carr Cottage provides an excellent working environment for post-16 students. This converted house is an ideal learning environment for students who are developing adult independence skills, as it is equipped as a home as well as a study area. For example, they plan, shop and prepare a meal every day. There are bedrooms upstairs and this gives some pupils the opportunity to stay over night and make breakfast in the morning and so develops the skills necessary in running a home. However, students with physical disabilities have difficulty in gaining access to the kitchen in the cottage, as it is very difficult to get a wheelchair into the kitchen. The support of the Fiveways School Trust in respect of the sports hall and Carr Cottage ensures the upkeep and maintenance of these two important educational facilities.
65. The grounds are well maintained and playgrounds incorporate two 'adventure playgrounds' built on safety surfaces. These outdoor play areas enhance pupils' independent physical activity and imaginative play, particularly for the younger children.
66. The toilets in the portable classrooms are inadequate. They afford very little dignity and privacy for the pupils who use them. In one classroom toilets have to be used by pupils of the

same sex. This has a negative impact on the personal and social development of pupils. These pupils are not given the opportunity to distinguish between the sign for a female and a male toilet and this hinders the development of very important social skills for these pupils particularly in preparing them to use a public toilet, for example in a restaurant or shopping mall. One pupil, who uses a wheelchair loses valuable learning time because of the journey that has to be made between classrooms in order to use a toilet. The changing rooms in the swimming pool are cramped. Doors open out directly on to a corridor. Rooms and their occupants are open to public view, as there is no 'modesty screen'. This robs the pupils of dignity and privacy. It is impossible for changing benches to be brought into the changing room, as there is not enough space. Pupils with more significant physical problems cannot therefore change adjacent to the pool. This wastes learning time and denies equality of access to the pool for them.

67. The school has a very good range of learning resources, which are used effectively. The resources for developing pupils' literacy and communication skills in all areas of the curriculum are excellent. The equipment and resources in classrooms and the recently completed resources library are a very good combination of commercially developed and high quality school-made learning aids and these resources influence pupils' learning very positively. The resources library is a significant strength with the potential to become an excellent feature of the school. The resources are easily accessible and laid out in curriculum categories.
68. The diversity of the resources means that teachers can meet the needs of all pupils in teaching groups. They can provide access and stimulate a response to literacy through using sensory materials and 'feely'/tactile artefacts. These resources provide an excellent experience for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and elicits very good responses from them. Using computer programs and complex word and story writing games stretches the abilities of children who can read and improves their standards. The school library is a satisfactory resource. It contains a range of fiction and information books but there are insufficient books for non- readers or those who have sensory impairments. The school is aware of this and is seeking to remedy the situation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. The governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher should give attention to the following points to improve further the quality of education provided and to raise standards for all pupils:
- ◆ Improve the toilet facilities in the portable classrooms so that boys and girls do not have to use the same lavatory. (This weakness is identified in paragraph 66).
 - ◆ Ensure that pupils and students are taught about the dangers of drug abuse. (This weakness is identified in paragraph 37).
 - ◆ Improve further the quality of provision for all post-16 students by:
 - providing all post-16 students with opportunities to gain work experience;
 - providing access to an age appropriate learning environment for the more mobile post-16 students with profound and multiple learning difficulties; and
 - providing non-ambulant students in wheelchairs access to the excellent facilities in Carr Cottage. (These weaknesses are identified in paragraphs 38 and 79).
 - ◆ Ensure that correct procedures are in place for reporting accidents. (This weakness is identified in paragraph 47).
 - ◆ Ensure that the policy for child protection meets the good practice in the school. (This weakness is identified in paragraph 47).

INCLUSION

70. The school provides excellent opportunities for its pupils to be included into mainstream schools and the wider community. This is a very significant strength of the school and contributes successfully to the development of pupils' independence skills and to their academic achievement.
71. Pupils are able to take National Curriculum subjects such as: science in primary schools where they work on the five senses; physical education in secondary schools where they achieve a good standard of skill at using gymnastic apparatus; information and communications technology courses at the local college of further education where accessing and carrying out basic data processing on a spreadsheet is learned.
72. In the wider curriculum pupils work with their mainstream peers in drama and other expressive arts projects. Not only does this raise their level of achievement in learning but helps significantly their social, language and communication skills. For example, a group of pupils drawn from Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and post-16 attend a lunchtime drama club at a local comprehensive school. They work entirely integrated into groups of same-age pupils from the host school. The session observed was based on portraying the five senses as the group walked down a busy urban street. The standards of mime dialogue and level of involvement when acting out were both very high. The session, organised and run by three Year 11 pupils at the host school, was challenging and motivating. Teachers from both establishments skilfully supported it. It is very significant to the success of this particular inclusion project that the pupils from both schools take part in the drama sessions on a voluntary basis and choose to attend. It is a popular choice in both schools.
73. Pupils are expected to participate as fully and as independently as possible when on an inclusion placement. The Key Stage 2 pupil working on primary science has achieved a high level of listening and focusing on teacher-led discussion. He was able to offer logical answers to questions on smell and sight and could recall key facts the teacher had covered during her talk to the class. In the playground he was able to talk to and begin to play with other pupils, a major achievement as he is challenged by autistic behaviour. He coped exceptionally well with a high noise level and large numbers of pupils playing running and chasing games. The post-16 student, attending a further education college session on information technology acquired a good command of operating skill and required only minimum support from his inclusion support teacher.
74. The overall response to these of challenges is outstanding. Pupils are confident and communicate and express their ideas clearly to their classmates and host teachers alike. Relationships with their mainstream friends and teachers are excellent.
75. There are placements and projects within community groups such as scouts, playgroups and local churches. Within the school, pupils and students with more significant learning difficulties have the opportunity to work within higher achieving groups. Some post-16 students who have greater profound learning difficulties work on a part-time basis in Carr Cottage alongside their more able peers. They learn basic independence skills and are able to prepare drinks and snacks, go shopping, and take part in enterprise projects in which they make goods to sell and raise funds for trips and equipment. All pupils participate in the weekly school singing session. It is an excellent vehicle for genuine inclusive practice as it enables every member of the school to join in through singing, vocalising, moving and signing. This improves their socialising and communication skills.
76. The inclusion policy and models are under the exemplary management of the co-ordinator. The organisation, consultation, monitoring and recording of all inclusion experiences are meticulous. They place the needs of the pupils first and foremost and match learning aims and social development to the individual placement. In particular the models of inclusion ensure access to the National Curriculum in other schools. Relationships with participating schools and other organisations are excellent and opportunities exist for pupils and students from these establishments to work at Fiveways.

77. The headteacher and governing body give inclusion a high priority in the school's future development. The successful securing of part funding for the part-time co-ordinator post by the Fiveways School Trust on an annual basis (which is supported by local education authority funding), is evidence of the commitment made to this initiative. The school is exploring ways to secure permanent funding for the current post. Fiveways School is well placed to become a centre of excellent inclusion practice.

Post-16

78. The balance and breadth of the curricular opportunities was an issue of concern in the last inspection. Provision for students at post-16 is now good overall, with some very good features and as a result of this, standards are very good for students of all achievement levels, not only in academic areas but also in personal and social development.
79. The school benefits from a house at the edge of the school entrance, Carr Cottage, which is administered by the Fiveways School Trust and is used as a base for courses involving higher achieving students. Unfortunately, it is not easily accessible to students with physical disabilities, who need to move around in wheelchairs, and this restricts opportunities to take the courses on offer. This situation is unsatisfactory. The students undertake a variety of courses which are designed to improve their communication and to enable them to become as independent as possible when they move from school into the wider community. The students are very successful in fulfilling these aims. Higher achieving students undertake the ASDAN Towards Independence courses in: 'Starting Out', 'Meal Preparation', 'Money', 'Knowing about Myself' and 'Recognising Everyday Signs'.
80. Students then go on to choose courses which have a more personal focus, for example, one student is undertaking a course in performing arts in conjunction with a neighbouring mainstream school. In addition to these courses, there are also courses in basic numeracy and literacy and students go on educational trips and visit various areas of employment for work experience. As part of their courses in communication and independence, they prepare meals at Carr Cottage each day and shop for ingredients at local supermarkets. The students invited the inspectors to lunch each day and demonstrated a high level of cooking and social skills; serving food and chatting about what they had been doing. Their behaviour is very good and they are polite and well mannered at all times; a real credit to the school.
81. Very good use is made of the local College of Further Education and local mainstream schools in assimilating students into appropriate courses. During the inspection, students were involved in drama at one local mainstream school and in ICT and plumbing courses at the College of Further Education.
82. The students enjoy practising basic French words and phrases. They are able to greet visitors and to express simple preferences in French. They have been to various local places of interest in order to reinforce their knowledge of the history and geography of the area and also to give them confidence in the community. Some students undertake residential experiences and stay in Carr Cottage overnight; caring for themselves, with help. Some students have been on a canal barge trip and some have been on a trip to Paris. The awareness of multi-cultural issues is developed well through the programme of religious education and issues such as racism are handled sensitively.
83. Lower achieving students are involved in the ASDAN Transition Challenge Curriculum and take courses in 'Independent Living Skills', 'Self Advocacy', 'Positive Self Image', 'Personal Development' and 'Personal Autonomy'. They also take courses in the humanities, art and music. A three-year rolling programme ensures that all students undertake the same courses. As part of the courses, students were observed making choices of materials to make greetings cards by indicating their preferences to the learning support assistants. Their behaviour and levels of interest are very good.
84. The standard of teaching at post-16 is very good in all subject areas. The teachers and learning support assistants know the students very well and are able to tailor the coursework to each student so that they can make very good progress. For higher achievers, the emphasis is on numeracy and literacy, as well as communication and personal and social development, and the teachers are continually providing opportunities for their students to practice these skills and to draw on their own knowledge. The students are always given challenging work and, as a result of this, are continually involved and interested. This level of involvement contributes very successfully to their high quality learning. Lessons are very well organised with a good pace and plenty to do. A wide variety of communication methods are used, including the use of signs and symbols and talkers, for the lower-achieving students. The post-16 section of the

school is very well organised and is clearly successful in preparing the students for their life after school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	34	46	7	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	67
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.59	School data	0.01

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

Attainment

As would be expected pupils at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 achieve standards well below those expected of pupils nationally in the National Curriculum assessment tests due to the severity of their learning difficulties. However, it is to the credit of this very good school that these pupils are given

the opportunity to take these tests. This shows the commitment to equality of access and dignity for all pupils. As far as possible pupils receive the same opportunities at this school that they would experience in a mainstream school.

At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils do not sit examinations that lead to nationally recognised accredited qualifications.

Post-16 students undertake a variety of courses which are designed to improve their communication skills and to enable them to become as independent as possible when they move from school into the wider community. Lower achieving students are involved in the ASDAN Transition Challenge Curriculum and take courses in 'Independent Living Skills', 'Self-Advocacy', 'Positive Self-image', 'Personal Development' and 'Personal Autonomy'. Higher achieving students undertake the ASDAN Towards Independence courses in: 'Starting out', 'Meal Preparation', 'Money', 'Knowing about Myself' and 'Recognising Everyday Signs'. These students then go on to choose courses which have a more personal focus, for example, one student is undertaking a course in performing arts in conjunction with a neighbouring mainstream school.

These are very good courses and add effectively to the provision the school makes for personal and social development in preparing students for the next step in their adult lives.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	66
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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Under 5 – Post-16

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.77
Average class size	6.7

Education support staff: Under 5 – Post-16

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	610

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	683,125
Total expenditure	687,837
Expenditure per pupil	10,116
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,901

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance carried forward to next year	59,189
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PARENTAL SURVEY FOR FIVEWAYS

Number of questionnaires sent out:	100
Number of questionnaires returned:	32

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strong disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	69	25	0	3	3
My child is making good progress in school	53	34	3	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good	66	28	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	34	28	9	9	19
The teaching is good	69	25	0	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	69	19	3	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	72	22	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	72	22	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents	72	19	6	3	0
The school is well led and managed	72	22	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	69	22	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	53	28	0	0	19

Not all columns add up to 100 because some parents return questionnaires with some questions that are left unanswered

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents very keen to emphasise how approachable they find the staff and the headteacher
- Parents very concerned about the inadequate toilet facilities in the portable classrooms and the cramped space in the changing room used for swimming

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

85. Very few children under five attend the school. There are 3 girls and 1 boy aged 4 years who attend full-time and another boy of the same age who attends part-time. These children have severe learning difficulties and additional complex special educational needs. All children under five at the school enter with a statement of special educational needs. These children under five have difficulties in communicating and experience a level of frustration as a result which shows itself in very challenging behaviours. They are in the Early Years class with other children already aged five. They follow a curriculum soundly based upon the Desirable Learning Outcomes (the six areas of learning for children under five).
86. Pupils under five achieve good standards in communication and social skills as a result of the very good teaching they receive. The provision made for the under-fives is very good and a strength of the school. Their teacher assesses these children very early and individual programmes are put in place to support them with their learning.
87. These children make very good gains in the early stages of personal and social development from a very low starting point because of the very skilful teaching that promotes independence. They begin to work well within a group situation, waiting quietly for their turn to come, for example in the greeting session at the start of the day. During free play/choice time, they move independently. They are beginning to load their own spoon and feed themselves independently at lunchtime. Most make a clear choice from alternatives, for example which drink or biscuits they would like at breaktime.
88. Achievements in the early stages of language and literacy development are good due to the very good teaching. A parent is thrilled with the communication skills that her child has developed through the skilful use of the PECS. The total communication environment promotes very good learning through the use of signing, symbol and vocalisation and enables these children to make their requests clearly understood. Children benefit from a very good range of suitable books available in the classroom and from the literacy hour. They enjoy listening to stories, often augmented well by the teaching using signing. The children are developing a love for books and one child was observed sitting quietly in the book corner turning the pages of a book carefully and concentrating on the pictures. These children are able to sit in a group and pay attention to a song or a rhyme. They communicate through signing, by the use of symbols and through speech, for example signing and vocalising 'hello' or 'biscuit' please. Very good use is made of symbols and photographs to assist understanding of the spoken word and children respond very well by indicating, for example, the symbol sun when it is a sunny day. A few recognise their own names and are beginning to make marks on paper with a crayon, the emerging signs of written communication.
89. Achievement in mathematics is good due to the high quality teaching. Through very good teaching children under five are beginning to recognise shape and colour and match objects that are the same. Children recognise the order of the day and know for example when it is dinner time or time for assembly. They experience counting by means of number rhymes that they enjoy, fun games and the counting of everyday objects such as the number of different kinds of drink at snack time.
90. These children make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world as a result of inspirational teaching. They understand the importance of putting on a coat in winter so as to keep warm and also of the importance of wearing a sun hat in summer to protect their heads. This is very good learning and outstandingly good achievement linked to the very imaginative and exciting teaching that engages children in enjoyable role-play. The cracking pace of moving from simulating a snowy season to creating a beach environment is resourced imaginatively and reflects outstandingly good teaching. During fun activities to promote excellent learning, children move around the classroom independently, freely and confidently.

Children are given many opportunities to find out how toys and computers work. These children have the opportunity to explore the differences that occur when blowing an object on a hard surface and then blowing the same object on water. Very good use is made of computer programs, for example to match shape and objects. Children are given numerous very good opportunities to experiment with a range of materials such as water, sand and paint and they greatly enjoy these experiences and learn from them.

91. Achievement in creative activity is very good because of the very good teaching. Children enjoy exploring and being helped to explore different textures, colours and two- and three-dimensional shapes. They have contributed to making three-dimensional displays to illustrate books in the literacy hour. Children enjoy music and singing and are excited by making sounds by holding and shaking instruments.
92. Excellent use is made of the outside environment to promote children's physical development. Those children with additional physical disabilities related to their special educational needs are carefully integrated in these sessions and are given very sensitive support from the teacher and the learning support assistant. Excellent use is made of physiotherapist programmes to support these children with their physical development. These children are beginning to move confidently in the classroom and outside in their play area when they ride and push large toys with increasing confidence. The very good teaching results in children making good progress in their physical development.
93. The quality of teaching is always at least good and on occasions inspirational. The teacher and learning support assistant know the personalities and individual needs of each child and so are able to plan effectively to meet their individual needs. Their expectations of these children are high and they constantly challenge them in a safe environment and so promote very good learning and high achievement. Assessment is ongoing and is used to inform short-term lesson planning and so raise standards for these children. The outstanding provision in the Early Years class enables all children to make rapid gains in confidence and self-esteem and it also supports parents in working to promote the highest possible education for their children. Children begin to access the National Curriculum as soon as they are ready to do so and the very careful planning within the school ensures access just as soon as it is beneficial for the child.

ENGLISH

94. Achievements in English are very good throughout in all key stages. The majority of pupils enter the school at the very lowest stages of pre-reading and writing and although some pupils can communicate their basic needs by speech, many are just beginning to indicate their needs through gesture and signing. The standards achieved by these pupils and by those with additional complex speech and language difficulties are good by the end of Key Stage 1 when measured against their attainment on entry. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties begin to make choices as they progress through Key Stages 1 and 2, supported by large switches to help them communicate. By Key Stages 3 and 4 and at post-16, these pupils and students listen well to stories and indicate their involvement or understanding through a variety of sound, gesture, sign and use of switches. Pupils with autism are beginning to communicate independent choices through the excellent use of the PECS communication programme sensitively devised to enable them to express their wishes independently.
95. Achievements in speaking and listening are very good for the majority of pupils' at all key stages and for post-16 students. Many pupils are able to predict events in stories and discuss aspects of their own lives using a relatively wide-ranging vocabulary by Key Stage 4. Pupils in all key stages listen carefully by observing their teachers using Makaton signing and also by listening to instructions and explanations that they vocalise.
96. The majority of pupils make very good gains in writing from a very low starting point and achieve high standards in the context of their prior attainment. During Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils gradually develop pencil control and are able to write and recognise their name. They continue to make very good progress throughout Key Stage 3 due to the high quality teaching they receive. By the time these pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4, they write simple

sentences in a joined script and describe their activities in record books.

97. Achievements in reading are very good throughout the school. For the vast majority of pupils their reading skills develop very well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. By Key Stages 3 and 4 a few higher achieving pupils progress to a very high standard of achievement and are able to read stories independently. Many other pupils read books with help by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. A pupil with severe autism in Key Stage 3 recognises the PECS symbols in his file and uses them well to communicate his wants. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties recognise some basic symbols and are stimulated by the experience of large and colourful pictures.
98. By the time they reach post-16 stage of their school life, a significant number of pupils can relate well to their mainstream peers showing confidence in joint drama sessions. These students communicate their needs easily in shops and restaurants and use lists and fill in forms, as they need them. The handwriting and written reports by this group of higher achievers are clear and well written.
99. Since the previous inspection standards in English have improved significantly with pupils making consistently very good progress, particularly with speaking and communication skills. Makaton is used well to support communication and there is a greater emphasis on developing communication skills in all activities than was the case at the time of the last inspection.
100. Teaching is almost always of a good standard and is usually very good. Materials, resources and activities are highly personalised which helps individual pupils to make the maximum progress in each lesson. For example some pupils have personal reading books which are made from photographs and describe events from their own lives, others have individually tailored switching systems to aid their work. Teachers assess each pupil's work at the end of a lesson so that the next lesson can be planned to build upon each pupil's skills gradually. The work of learning support assistants is also highly skilled, for example with developing pupils' word processing, using a symbol program and in teaching letter sounds. The very good teaching makes a significant contribution to the very good learning and very good achievement of pupils and students.
101. In all lessons seen the pace and challenge keeps almost all pupils engaged in their work and helps them to be enthusiastic and proud of their achievements. A key feature of English lessons is the very positive and relaxed relationships and familiar routines. These excellent relationships enable pupils to feel confident to put their ideas forward and to keep trying when work, such as sentence making, proves difficult and so influences the very good learning. Teachers make excellent use of PECS across the curriculum when working with pupils with autism and this contributes very significantly to improving pupils' communication skills. Pupils and students are given many opportunities to speak, listen, read and write across the curriculum and so all subjects make a rich contribution to the development of pupils/students literacy skills.
102. The subject is well managed by two co-ordinators who actively monitor the quality of teaching and learning and work with the whole staff to improve practice. For example the complexity of the assessment system has been recognised and a simpler system is now being devised. Nonetheless assessment practice currently is very good, highly informative and regularly kept up to date. In addition, new initiatives such as the Picture Exchange Communication system and the National Literacy Strategy are carefully introduced and monitored for their effectiveness, contributing significantly to the high standards seen.

MATHEMATICS

103. Pupils maintain high levels of achievement throughout the school as at the time of the last inspection. However standards are higher than then because the quality of teaching is better. There have been significant improvements in the quality of provision and standards attained since the last inspection.
104. The teaching of mathematics is consistently good and occasionally very good. This is a

significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a very good knowledge of mathematics and are able to match mathematical experiences to meet the individual needs of pupils, and structure activities in such a way as to accommodate personal difficulties of individual pupils. At all key stages and post-16, teachers plan effectively both on a lesson to lesson basis and in the longer term. They link Programmes of Study to individual needs as expressed in individual education plans. Teachers use excellent communication techniques in the teaching of mathematics where they incorporate multi-sensory input through speech, signing, and pictograms and through movement and body awareness, where required for individual pupils and students. For example, where pupils have difficulty in conceptualising shape, they not only see and feel the shape by touching shapes with a variety of textures but also move their limbs to the contours of the shape and this makes a very significant contribution to their very good learning.

105. All pupils are given access to the full mathematics curriculum, which is modified to meet their individual needs or difficulties and more work in the subject has been introduced for pupils with more profound learning difficulties. For example, a child with profound learning difficulties was, during the inspection, well able to learn parts of Attainment Target 3.4 (measuring) by using cord running through his hand to calculate how far away a ball had rolled. Many lessons at Key Stage 2 and 3 are now based on a model similar to the National Numeracy Strategy and this contributes very significantly to pupils' very good learning. In the Early Years (under-fives) the curriculum is based on the national Desirable Learning Outcomes curriculum and the Somerset Baseline Strategy and post-16 students follow a curriculum geared to the daily living needs of young adults. There are strong links with other aspects of the curriculum, for example with English in the use of a total communication system and with ICT where the technology is well used.
106. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and manage their lessons very well. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed, and fully involved in the lessons showing an understanding both of the subject matter and of methods used to meet the individual needs of pupils. All staff have a calm and confident approach to the management of pupils' behaviour, however this is displayed, and good relationships between staff and pupils are well maintained. Resources for delivery of the curriculum are good and well used, for example pupils use calculators to check their work, and work with money only uses real currency and not plastic tokens. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum and are well managed and organised. Monitoring of the subject is good with a well-structured system of recording set against the curriculum in teachers' planning and in their lessons.
107. At Key Stage 1 and in the reception class children follow the Early Years curriculum and most understand the idea of 'sets' and sort objects into groups by single attributes for example colour or size. They understand the idea of 'same' or 'different' and many recognise numbers up to 5 both as sets of object and by the symbol '5'. They understand that 2 sets of 5 (fingers) make 10. Achievement continues to increase at Key Stage 2 where pupils sort objects into groups by more complex criteria, for example objects with wheels or no wheels, and many can count up to 10.
108. By Key Stage 3 pupils understand the mathematics regime and higher attaining pupils can both add and subtract by using a number line. These pupils understand the meaning of the spots on dice or written ciphers on dice (1, 2 3, 4, 5, etc). They recognise simple two-dimensional geometric shapes and describe their attribute (a triangle has three sides and three corners). By Key Stage 4, pupils understand the function of money and select the correct combination of coins to buy snacks at playtime. Many can add larger numbers by counting on and recognise place value, for example that the two numbers 9 and 2 can be put together to make either 92 or 29 and that 92 is bigger than 29. Most post-16 students understand the value of money, its function and perform simple shopping calculations. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties clap simple numbers, for example two claps in response to the stimulus provided by their teacher. They can understand that objects have permanence and are often able to choose by attribute, for example by function or colour. They understand that their actions can have an effect on their environment, for example, that by touching a switch they can produce a sound or a number of sounds. Through experiments pupils with autism learn to count, for example the

number of breath blows in putting a candle out following a calming exercise in religious education.

109. The numeracy skills of pupils and students are developed well across the subjects of the curriculum. In science, sorting, weighing and measuring skills are developed well. In physical education pupils learn about groups and sets. Computers are used well to develop number skills by post-16 pupils for analysing data.
110. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who is leading future developments such as the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

111. The pupils' and students' achievement has improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Achievement is now very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4.
112. At Key Stage 1, high achievers are able to sort fruits into different types and can sort gloves and mittens. Some know that they stop hands from getting cold. They predict which will admit water. They know the difference between wet and dry. Low achievers can feel and touch the fruit and the gloves and mittens and can feel water entering the gloves. At Key Stage 2, high achievers know the parts of a plant, the parts of an animal and the parts of the body, although a few require clues from the teacher to attain this standard. They can sort symbols of parts of a plant. They know the difference between light and dark and about different light sources. They know that lights need bulbs that have to be plugged in and that torches need batteries. Low achievers can touch and feel parts of a plant or of their own bodies and they can respond to light sources with their eyes. At Key Stage 3 high achievers can collect soil samples. They know how flies feed and the life cycle of the honeybee. They know about different insect habitats and that material can change when heated. Low achievers can collect different insects, with help and look at them. At Key Stage 4, high achievers know that a wide range of materials are used for building houses and can sort the materials into different types, some with help. They know that a mirror reflects light. Low achievers can feel the materials and look at reflected light. At post-16, high achieving students know about the planet Earth and its place in the solar system. They are aware of environmental issues and the importance of conservation of natural resources and wildlife. For low achievers science is based within the ASDAN Transition Challenge and these students know about the parts of the human body.
113. The pupils' and students' attitudes to their learning are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. They are keen to learn and maintain their interest well and this is directly related to a wide range of carefully chosen activities with plenty to do in each lesson. All pupils and students respond very well to the sensitive use of praise and encouragement from the teachers and learning support assistants. As a result of this, they take great pleasure in their achievements and the achievements of others and they are keen to demonstrate what they can do to visitors. The pupils' and students' behaviour is very good in all lessons and this is linked to the adults' caring, friendly, but firm approach to discipline, with clear boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The relationships between pupils, students and adults in science lessons are very good.
114. Teaching is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. These judgements are based on examinations of the pupils' work and the teachers' plans and records, as well as the lessons observed. The teachers have a good understanding of science as a subject and because of their intimate knowledge of the needs of the pupils and students, their ability to produce activities which match these needs is very good. The teachers also make good use of science as a vehicle for teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy and pupils and students are constantly practising their communication skills through the teachers' skilled questioning, and the use of signing, symbols and electronic communication aids. Weighing and measuring within science, contribute to overall numeracy skills well. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils and students to practice their skills of prediction through skilful questioning. The teachers also make very good use of the learning support assistants in such a way that their roles are complementary and mutually supportive. However, insufficient

use is made of computers to enable the pupils to carry out independent research.

115. The teachers' methods are very good at all key stages and at post-16. They make good use of questioning to enable pupils and students to recall what they have learned previously and to relate what has been learned to their experience. Where appropriate, effective use is made of direct instruction and sensitive support is given both directly and through the use of the learning support assistants. The teamwork between the teachers and learning support assistants is outstanding. Very good use is made of a wide range of communication, including speech, signing, written signs and electronic communicators. The teachers plan work sensitively according to the needs of each pupil or student with a wide range of activities and plenty to do. This high quality teaching makes a significant contribution to very good learning. The teachers encourage the pupils and students to record their work neatly, often through the use of typed symbols, but it is not clear how teachers monitor and record their progress from day-to-day. The teachers manage the groups well, with a good use of time and resources and a relaxed but firm and consistent approach to discipline.
116. The subject is led very effectively by the co-ordinator, with good curriculum and development planning. Teaching and learning is monitored well. The accommodation is satisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2 and for post-16 but the absence of a science laboratory, or area for science, restricts the curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, in the area of experimental and investigative science. Resourcing is good overall.
117. The subject has made good improvements in teaching, learning, curriculum planning and monitoring and in resourcing since the last inspection.

ART

118. Achievements in art are good throughout the school, and pupils use a range of materials and techniques, including paint, wax, cloth, clay and model making. There is limited evidence of three-dimensional work throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to discuss the pattern on clothes and make their own clothes' patterns which they paint and stick. By the end of Key Stage 2 skills have become more advanced and pupils discuss design of plates in preparation for designing and firing their own. Some pupils at this key stage observe and imitate the use of colour by Paul Klee. Their learning continues to be very good throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and by the end of Key Stage 4 standards of achievement are good. By the end of Key Stage 4 those pupils with the most profound and complex difficulties are able to make clay beads and colour and thread them for use in jewellery showing very good learning. At post-16 the very good work seen is linked to the current Chinese project and work on multicultural designs extend further the observational and critical skills of these students.
119. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. In all lessons resources are well prepared allowing the pupils to remain focused on the task and so the activity runs smoothly. The very good understanding of pupils' needs in this subject allows for the tasks to be well matched to pupils' skills. This helps the teachers and learning support assistants to direct support where it is needed, for example with cutting and sticking, whilst enabling other pupils to work independently. The very skilful teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' independence and results in very good achievement for these pupils. The high expectations seen in all teaching encourages pupils to make very good progress by developing their critical skills, increasing their confidence to try new techniques such as wax relief and choosing which colours and materials to use. The improved assessment system since the last inspection is good practice and ensures that pupils build upon previously learned skills, for example extending their understanding of the links between clothes art and design.
120. The subject is well led by a co-ordinator who is given sufficient time for monitoring subject development and this has led to improved practice and coverage of the Programmes of Study since the last inspection. The subject provides very well for the full ability range and there are very good cross-curricular links with drama. There has been some good staff development that has had an impact on improved teaching and quality of learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. No direct judgements were made about standards in design and technology (DT) in the last report but from an examination of records, pupils' and students' work and subject development planning, the pupils' and students' achievement is now good at all key stages and at post-16 and has improved significantly since the last report.
122. Most lessons observed were food technology (FT) and so the overall judgements relating to teaching and learning relate to evidence taken from teachers' plans and records, pupils' work and discussions with the subject co-ordinator and the other teachers. Resistant materials are not taught at post-16.
123. Standards of achievement in DT are good throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 high achievers are able to cut card and to glue it together, some with help. They can sort fruit and vegetables. Some can select simple ingredients and mix them, with help. Low achievers can touch and feel the fruit and vegetables. At Key Stage 2, high achievers can assemble a simple puppet using pre-cut card and paper fasteners. They can select ingredients and put them together to make pizzas or sandwiches, with help. Low achievers can touch and feel and taste the ingredients, some with help. At Key Stage 3 high achievers can put together snacks on toast. They can choose ingredients, mix, measure and record what they have done, using simple signs on paper. Low achievers can taste and feel the ingredients and the snacks and express preferences. At Key Stage 4 high achievers can cut shapes from cards and fasten them together to make model cars and greetings cards. They can rub flour and other ingredients together to make a series of different kinds of scones. Low achievers can stick parts together, with help and indicate preferences for different kinds of scones. At post-16 (food technology only), high achievers are able to shop for ingredients and to design and assemble simple meals, which they serve up every day at Carr Cottage (the base for higher achieving post-16 students). Low achievers can select the materials for making a totem pole and select and cut the materials for making greetings cards. Some can select butter and spreads for rolls to make simple snacks. Others can indicate preferences for spreads.
124. The pupils' and students' attitudes to learning are good at all key stages and at post-16. Most pupils are keen to learn and their interest is maintained well by well-chosen activities and plenty to do and this contributes very significantly to their good learning. The pupils and students respond well to praise and encouragement and are keen to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. They take pleasure in their achievements and in the achievements of others. Behaviour is very good and the teachers achieve this by very skilful behaviour management in lessons. Relationships are very good.
125. Teaching is good at all key stages and at post-16 and this judgement is based on an examination of teachers' plans and records and of the pupils' and students' work, including an excellent meal in Carr Cottage. The teachers make good use of DT as a vehicle for encouraging communication, through skilled questioning and very good use of signing, symbols and electronic aids, where appropriate. The pupils' and students' numeracy skills are reinforced through measuring and weighing. Teachers make very good use of the learning support assistants in a mutually supportive and collaborative way. This skilful teamwork favourably influences the very good learning made by pupils and students. However, insufficient use is made of computers to support the teaching of DT. The teachers' methods are good at all key stages and at post-16, with a good mix of direct instruction and individual help. Planning is very sensitive to the needs of each pupil and student and the wide range of activities keep them fully occupied and interested and so influences the good learning. The sensitive use of symbols enables most pupils to be fully involved in the planning and recording processes. The management of the groups is good, with a firm and consistent approach to discipline.
126. The management of the subject by the co-ordinator is good overall but the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently structured to be effective to raise teaching and learning standards further. The professional developments of the staff, accommodation and resources in DT are satisfactory.
127. The subject has made significant improvements in teaching, learning and curriculum planning

since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

128. Consistently good teaching in all key stages and very good teaching in Key Stage 3 results in very good learning and pupils acquire the very good knowledge to make sense of their world and relate it to their own lives. Thorough planning, effective use of different strategies to provide learning opportunities for all, and using the subject to work on language and communication targets gives pupils the opportunity to achieve good and often very good standards of achievement in line with their prior attainment. In all key stages learning support assistants give encouraging support which allows pupils to learn as independently as possible. This creates a sense of ownership and pride in the pupils and successfully promotes pupils' independence skills and so builds up their confidence and self-esteem.
129. It was not possible to observe any direct teaching of geography in Key Stages 1 and 2 at the time of the inspection because the programme of topics and timetable did not allow for it. However, close scrutiny and analysis of teaching plans, records and samples of pupils' work and displays of work provided strong evidence of good quality teaching and good learning. In all key stages, the subject provides opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
130. In Key Stage 1, through providing a series of tactile and other sensory experiences pupils with profound learning difficulties begin to recognise and respond to warmth and cold, wet and dry objects whilst high achieving pupils select clothing to keep warm or cool. They make 'cut outs' of various types of clothing and the highest achieving pupils use pictures and words with symbols to identify and name types of weather. The highest achieving pupils achieve a good standard of display work on transport, incorporating drawing and writing. Other pupils name and use toy trains, cars, buses and lorries to identify types of transport.
131. In Key Stage 2, through well planned activities based on visits to caves pupils, who benefit most from an experiential and sensory approach, begin to recognise dark and light and register response to the feel and sensation of rocks and water. Higher achieving pupils have well-developed concepts of 'under' the ground and 'on' the surface. They produce drawings of caves and use their imaginations to make cave paintings. Those pupils who are the highest achievers recount the key facts of how caves are formed, write this out in their own words and produce drawings and writings on caves and cave paintings. Pupils of all abilities are able to contribute work for a display on trees and woodland. By setting tasks that develop, drawing, using colour and making models, the teacher enables pupils to make leaves, branches and roots from paper and card. Pupils with significant learning problems experience and choose colours to paint leaves. Higher achieving pupils name the various parts of trees by matching symbols and the most able use captions containing words and symbols. This develops the literacy and communication skills in pupils of all abilities and so contributes to their good learning.
132. Key Stage 3 pupils achieve a very good standard of work. In a lesson that focused on types of buildings in the local area, the teacher set a brisk pace to a matching and naming task. This engaged high and middle achieving pupils who recalled from memory various types of building such as churches, shops, theatres and matched name-symbol captions to the right buildings with encouragement but without any direct prompt. Lower achieving pupils were able to choose between two word-symbol captions of buildings and use bricks to make their own versions. Skilful use of these activities matched to individual pupils' needs created a sense of purpose and confidence in the pupils which in turn increased the awareness of the locality and improved their literacy skills through the caption reading work. The style of teaching set the challenge of all pupils having to be as independent as possible, a challenge to which they responded well and resulted in very good gains in important independence skills.
133. A significant achievement in Key Stage 3 geography was due to the very skilful and sensitive way in which a teacher worked with a single pupil who had severe autistic tendencies and displayed extremely challenging behaviours. This pupil was able to demonstrate his understanding of a wide range of weather conditions by using PECS. Careful planning of short, directed activities kept the pupil involved in his work almost continuously. This inspirational

teaching contributed very significantly to the focused concentration on the part of this pupil and this was an amazingly good achievement for this pupil.

134. The teacher responsible for geography through enterprise education brings about good achievement in Key Stage 4 pupils. Pupils working on an enterprise project were making 'dream catchers' as found in the cultures of native North Americans. They were able to talk about the tribal system in Canada and less able achievers had a good grasp that this was a country that was far away but a part of the world in which they lived. The 'dream catchers' were to be made and sold in order to raise funds for holiday's abroad and equipment to be used in class. This was a good example of applying geographical and cultural knowledge in a wider, purposeful situation and contributed to pupils' good learning.

HISTORY

135. Achievements in history throughout the school are at least good. They are very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 with instances of excellent achievement in Key Stage 3. This achievement is the result of a well-constructed access curriculum of topics that are followed through to ensure very good coverage of the National Curriculum. Very effective classroom planning and assessment of work contribute to pupils' learning.
136. It was not possible to observe any direct teaching of history in Key Stages 1 and 2 at time of the inspection because the programme of topics and timetable did not allow for it. However, close scrutiny and analysis of teaching plans, records and samples of pupils' work and displays of work provided strong evidence of very good quality teaching and very good learning. In all key stages, history lessons provide a setting for pupils to use and develop their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
137. Throughout the school, a recurring technique to develop the concept of time passing and putting events into sequences is the daily session at the beginning of the school day when classes gather around the pictorial timetable and begin to order the events of the day. The communication and literacy development that takes place in these sessions is very good and contributes very successfully to pupils' very good learning as they recognise symbols for various activities and remember events from one week to the next. This is a powerful tool of which all teachers make very good use to help their pupils make sense of their immediate world.
138. In Key Stage 1, through a series of well planned visits and role-play experiences which are developed further in the classroom, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties begin to recognise differences between old and new objects because the teacher provides them with artefacts to touch, taste and smell. Higher achieving pupils identify old and new by pairing pictures, for example of a flat iron (old) and a steam iron (new). The highest achieving pupils dress in period costume when on visits to museums and carry out tasks from bygone times, for example working in role as Victorian farm children at a farm museum. This type of first-hand learning is a good aid to developing a sense of 'olden times' being different from the present.
139. Teachers make good use of visits and 'hands-on' experiences also contribute very significantly to the good achievement in Key Stage 2. In a topic on the Victorians, the lowest achievers experience dressing in Victorian clothes and so improve their tactile awareness of different types of fabrics. They register likes and dislikes. Well organised display work in the back of the classroom allows higher achieving pupils to create their own 'king and queen' display after meeting a person dressed as Queen Victoria at a local place of historical interest. The highest achievers make models of houses based on a study of Tudor and Elizabethan times. Both the display work and models are enhanced by some pupils writing a small amount of text and others writing with symbols. Analysis of planning by teachers in Key Stage 2 shows that literacy and language learning targets are incorporated into the overall structure of lessons and this makes a very significant contribution to the development of pupils' communication skills.
140. Achievement in Key Stage 3 is very good and in one lesson observed it was excellent. In this lesson the teacher aimed to develop curiosity and investigative skills. As part of a topic based on Ancient Greece the pupils were given the question, 'how do we know that life was like that?'

Extremely skilful questioning, combining sign and good use of key words, enabled pupils of all abilities to respond and put forward suggestions. By using word prompts, the teacher drew out correct answers and allowed the pupils to suggest various ways of finding out from books, visiting sites and a 'digging' experience. The pace of the teaching was very brisk and demanded and maintained a very high level of concentration from the pupils. As a result they gained a good grasp of 'finding out' methods. The lively questioning and inclusion of everyone's contribution to the discussion kept each pupil involved and eager to move on to the next activity. The final activity of 'digging' through trays of soil to retrieve, clean and piece together pieces of pottery demonstrated in the pupils an ability to investigate and carry out tasks such as carefully digging, cleaning off and piecing together. The level of achievement by pupils of all abilities was very high, especially when they recorded their findings and were able to recap on what they had done and achieved in the lesson.

141. Enterprise education is an example of the settings to deliver history in Key Stage 4. It is studied in tandem with a similar geography topic that focuses on North America and its native peoples. The historical information gained not only gives pupils an appreciation of another culture but helps them to create artefacts such as 'dream-catchers' which are made and then sold to raise funds. This gives learning about the history and culture of a remote country and its peoples a more immediate sense of purpose which makes pupils become more involved and motivated in their work. Pupils with greater profound learning difficulties are able to react with pleasure and reach out to touch dream-catchers, being stimulated by colour and movement and the teacher's skilful use of background tribal music. The higher achieving pupils explain the purpose of 'dream-catchers' and relate that native North Americans have used them for a long time. The highest achievers in this group explain in some detail how 'dream-catchers' work along with the significance of the various components. They relate the history of the object. The thorough planning and structured delivery of the topic by the teacher ensures a balance between very good learning in using historical information and developing an understanding of enterprise.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

142. There has been a very significant improvement in standards achieved in all key stages and at post-16 since the last inspection. This reflects the increased investment in modern computers and large switches and increased confidence on the part of teachers to use ICT to support their teaching. There are computers positioned in each classroom; these are used well to support teaching. Computers are also located in the resource centre and are used well to promote good quality learning and raise pupils' ICT skills. The large switches enable pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to make independent and informed choices and to experience cause and effect. High achieving pupils and students have independent access to personal computers and CD-ROMS to support them in developing good research skills.
143. Scrutiny of work, examination of teachers' planning and the observation of lessons, where pupils and students used computers, show high standards of achievement as a result of very good teaching. Teachers make very good use of pupils' individual education plans in planning their development of information and communications skills for each pupil and this contributes to their very good learning and high standards achieved in relation to their prior attainment.
144. In Key Stage 1 pupils gain in confidence in using a computer with much support from their teacher and learning support assistant. They begin to get used to using a touch pad or alternative keyboard to produce basic responses from the computer. Learning throughout Key Stage 2 is very good and so pupils make further gains in confidence in using ICT, particularly with matching, letter formation and basic word-processing skills. Those pupils integrated into mainstream schools make very good progress in word processing to support their writing and this adds to their confidence and self-esteem. As pupils move up through Key Stages 3 and 4 they are introduced to specific design and word-processing programs. As a result their work progresses well. By the time they enter the post-16 stage most students have achieved good skills in word-processing and publishing and have begun to use basic data-handling programs in mathematics and investigative techniques using CD-ROMs in subjects such as history and religious education. Other subjects such as art and geography have reinforced these basic skills and contributed to the confidence students have in using computers. Achievement at post-16 is very good. By post-16 students have developed the skill of using computers to combine artwork

and text. They also search for information using a CD-ROM independently.

145. Achievement for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is very good when measured against their prior attainment. They exercise control over their learning environment through using large switches. They make rapid gains through experiencing cause and effect and begin to understand that their actions have a consequence. In music they can start and stop music and they also are able to control the sewing machine in DT. Pupils are able to communicate their requests by using switches to control pre-recorded messages.
146. Pupils and students enjoy using computers and their confidence contributes to their very good learning and high standards. They respect the computers and are very careful in handling switches. Their levels of concentration when working independently are very good and they persevere when they encounter difficulties.
147. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers prepare resources very well to support pupils and students in their learning. Teachers and learning support assistants are confident in their use of computers to teach ICT skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2 computers are used as a tool to assist pupils in the development of co-ordination, writing and concentration skills. Very efficient and imaginative use is made of computers to support the teaching of these important skills. At Key Stages 3 and 4 teachers give 1:1 teaching based on pupils' individual needs and personalities so as to ensure that all pupils develop sound foundations in the use of computers and develop basic skills well. At post-16 students have independent access to a computer to support their work.
148. The co-ordination of the subject is very good and the advice given by the co-ordinator to her colleagues supports their teaching very well. Resourcing and planning is of a very high standard and software is chosen well to meet the needs of the pupils and so raise their achievement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

149. French is taught to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and to post-16 students. Standards of achievement are very good in both key stages and at post-16. Given that French was not taught at the time of the last inspection there has been a very significant improvement in the curriculum offered to older pupils and students.
150. The quality of teaching is very good. The teaching in the two lessons seen in Key Stage 4 and at post-16 was very good and so the standards achieved by pupils and students were high. In Key Stage 4, pupils pronounce French words confidently, say the numbers one to six and understand and respond to greetings. All pupils discuss important features in the City of Paris using basic French words. In the post-16 group, the level of French spoken is very good, the pupils have a wide ranging vocabulary, can ask for things, know numbers, food and conversational phrases. The accent is exceptionally good for pupils of this ability. The work in pupils' folders is very interesting and illustrates their visit to France, which they are able to discuss in detail and with confidence in French.
151. The very good lesson planning at post-16 provides the students with a real-life situation in which to practice their French. The culmination of French music, wall displays and a cafe role-play with real French food creates an exceptional learning environment leading to the students speaking very good French. Very good teaching at post-16 influences very good learning that results in students achieving a high level of spoken French. The post-16 students are enabled and encouraged to be mature and comfortable and focused on their work. In both groups the excellent preparation of resources that are varied and interesting, encourages enthusiasm for the subject and this contributes very successfully to very good learning.
152. The subject is well led and is developing positively, although policy and assessment schemes are not yet in place. The co-ordinator is working with mainstream colleagues to develop

provision further. Resources are good and the four teachers who teach the subject are enthusiastic to continue with the subject development and so improve the quality of provision and raise standards even further.

MUSIC

153. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve good standards in line with their abilities. Pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 achieve very good and often excellent standards. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who in turn is well supported by the musical expertise of the deputy headteacher. Their very good subject knowledge influences the very good learning and high standards achieved in the subject. At the time of inspection there was no whole-school access curriculum in place but the main curriculum document and guidance for delivering music to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties contains thorough teaching and curriculum content for ensuring very good coverage of the music requirements in the National Curriculum. A very good repertoire of musical forms is used throughout the school and these successfully give pupils a wide experience of music from cultures around the world and from different time periods.
154. In Key Stage 1, sound planning of lessons coupled with well structured and varied activities support good achievement in all pupils. According to their various levels of ability they are able to vocalise, sign and sing simple songs, tap rhythms and play simple percussion instruments to accompany taped music. The teacher promotes good listening skills by encouraging pupils to sit quietly and listen to short passages of music. All pupils are allowed to lead activities by choosing sounds to sing and variations on tapping which the rest of the group follows, for example changing from hand clapping to knee tapping. The teacher re-enforces pupils' good levels of involvement and concentration by working to a familiar lesson pattern and gentle encouragement to participate. There is an obvious sense of enjoyment and eagerness to join in by all pupils.
155. In Key Stage 2 pupils' achievements are excellent when they take part in the weekly whole-school singing session. The musical expertise and strong lead given by the teacher who leads the session, coupled with the encouragement and support of the rest of the staff, means that the whole school achieves a very good standard of singing and level of participation. A group of Key Stage 2 pupils achieved an excellent level of singing and rhythm work. They remained totally focused and involved throughout the 45-minute session. The confidence instilled by the teacher's modelling of songs and the encouragement to vocalise, sign, and remember words and tunes motivated the pupils into making the maximum effort all through the session. The highest achieving pupils in particular were able to recall lyrics and tunes with ease and were very quick to learn new songs which were fast and contained complicated phrases. They were also able to sign the tonic sol-fah accurately. Lower achieving pupils had a real sense of achievement through being able to sign accurately in time to the music. Support through modelling from members of staff in the hall helped them to achieve this. Those pupils with the most profound communication problems made an excellent contribution. They made every attempt to vocalise and move their hands and arms in a controlled manner and registered their successes through laughter and smiles. A sense of joy prevailed throughout the whole session.
156. The most significant achievement at Key Stage 3 was shown by a pupil with complex learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviour. Using music to develop behaviour control and a sense of calm was a highly successful strategy employed by a teacher working with a pupil who displayed very challenging behaviour caused by severe autistic tendencies. Through gently encouraging the pupil to focus and concentrate, the teacher brought about an improvement in listening and imitation skills. The pupil listened to a sound effect of rain and was able to recreate the effect when the teacher provided a 'rain-tube'. This was part of a very well organised series of musical activities that linked into geography work on the weather. Another teacher, working with pupils who had complex learning difficulties, made exceptionally skilful use of using drumming rhythms and singing to get pupils to improve their eye contact and reach out for objects and instruments and attempt to engage in drumming activities themselves. Pupils became involved at a higher level when the songs and drumming patterns incorporated their names.

157. The weekly singing session also provides opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 4 to work to an exceptionally high level of achievement. Again, the excellent subject knowledge of the leading teacher allows high achieving pupils to use musical terms such as 'pitch' correctly. They are then able to relate this to the tonic sol-fah that they can name and sign accurately. Some of the highest achievers also sing well and can hold a tune. These pupils are taught to clap out regular rhythms accurately and they successfully tap rhythms and sign in simple syncopation! Very good use of teaching songs and rehearsing them over a period of time allows less able pupils to retain words and recall tunes, helping them to develop a very high level of retention and recall. Those pupils faced with the difficulty of severe communication problems are given support to move and vocalise at every opportunity. Through this they improve their co-ordination and are able to tap surfaces and on occasion clap in accompaniment to songs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Achievement in physical education is good in all key stages and at post-16. Key Stage 2 pupils achieve excellent standards in swimming against their prior attainment and come close to the national expectation by the end of the key stage. Achievements in physical education must be seen in the context of the individual needs of the pupils and students.
159. Pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very good gains in mobility as a result of the outstandingly good MOVE programme. Teachers make very good use of advice from the physiotherapist in devising programmes to develop pupils' stretching and grasping skills. Pupils with autism make very good eye contact with a ball in games lessons and this outstandingly good achievement is due to the high quality 1:1 support they are given from the teacher or learning support assistant. One pupil with autism integrates with pupils in a local mainstream school. He is able to play games independently with other pupils at break time due to the outstandingly good support and encouragement he receives from his inclusion teacher.
160. Through being encouraged to undress and dress themselves for swimming, pupils and students independence skills are developed well. However, the changing room is cramped and does not afford them the privacy they deserve as recognised by the school. Physical education makes a very significant contribution to pupils' gains in confidence and self-esteem as shown by the gorgeous smiles on the faces of even the most nervous pupils in the swimming pool.
161. Physical education is planned with the needs of the individual in mind but all pupils are integrated well in team games. They learn the importance of rules and gain the social skills required to work effectively as a team. In gymnastics pupils develop their co-ordination skills well through jumping and landing safely. They learn skills such as throwing and catching in games lessons and are given opportunities to participate in team games. Post-16 pupils take part in the locally organised special Olympic games and compete against other students.
162. Pupils' responses and attitudes are very good and contribute to their very good learning. Pupils show excitement and enjoyment in the swimming pool and in the sports hall. The enjoyment and security in swimming contributes well to the very good progress they make in developing good stroke techniques in swimming. Pupils are enthusiastic about their performance, for example in dance, and high achievers have the confidence to demonstrate their moves to their peers and a few are beginning to comment on how they can improve their own performance.
163. The quality of teaching is very good and activities are always well matched to the individual needs of the pupils and students. Lessons are well resourced, teaching is conducted at a cracking pace and the sports hall provides excellent accommodation for the subject and contributes to the very good learning. The teaching of swimming is excellent and because of this the pupils make excellent progress in developing their stroke technique. The swimming pool on site enables the pupils to make rapid gains in their swimming and the well-marked out playground is used in good weather to teach important games skills. Teachers encourage pupils' independence skills and celebrate their achievements. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and influence pupils' very good learning. Opportunities are used well to develop pupils' communication skills, particularly through encouraging them to listen to and repeat instructions. Their number skills are developed well through placing them in pairs and small groups for collaborative work such as developing ball control skills. They are encouraged to count the number of controlled bounces and are also given very explicit instructions such as 'stand in the yellow circle'.
164. The co-ordination of physical education is very good and ensures pupils/students have access to a wide range of interesting and enjoyable experiences. The exciting range of activities available includes swimming, gymnastics, games, riding and outdoor pursuits. Very good use is made of local facilities to support this excellent programme of activities. These activities make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. Achievement in the aspect of religious education taught is good throughout the school. This reflects the consistently good and occasionally inspirational teaching that promotes very good learning in the attainment target on reflection and response to the spiritual dimension of experience. Although there is room for improvement in the balance of provision within the subject there has nonetheless been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching and standards achieved since the last inspection. However, the majority of teaching observed during the inspection focused on promoting pupils' spiritual development through the dimension of experience as outlined in the attainment target on reflection and response to religion. Only in post-16 was teaching based on the knowledge and understanding of religion. This imbalance in provision reflects the planning, teachers' lack of a secure subject knowledge and also a lack of confidence in how to teach knowledge and understanding about Christianity and other world religions to pupils with severe and learning difficulties.
166. In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to grasp the notion of friendship through listening to the story of 'Elmer the elephant' and as the consequence of being given the opportunity to participate in imaginative role-play. Owing to the structure of the timetable no teaching could be seen in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Through the very good use of pictures and symbols, pupils in Key Stage 3 make rapid gains in their understanding that a church is a religious building. They associate a church with a place of prayer and have an understanding that it is a special place. Due to inspirational teaching using a candle to promote stilling and playing soothing music, a Year 8 pupil with autism and very challenging behaviour made a quite remarkable breakthrough in communication. He made an independent and informed choice about blowing the candle out even though he did not have the PEC symbol to assist him. In this situation the teacher reflected on her practice and there was excellent learning on the part of both the pupil and the teacher. Through sensory exploration, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very good eye contact and produce wonderful smiles in response to the rich stimulus provided by the teacher. This was evident when they listened to their heartbeats using a stethoscope in their topic work on the religious customs of the Native American Indians. Though this experience feelings of awe and wonder were evoked in these pupils. In Key Stage 4 pupils make significant gains in their understanding of the importance of friendship through very good discussion and interesting activities provided for them by their teacher. Post-16 students make very good gains in their learning about Hinduism and begin to research information independently using a CD-ROM. They also use computers well to develop word-processing skills when writing up the information they have found out about Hinduism.
167. Pupils' response to religious education is very good and contributes to their very good learning. Pupils handle artefacts very carefully and treat one another with great respect. Pupils' curiosity is aroused through role-play and an exciting tactile approach to teaching. All pupils, including those with acute fine motor skill difficulties smiled as they held a stethoscope to listen to their heartbeat. Older pupils/students with profound and multiple learning difficulties become excited when they taste Chinese food as part of their topic on the Chinese New Year. Pupils' interest and enjoyment contribute to their very good learning. Eye contact, gorgeous smiles, gestures using signing and vocalisation responses are evoked from pupils with the severest communication difficulties due to the very skilful and sensitive teaching. Excellent use is made of music to set a very calm atmosphere particularly in working with pupils with autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties. This together with the very carefully planned visual stimulus promotes very good behaviour and so promotes very good learning.
168. The quality of teaching is always at least good. The teaching of pupils with autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties is inspirational. Excellent use is made of Makaton and PECS to promote very good communication. The atmosphere for teaching is set well by the sensitive use of music and the careful provision of beautiful smells and exciting artefacts, for example in the Year 8 lesson on using a candle to promote spiritual development. Pupils are given the space to express their feelings and also to make independent choices. Excellent opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual development. Learning support assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' very good learning. However, too little attention is paid to teaching knowledge and there is no formal system to assess pupils' progress over time. The school has recognised the need to improve the quality of provision and the subject is clearly identified as a curriculum area for improvement in the school development plan.

