

INSPECTION REPORT

Park School

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique Reference Number: 110581

Inspection Number: 188925

Headteacher: Mrs. Ruth Cutler

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 27th September – 1st October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708324

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stocklake Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP20 1DP
Telephone number:	01296 423507
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Les Sheldon
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Derby, Rgl	Information technology	Attainment and progress
	Modern foreign languages	Teaching
	Areas of learning for children under five	Leadership and management
John Fletcher, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Katie Khan	Mathematics	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Music	
Rosemary Moruzzi	Science	The efficiency of the school
	Art	
	Personal, social and health education	
Andrew Parsons	Design and technology	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Geography	
	History	
Jane Reed	Post-16	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Physical education	
	Religious education	
	Integration	
Aileen Webber	English	Curriculum and assessment
	Equality of opportunity	
	Key Stage 4	
	Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
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London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school promotes an ethos of respect and acceptance of others. The well-being of the pupils is uppermost in the minds of staff at all times and the care they have for the pupils is of a very high quality.
- There are very good opportunities to promote pupils' moral and social development.
- Pupils behave well both in and out of the classroom and when in the community. They make good progress in personal, social and health education.
- The provision for post-16 students is very good and students make good progress.
- Children make good progress through the stimulating experiences they have in the good nursery provision.
- There are very good systems for assessing pupils at post-16 and these are used well to plan future work.
- Day-to-day administration and financial control is very good.
- Pupils' make good progress in listening and speaking and the teaching of drama is excellent.
- There are very good links with the community and excellent relationships with local commerce and businesses. These are very well developed through the work of governors.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There are weaknesses in the curriculum at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. The breadth and balance of subjects is affected by a lack of teaching time. Some subjects are not taught regularly enough. Assessment is not used sufficiently to plan what pupils should learn next.
- II. Due to weaknesses mainly in the curriculum, the majority of pupils do not make enough progress overall in information technology, religious education and humanities. Pupils' progress is also limited at Key Stage 3 and 4 in art, design and technology, and French. There is not enough attention given to recording pupils' progress in some subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to assess the gains pupils have made and to use this information when writing reports to parents.
- III. The school management plan is insufficiently detailed and there is no adequate plan for the long-term development of the school. It is difficult for governors to measure the impact of any plans put in place or link their spending decisions to the school's priorities.
- IV. Learning resources (books, equipment and materials) are generally inadequate.

The school is a caring community and the good relationships between staff and pupils have a positive effect on the support and guidance offered to pupils. The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. A high quality, comprehensive policy document which guides staff about how they should check on teachers' planning and evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects, has been put in place. Headteacher and deputy headteacher roles have been clarified and there is now a well-organised system of subject and phase co-ordinators. The monitoring of teaching and subjects is relatively new but where it has taken place it has had a positive impact in rectifying weaknesses identified. Classroom observations have taken place and more are planned. A daily act of collective worship is now in place and registers are marked in accordance with the regulations. French is now taught to pupils at Key Stage 3 but only for one week per year. There is too little planning and not enough time for pupils to make progress in religious

education. The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. The school has largely maintained its standards since the last inspection and the proportions of good to excellent teaching currently seen, are similar. The improvements in the post-16 facilities are very good. The school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

• **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

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

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

Best progress takes place in:

listening and speaking: by the time they leave the school higher attaining pupils can express their likes and dislikes in short, simple phrases. Lower attaining pupils respond and anticipate parts of a sensory story. Other pupils use a combination of sign, symbols and speech to make their needs known.

science: some pupils can set up simple experiments and carry out investigations by the time they leave the school. They know they have to make suggestions, test things out and use their scientific knowledge to say why something has happened.

physical education: by the time they leave, many of the pupils are able to swim independently and are working towards a range of distance awards.

personal, social and health education: pupils develop well in being able to do things for themselves such as make choices and purchases at a supermarket.

Not enough progress takes place in:

information technology, religious education and humanities for the majority of pupils throughout the school.

French, art, design and technology by pupils aged 11-16.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years	Good	PSHE, physical development, language and literacy	
5 - 11 years	Satisfactory	art, design and technology, drama, English, mathematics, physical education, PSHE, science	information technology
11 - 16 years	Satisfactory	design and technology, drama, English, PSHE	information technology, mathematics
Post-16	Good		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good		

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons; in 12 per cent of lessons it was very good or better. Six per cent of lessons were excellent. In nine per cent of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory. This was due to a lack of lesson preparation and organisation, and weaknesses in managing some pupils.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in and around the school and on visits in the local community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is some lateness due to late arrival of transport and the systems for pupils to enter the school in the morning.
Ethos*	Pupils are interested in their work and are keen to explain what they have done and the experiences they have had. Relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. A good start has been made to monitoring teaching and parts of the curriculum. Development planning is limited and lacks pace and rigour. Management and governors have clearly thought out ideas for improvement but don't always write these down.
Curriculum	Curriculum planning is weak and the curriculum lacks breadth and balance at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. The post-16 curriculum is good and the curriculum for under-fives and at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Social and moral development are strengths.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory levels of staffing are enhanced by the good number and quality of support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory; the quality of the new post-16 building is very good. The school does not have enough resources.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>V. Parents are positively encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.</p> <p>VI. The headteacher and staff are very approachable and work hard to create a very happy environment.</p> <p>VII. The school's values and attitudes have a very positive influence on their children and the school achieves high standards of good behaviour.</p> <p>VIII. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.</p> <p>IX. Parents and pupils are given good support in relation to their learning and personal difficulties.</p> <p>X. Harding House and the post-16 provision.</p>	<p>XI. Reduced levels of funding and a</p> <p>XII. Finance diverted from resources</p> <p>XIII. Insufficient specialist therapy</p>

Inspector's judgements concur with all parents' positive views of the school. The pupils' behaviour is good; they enjoy school and are happy. The school now has insurance cover in place to offset the financial impact of long-term sickness although there is a significant cost involved in purchasing the insurance. Inspectors agree with parents that the school has an unsatisfactory level of resources (books, materials, equipment) for effective delivery of the curriculum. However, because of the way they work with individual pupils and the advice and support they give the staff, the support provided by specialist therapists is considered to be of a high quality.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve further the educational standards, the quality of education the school provides and the management and efficiency of the school, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- ◆. Improve pupils' progress in information technology, religious education and humanities across the school and in art, design and technology, and French at Key Stages 3 and 4 by ensuring:
 - . there is a planned programme of work which builds on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding;
 - . there is enough time on the timetable for pupils to study these subjects;
 - . that teachers and other staff develop their own knowledge of how to teach these subjects, and especially information technology.
(Paragraphs: 14, 26, 63, 161, 171, 177, 185, 193)

- ◆. have a whole school approach to curriculum planning and the use of assessment and in particular improve the planning for pupils' by:
 - . having an agreed format for long, medium and short-term planning;
 - . ensuring that objectives in all the school plans are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time related (SMART);
 - . ensuring that short-term planning has clear targets, identifies what pupils of different abilities are to do and relates well to medium term plans
 - . providing opportunities for assessment, stating how this will be carried out and using the results to inform future planning;
 - . ensuring that work builds on what has gone before and identifies what needs to come next, and enables pupils to improve their progress in subjects where curriculum planning is weak;
 - . ensuring that planning is informed by pupil's individual education plan targets;
 - . ensuring that all reports and pupils' records in every subject contain clear information about what pupils' know, understand and can do and that this information is used for planning;
 - . ensuring that co-ordinators have a clear view of their subject across the whole school and have opportunities to monitor all aspects of their subjects including the quality of curriculum planning, coverage, teaching and the progress of pupils.
 - . ensuring that the curriculum enables pupils to move smoothly from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to National Curriculum programmes of study at Key Stage 1;
 - . ensuring that there is enough time allocated for subjects;
(Paragraphs: 52, 55, 57, 63, 65-67)

- ◆. Improve school development planning by ensuring:
 - . there are suitable priorities for development, based on the school's aims and where it needs to develop;
 - . that the plan is fully costed;
 - . there are clear criteria for evaluating the targets in the school development plan and that these are expressed as outcomes to improve standards;
 - . there is a clear framework for financial planning which ensures an appropriate balance between the areas of expenditure, that resources are prioritised in the light of the pupils' needs, and that the school is well prepared for the impact of possible changes;
 - . governors are able to measure the effect of their spending decisions;
(Paragraphs: 85, 86, 100)

- ◆. Increase the amount of resources in design and technology, French, geography, history, religious education and software resources in information technology by
 - . auditing the current resources so that all co-ordinators have a clear view of what is available in each area they are responsible for;
 - . identifying from subject and other development plans the priorities for increasing pupils' progress and link the purchase of resources to these;
 - . identifying a budget and prioritise the spending plans in line with school needs and the subjects' budget;
(Paragraphs: 95, 176, 183, 188, 197)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in the following paragraphs:

- . Health and safety and accommodation issues in the nursery and school playground (paragraph 77)
- . Statutory information to parents in the prospectus and annual report of the governors (paragraph: 88)
- . Improve the accommodation for the teaching of art, design and technology, and science (paragraph: 58)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1.Park School is a day special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties situated in the Stocklake area of Aylesbury. The area is mainly of an industrial and business nature and nearby there is a prison, a hospital for adults with learning difficulties and psychological disorders and an adult training centre. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. At the time of the inspection there were two pupils in the nursery who were under five, and an additional nine pupils who were Reception and Year 1. Pupils can be admitted at any time throughout the school year and to different year groups. Overall, their attainment on entry is very low compared to the national average. Since the last inspection the school has developed off-site post-16 facilities at Harding House, a large detached building, near the town centre and local grammar school.

2.The size of the school is just above average when compared to schools of a similar type. There are currently 75 full time and two part-time pupils on roll; this is a reduction since the last inspection when there were 85 pupils. There is now a fairly equal balance between boys and girls with just over 50 per cent boys. At the time of the inspection there were three children under the age of five. Thirty-one per cent of all pupils are eligible for free school meals, a drop since the last inspection when the figure was 41 per cent. Over three-quarters of pupils are from white family backgrounds; most others are from Pakistani homes and two of Black origin. Fourteen pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. A small number of pupils board during the week at the nearby residential school for pupils with

moderate learning difficulties.

3. Pupils come from areas as far afield as Milton Keynes, High Wycombe and the borders of Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire. Most come from the Vale of Aylesbury. The majority of pupils are transported in minibuses and taxis funded by the local education and some pupils travel for up to one hour to get to school. Their families represent a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Since the last inspection the county has reduced in size and Milton Keynes is now a unitary authority. Although the new authority still funds pupils to attend Park School, the headteacher and governors are concerned about the long-term implications for places at the school. Furthermore, the school's future remains uncertain; the local education authority is conducting a review of special educational needs.

4. The school has a mixed population of pupils with special educational needs; most pupils have severe learning difficulties and a very small number have moderate learning difficulties. The population of the school is slowly changing and many pupils are being admitted with more complex special difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs such as a physical disability and some are autistic or have challenging behaviour. With the exception of the pupils over 16 years, pupils of all disabilities are taught together. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are grouped in a separate post 16 class based in Park School. The pupils in the junior department (Year 2 to Year 7), senior department (Year 8 to Year 11) and able-bodied post 16 (Year 12 to Year 14) are grouped according to their ability for many lessons.

5. There is one teacher for every seven pupils and one adult for every two to three pupils when support assistants are included.

6. The school states that its vision statement is to:

- develop the school as a centre of excellence for the education of pupils with a wide spectrum of learning difficulties and the provision of educational and other support services;
- further meet the needs of pupils by establishing full year residential resources;
- be proactive and influential in the decisions currently being made by the local education authority concerning the future of special educational needs organisation and provision.

1. The school's aims are to:

- prepare students for adult life in a multi-cultural society and provide equal opportunity for all, regardless of ability, race, religion, culture and gender;
- provide a broad, balanced and differentiated and relevant curriculum to include the National Curriculum which encourages every student to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to adult life, the world of work and leisure;
- help each student to develop to their full potential and yet be sensitive to the needs of others;
- enable students to experience success, to feel positive about themselves and others and be valued and accepted as individuals;
- help each student to become a happy, caring young person capable of contributing to the community in a positive way.

1. The school evaluates pupils' progress by:

- the acquisition of new skills and concepts;
- any achievement made;
- the maintenance of learned skills and concepts;
- the generalisation of learned skills and concepts;
- the relearning of forgotten skills and concepts;
- the breadth of experience gained;
- the continued stimulation of pupils with regressive conditions.

1.Key indicators

9. Attainment at Key Stage 1

Two pupils were entered in 1999. Both pupils were working towards Level 1 in English, mathematics and science.

9. Attainment at Key Stage 2

Eight pupils were entered in 1999. All pupils were working towards Level 1 in English, mathematics and science.

9. Attainment at Key Stage 3

Four pupils were entered in 1999. All pupils were working towards Level 1 in English and mathematics. Three pupils were working towards Level 1 in science and one pupil achieved Level 1.

9. Attainment at Key Stage 4 and post-16

No pupils have gained accreditation as yet.

Attendance

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

			%
Authorised Absence	School		9
	National comparative data		8
Unauthorised Absence	School		0
	National comparative data		1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	12
Satisfactory or better	91
Less than satisfactory	9

9. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

9. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

9. Attainment and progress

2. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.

3. In relation to their knowledge and prior attainment, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress when supported by the assistants who often work with specific groups of pupils in a teaching role, and also with individuals within the classroom. Progress is good for children under five, in all areas of learning, and for those students at post-16. The use of accreditation at post-16 means that courses are carefully planned to build on what students have previously learned, and there is an interesting range of units of work related to life skills. Although progress is satisfactory overall for pupils of statutory age there are weaknesses in the curriculum and the time allocated to subjects which means that pupils do not make enough progress in some subjects. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic groups.

4. At Key Stage 1 the pupils' progress is good. This is mainly due to the teachers' effective planning, which identifies clear targets through good written guidance to staff. The good knowledge of pupils coupled with the clear targets results in the staff building on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in small steps. The work is well matched to the pupils' needs. At Key Stage 2 the pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, their individual needs are not always identified in planning and although the grouping of pupils helps, there is still a wide variation in their abilities and needs. At Key Stages 3 and 4 whole group teaching means that there is less attention to individual needs although staff modify the questions they ask and the way they generally approach the pupils. Therapists are careful not to withdraw pupils from the same lesson each week for treatment or activities so that the effect of this on pupils' progress in subjects is minimised.

5. Where teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and set high expectations, the pupils are well challenged and make good progress such as with children under five, and in one lesson of music taught by a specialist teacher. The progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is good when they are in the separate post-16 class and satisfactory when in the ordinary classes in the school. Staff know their needs well and there is a good commitment from staff to supporting these pupils, particularly with regard to their physical positioning in special equipment. In the best lessons they are planned for individually but they sometimes do not get the support they need through information technology to help them have access to the curriculum and support their communication. This is because staff are not aware of the wide range of equipment which is available to meet their needs.

6. Where staff are less secure in their knowledge, such as information technology, expectations are low and there are limited opportunities for pupils to build on previous learning. In these cases the pupils make insufficient progress. In subjects where there are no schemes of work or limited planning, the curriculum does not underpin the pupils' knowledge. Some subjects are not taught regularly enough. The school develops pupils' skills in subjects such as humanities and French by having theme weeks. From the evidence seen these are highly stimulating occasions which help pupils understand well the relevance of what they are learning. However, there is not enough time for subsequent work for them to fully retain and

build on what they have learned. In information technology, religious education and humanities pupils do not make enough progress across all key stages because of this. At Key Stages 3 and 4 in art, design and technology, French, there is also insufficient progress. This is partly due to a lack of curriculum planning and partly due to the lack of time devoted to the subjects.

7. Overall the pupils' make satisfactory progress in English across all key stages. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening across the school. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils respond to their names and show an understanding of simple instructions with signs. At Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils say single words with signs and they anticipate parts of songs, adding the appropriate actions. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils sign and say simple phrases. Lower attaining pupils sign by copying the sign and saying the word after the teacher. At Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils speak, sign and provide actions in familiar stories. At Key Stage 4, in drama lessons, higher attaining pupils give simple commands to fellow 'actors' in a play. Lower attaining pupils sign their commands and gesture to give their instructions. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils are prepared to speak in front of audiences in class and in drama lessons. Lower attaining pupils sign and make themselves understood at a basic level.

8. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading across all the key stages. At Key Stage 1 they point to some named pictures and match some of the pictures to objects. At Key Stage 2 they read a school-made book of words with symbols by signing and saying the words. By the end of the key stage they can recognise their names and addresses and can match the word for a colour with the actual colour.

9. At Key Stage 3 pupils find and read text consisting of words with symbols which are computer generated by staff, stick them on paper and read and sign them. By the end of the key stage they read from a reading scheme hesitantly, using picture clues and meaning to predict which word comes next. At Key Stage 4 they read more confidently and with the use of well-spaced symbols read back the short phrases that caption their work. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils read to a range of audiences, such as the class or to pupils in their department, in assembly. Their reading of simple texts is generally accurate and shows understanding. They use strategies, such as context and meaning, to read more complex words. However, they do not show that they are using phonic clues very often. Lower attaining pupils point to words with symbols they have written and sign the words.

10. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing across the key stages. However, they do not have the opportunity to write in many different styles or for many audiences at Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils develop their hand-eye co-ordination and practice pencil control through a range of activities. Lower attaining pupils are physically guided to produce simple marks on paper. By the end of the key stage they work with an adult to trace simple 'pathways' with their fingers. At Key Stage 2 they use pencils with special grips and begin to enjoy drawing and staying within the lines of an outline. By the end of the key stage they are helped, through using computer-generated symbols, to write their own books about themselves. At Key Stage 3 they recognise which letters sound like other letters. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils write their own name and copy under script with some letters well formed. Lower attaining pupils read symbols with words, to caption the work they have done. At Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils word-process when copying from sentences, using symbols and words. Lower attaining pupils talk and sign their news and stick the words (with symbols) onto a page in their book to make a sentence. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils write about a topic of interest with words with symbols. Lower attaining pupils match pictures with symbols and sign when they caption their work on making pizzas.

11. Progress is satisfactory overall in mathematics. Pupils at Key Stage 1 explore numbers

from one to five through a variety of activities including music and movement. Some begin to recognise numerals and develop the idea of a number representing a group of objects. High attaining pupils are given opportunities to work with numbers from five to 10. Lower attaining pupils develop eye contact through the concealing of objects which are stimulating and encourage them to concentrate.

12. At Key Stage 2 pupils are able to handle simple data. They produce simple bar charts and explore the use of tallies. Low attaining pupils are able to point out requested numbers from a choice of two cards. Higher attaining pupils sort and match independently and are able to give names of simple shapes such as a circle and a square. They are able to solve simple number problems using number bonds up to 10. Pupils use numbers and pegs to solve simple addition sums. They are able to adjust their pegs with support if the sum is incorrect. As pupils move into Key Stage 3, low attaining pupils join numbered outline dots to make a house shape. High attaining pupils ring the differences between tall and short on a worksheet. They match numbers to objects and order numbers from one to 10. They use simple words associated with capacity, such as full and empty, and estimate how many glasses will fill a given container.

13. By the time pupils reach Key Stage 4 their progress is satisfactory overall although lower attaining pupils tend to repeat work they have already done and are not sufficiently stretched. They make insufficient progress because of this and the narrowness of the curriculum. High attaining pupils make satisfactory progress because of the use of a well planned accredited course but at times they too do work which is too easy for them. Low attaining pupils are still continuing to develop their ideas of shape and size and colour large and small shapes using different colours. Some are beginning to count to 5. Higher attaining pupils measure units of food and liquids and estimate how much a milk container holds compared to a glass as part of their accredited course. This stretches them well, but at other times they continue with activities which are too simple, such as when sorting by hair and eye colour.

14. Overall, the pupils make good progress in science. At Key Stage 1 they develop an understanding of forces and motion through the use of their own bodies by practical experience of 'pushing', 'pulling', 'slipping and sliding'. They understand that there are many sources of sound and that sounds have different dynamics, such as loud or quiet. They are aware that changes take place in certain materials such as when ice cubes melt and change into water.

15. At the end of Key Stage 2 some higher attaining pupils know how to complete a simple electrical circuit to light a bulb by connecting wires to a battery. They develop an understanding of magnetism when handling magnets, and distinguish magnetic from non-magnetic objects. Most demonstrate an understanding of the forces of push and pull and some are beginning to develop an idea of friction when pulling objects along sandpaper in contrast to a smooth mat or bed of marbles. They can relate sounds to objects and have practical experience of sounds produced by vibrations through the strings of a guitar. Over time, some pupils develop good experimental and investigative skills and are able to set up classroom experiments from work presented previously. They begin to discuss and compare the outcomes of science activities through class reviews and to record their findings by constructing simple graphs. Through a sensory curriculum, lower attaining pupils also experience different properties of materials by comparing different outcomes when sticks, play-dough and other material is bent, squashed and stretched.

16. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils develop a simple understanding of the properties of air. They know that a balloon can be filled with air by blowing and propelled by the escaping air when released. Ideas are regularly re-inforced when topics are regularly re-visited by teachers and this has a positive effect on their progress. Through this, the pupils are beginning to predict outcomes more accurately. For example, they know that a lighted candle will go out when an inverted bottle is placed over it, or the direction a balloon will move along a wire when the air is

released from it in a controlled fashion. They are starting to consider why things happen and suggest reasons. For instance, some could say that the candle used up the air in the bottle. Some remember that oxygen is the important part of air which the candle requires to burn.

17. For pupils with more complex difficulties teaching via a sensory curriculum enables them to make good progress in developing ideas such as air and wind, light and sound and they respond with pleasure and anticipation when they work in the sensory room.

18. The pupils' unsatisfactory progress in information technology is directly related to their limited use of computers in lessons. The majority have little opportunity to develop skills in a systematic fashion as they go through the school and it is not until students are in post-16 that this occurs through the use of an accredited course. Their progress is satisfactory. Although there are plans for developing the subject across the school there is no whole-school scheme of work as yet. Some higher attaining pupils, by the time they leave school, can type simple words and know where the keys on the keyboard are located and their function. Lower attaining pupils use information technology in a practical way and understand its use in society. They know that a computer controls a cash machine in a bank and they use a digital camera to take photographs which are printed through computer software.

19. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in religious education. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. However, throughout the rest of the school progress ranges from unsatisfactory to poor at the end of Key Stage 4. Progress is poor due to the insufficient experiences offered to pupils and a limited time being allocated on the school timetable. At Key Stages 3 and 4 only three modules of study are taken from the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and there is limited evidence in planning to show that the school is building on what pupils have learned previously.

20. The pupils make good progress in art at Key Stage 1 and 2, and in physical education, and personal, social and health education overall. Their progress is satisfactory in design and technology at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in music overall.

28.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21. Since the last inspection the school continues to maintain a good standard of behaviour and functions well as an orderly community. A creative learning environment is fostered. Pupils are courteous and polite.

22. Children under five take increasing responsibility for their activities although they may still need the watchful eye of an adult and support to keep them focused on what they are doing. Some still have severe difficulties in this area and need the support of an adult for most of their basic needs. Children are well behaved and in group snack time wait their turn well using a wide variety of ways to communicate their requests and greetings.

23. Pupils have positive attitudes and are interested in their work. They make useful suggestions which are taken up by staff, such as which ingredients should be chosen for a pizza in food technology lessons. They are able to sustain concentration when lessons are stimulating and are eager to contribute their ideas. However, in some lessons, where teaching does not engage pupils sufficiently, they lose interest and become restless. Generally, pupils enjoy responding to challenges and staff encourage them to persevere when responding to questions in class.

24. The school promotes an ethos of respect and acceptance of others and this aim is certainly achieved. Pupils behave well both in and out of the classroom. In English they ignore the more challenging behaviours of some pupils, and the staff model this approach for them. Most parents agree that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour. The challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils with additional special needs is skilfully addressed by the majority of the staff. There have been no exclusions over the past 12 months. Pupils say that they are happy at school and enjoy being there. During the inspection older pupils showed they were confident in the school and valued the praise and attention given to them.

by staff. Staff are sensitive to the need to position pupils in wheelchairs so that they can see one another and this promotes their participation in activities.

25. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own personal development, such as when they take the registers back to the office in the morning and for the distribution of drinks during the senior break. There were some good examples seen in music when the pupils were asked to 'conduct' the group and in English where pupils offered to work switches. By the time they reach post-16 their opportunities have increased, and the school council is a very positive development in promoting personal growth. Senior pupils are pleased to represent the school and the views of other pupils. They listen carefully to the teacher and support each other during discussions about the role of the council.

26. Relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils develop friendships and show concern for each other. There is a *buddy* system where post-16 pupils link up with the most physically disabled pupils. Staff have classes in the *Makaton* sign system to promote communication between the two groups of students. Several examples were seen where pupils helped one another when moving along corridors between lessons. In design and technology lessons there is co-operation between the more able pupils when sharing tasks.

27. Pupils are given opportunities to celebrate each other's successes as they progress through the school. There are achievement certificates for all pupils, when, for example, a pupil is congratulated for being able to use a spoon unaided for the first time. In lessons, pupils' successes are often celebrated through enthusiastic, and often spontaneous, applause which contributes to a positive learning environment.

35.

Attendance

28. Attendance is satisfactory and contributes positively to pupils' progress and personal development. The pupils' overall attendance is just above 90 per cent, with each year group reflecting a similar pattern. Absences usually occur as a result of sickness, to which some pupils are prone, medical and similar appointments and through holidays which are properly authorised. The pupils arrive in the school grounds in good time for the start of the school day. However, the current arrangement for getting pupils from their transport and into classrooms is inefficient with the result that, invariably, pupils get down to work late. This situation improved over the week of the inspection but, nevertheless, with the start of the day at 9.10am, inevitably, the time taken for unloading all the pupils delays the start of lessons. During the day some lessons start late as time is not built in to enable the organisation into teaching groups or for movement around the site.

36. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

36. Teaching

29. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This has been maintained since the last inspection. The proportions of good or better teaching are similar to the last inspection. However, there is also a similar proportion of less than satisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching is good for children under five, for pupils at Key Stage 1, and students in the post-16 department. It is satisfactory at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Twelve per cent of all lessons are very good or better and six per cent excellent. The features of the teaching in these lessons include, excellent subject knowledge, a superb range of equipment provided, activities in which all pupils are encouraged to fully participate and where much is expected of them. In nine per cent of lessons the teaching is less than satisfactory. The reasons for this include the pace of the lesson being slow and failing to motivate pupils, activities set which do not stretch the pupils and, occasionally, pupils who have challenging behaviour not being managed successfully.

30. The quality of teaching of children under five is good overall. It is good in every area of learning but is stronger in language and literacy, physical development and personal and social areas. This is mainly because of the good knowledge staff have of the pupils and the good working relationships between the therapists and teacher. This makes a positive impact on the children's progress. The staff's concern for the children's personal development means that they take every opportunity to help the children to be as independent as possible. The support staff make a significant contribution to the teaching, are well organised and know the children very well.

31. The teaching of pupils with additional needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall; staff are very aware of these pupils and know their strengths and weaknesses well. They often have a very detailed knowledge of their pupils' backgrounds, their disabilities and are careful to try and include them as much as possible in all lessons. They are usually very careful to position pupils so that they can take part in lessons and give much encouragement and support. Particularly good examples of the teaching of these pupils occurs in the post-16 group at the Park School base, and during the sensory activities which the lower attaining pupils undertake in the senior department. Staff are very aware of the equipment and resources these pupils need to physically support them but sometimes they are given too much help either by staff or, sometimes, by pupils. Some of this weakness is related to the availability of resources. There is limited computer technology for them and few simple communication aids which they can use independently. In one lesson the teacher produced the written work on the computer for a pupil as there were no aids available for him to do it by himself.

32. The quality of teaching is good in design and technology, personal, social and health education, physical education and in science at Key Stages 1 and 2. In design and technology staff use their good knowledge food technology well and the way they present lesson, and value pupils' ideas, keeps the pupils interested. In science teachers re-inforce scientific ideas by re-visiting these in lessons which helps pupils to develop a good understanding of what they mean. In physical education the joint planning between teachers and physiotherapists ensures that activities are relevant for pupils with physical difficulties and there are high expectations of their performance. Teachers have a high regard for pupils' personal development and mostly insist that they do as much for themselves as possible in lessons; the teaching in the pastoral sessions contributes well to this. The school's high quality planning documents in personal, social and health education give good guidance to help teachers plan and provide opportunities in small steps; this helps the pupils to make good progress. The teaching of English is good, and teaching through the literacy hour in the junior department is beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The quality of teaching in mathematics, music and art is satisfactory. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in the humanities, French, or religious education as very little teaching was seen during the inspection.

33. Support staff make a significant contribution to the teaching of the pupils and in many lessons they take a lead role in delivering the lesson planned by a teacher. The quality of teaching by support staff is good overall; occasionally it is excellent. Staff are very knowledgeable about the pupils and take a confident approach in managing them well. They use many different approaches to engage and motivate the pupils and know how, and when, to use them to best effect. In one lesson, with pupils with additional needs, a dramatic approach was very effective in helping pupils experience smells from the seaside. The very good relationships they have, and the way in which they encourage the pupils, means that pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons taught by support staff.

34. The school uses specialist visitors well to add value to the quality of teaching, and a visit by a Roman soldier made a significant impact on pupils and they have remembered this well. The

ideas the staff have to present theme days or weeks in certain subjects also motivates the pupils and staff, such as when a specialist French teacher adds much in terms of her specialist knowledge. The speech and language therapist and the physiotherapist provide effective support for pupils and directly teach groups and individuals. There is particularly good

support for children under five and language groups are regularly taught by the speech and language therapist.

35. The teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' personal difficulties and backgrounds and are sensitive, but mostly firm where they need to be, when working with them. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, overall. The main weakness is in their knowledge of information technology. There is good knowledge of the nursery and early years curriculum and how to get the best from pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. The teachers' knowledge is sound in Key Stage 3 and 4. Staff have a very good knowledge of the students at post-16, often built up over a long period of time, and this helps them plan specifically and well for individuals, and especially those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Their knowledge of subjects and how to deliver these is mostly good and underpinned by the accreditation system the staff use.

36. Many teachers have a sound knowledge of their pupils' targets in individual education plans, and especially as targets relate to work in English and mathematics. However, the targets are often too broad to be easily evaluated and this means that teachers cannot easily track the pupils' progress. Not all teachers or support assistants are aware how these targets can be promoted through the subjects they teach to different classes. Although teachers are now much more confident in the use of computers they are not always aware of the range of equipment and software which may be useful in supporting their pupils in the subjects.

37. Staff manage their pupils well and use their positive relationships to good effect when dealing with the occasional occurrence of challenging behaviour. This is particularly strong in the early part of the school, for pupils in Key Stage 1, but as pupils get older some staff do not have enough strategies and some of those used have limited effect. Most staff work hard to keep pupils motivated in lessons. Sometimes the pupils become restless when, due to a lack of imaginative teaching, the length of time pupils have to wait for a turn at an activity is too great. This is also the case when staff have not planned for their pupils' individual needs. Some staff are unaware that this is the reason for the pupils' inappropriate behaviour and seek behavioural methods of resolving the problem instead of evaluating what might have been the weaknesses in the lesson.

38. Many lessons have a good structure which includes a beginning, a practical middle part and a session at the end to review and check on the pupils' knowledge. However, not all lessons are planned in this way and in some long introductions, which are too teacher directed, pupils lose interest. The lessons for the children under five and in Key Stage 1 have a good range of opportunities for guided choice, planning, practical activity and review and this takes place regularly during the day. Some lessons for older pupils have little structure apart from whole class teaching for the whole of the lesson and there is often little attention to pupils' individual needs. Although most classes have enough staff to work with small groups, or individuals, this opportunity is infrequently grasped. Generally, however, teachers give sound consideration to the way they plan work for pupils of different abilities and every effort is made to include pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, this is not always reflected in written plans, except for under fives and at Key Stage 1, where it is good. The structure of lessons for students in post-16 is good and there are many opportunities for practical work in and out of school which makes the work provided meaningful and relevant to them. The pace of lessons is mostly satisfactory, but one of the most common features identified where the teaching was less than satisfactory, was a slow pace. Sometimes the momentum of the lesson is slowed by late starts to lessons due to staff and pupils getting used to the new pupil groupings and the occasional confusion as to the rooms where pupils should go. The organisation and the varied ways the pupils are taught during the theme weeks, such as French week, means that they really benefit from the intensity of the activity. The staff try very hard to make the pupils' learning meaningful.

39. Teachers generally have satisfactory expectations of their pupils. Sometime they are superb and pupils rise to the occasion, such as in a music lesson taken by a specialist. Expectations were also high in a movement lesson for pupils under five and at Key Stage 1. The pupils stilled to the requests given to them and moved in a controlled way despite their usually weak attention skills. Sometimes expectations are not high enough such as in a lesson in personal, social and health education when the teacher did not expect pupils to participate sufficiently and gave little encouragement for pupils to read some of their work, even though they were capable of this.

40. The written planning of lessons is satisfactory overall and strongest for the youngest and oldest pupils. Here, planning specifically states what different pupils are to learn and careful thought is given to the activities the pupils will undertake. Planning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but at Key Stage 3 and 4 it is unsatisfactory. Some plans do not have any objectives and are merely a list of activities to be undertaken. These short-term plans do not have clear targets and do not identify what pupils of different abilities are to do. Although there is a section for evaluation on most plans, there is little evidence of these being completed. However, a strength in some lessons, is the use of individual and specific targets written in the front of the pupils' workbooks. These are usually based on the pupils' individual education plan targets. This is good practice but not all teachers match the activity sufficiently to help pupils reach the goals set for them. There are examples of teachers identifying assessment opportunities in lessons, but the practice is inconsistent and does not always inform planning for pupils.

41. The use of time and resources in lessons is satisfactory overall and good at post-16. The use of the school grounds, the immediate locality and neighbouring areas allows teachers to present pupils with first hand experiences; this has a positive effect on their progress. Resources are generally well prepared and there is a good use of good quality teacher-made resources. Teachers try to compensate well for the general lack of resources in the school. However, a lack of resources affects the teaching of subjects such as religious education and information technology. There is insufficient software to support subjects or pupils' individual needs for learning or communication and staff make little use of this equipment during lessons. There are some special switches, overlay keyboards and pointer devices, but they are insufficient in range and quantity. Sometimes equipment is positioned in a way that makes it difficult for pupils to reach, such as a monitor which is much higher than the pupils' eye level.

42. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and is not a useful means of assessment. Often work is checked during the lesson and pupils given feedback immediately. Pupils benefit from the individual support and advice staff give and value the verbal praise they receive. Rewards for good work are not always appropriate to the age of the pupils. The pupils' work is well displayed and valued by staff; there is much photographic work, but little which is sufficiently annotated or dated to exemplify what pupils' know, understand and can do. There was little evidence seen on the inspection of homework being given to pupils although pupils do read at home and therapists liaise with parents in order to help them carry out programmes. The home-school agreement aims to provide parents with clearer information about their role in helping their children with work at home.

50.

The curriculum and assessment

43. The curriculum is satisfactory for children under five and at Key Stage 1. For pupils at post-16 it is good. However, the school does not meet its stated aim to provide all pupils with a *...broad, balanced, differentiated and relevant curriculum that includes the National Curriculum* as there are weaknesses in the breadth and balance of the curriculum at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. This makes the curriculum unsatisfactory, overall.

44. The time available for lessons is below that in the majority of similar schools. Time for some pupils is also lost when school transport arrives late and when pupils are moving into different groups. This affects the breadth of the curriculum. The school does not meet its statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education as not all aspects of the subjects are taught. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, there is no system to ensure that timetables reflect a balanced curriculum and frequently it is the pupil groupings and the availability of teachers which are taken into consideration above the needs of the whole curriculum. As a result the balance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient time given to the teaching of religious education, information technology, geography, history, design technology, and a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3. This results in unsatisfactory progress in these subjects.

45. There is a good personal, social and health education programme with well-planned schemes of work that has been developed by a whole school approach. There are also useful targets for pupils at lunch-time. Sex education is taught as part of the programme. For example, the younger pupils are taught to recognise and respect physical differences between the different genders. Older pupils are given planned experiences, which promote the ability to understand the changes that affect their bodies during adolescence. Pupils are taught, using good role-play methods, to say "*No to Strangers*". There is little careers education provided for pupils until post-16, although there is associated work covered in the *Transition Challenge* course at Key Stage 4. There is a limited programme of drugs education, although there is some informal work which is carried out as part of personal, social and health education. It is not until students are in post-16 that the majority of this work takes place. This affects the progress that the pupils make in this area. Good opportunities are provided to extend pupils' experiences with visits out of school and by inviting people into school. For instance, the younger pupils recently visited a farm and a windmill related to their topic on air, and senior pupils visited a museum to support their design technology work.

46. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. The majority of Key Stage 1 pupils are taught a curriculum that is appropriately planned around the Desirable Learning Outcomes (DLOs) and covers the areas of learning of personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. A three-year rotation of half-termly topics is planned and these are shared with parents. For example topics include *The Farm*, *Animals* and *Up in the Air* (during the week of the inspection). The computer produced information about these topics for parents and support staff is excellent.

47. All staff are clear about the learning objectives for different activities and these are displayed on apparatus within the classroom. However, the planning does not provide sufficient detail of each activity and does not show how pupils' work is planned to ensure progression to prepare for, and include, the programmes of study of the National Curriculum as they proceed through Key Stage 1. There are very good opportunities for the children to mix with children in mainstream schools both through visiting other schools and by other children attending Park School. There is a good baseline assessment system which is in the process of being developed. Detailed records are kept on pupils' progress and good reports are written for parents.

48. The curriculum for students at post-16 is good overall, and a large proportion of the work is planned from the accredited courses followed by the school. The work clearly develops their skills in the four core areas of communication, numeracy, information technology and personal development. They are responsible for evaluating their own performance and are encouraged to set targets for improvement. Students in the post-16 department at the Park School site follow a predominantly sensory curriculum and which is relevant, broad and balanced with a good range of accreditation.

49. The planning of the curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. Pupils are organised into classes that include pupils from different key stages. For example, some Key Stage 1 pupils are taught with pupils in Key Stage 2. Some lessons are repeated for pupils of different abilities, with little modification, and are also presented to pupils more than once. Apart from mathematics, science and personal, social and health education, schemes of work for subjects do not provide sufficient detail. For example, what pupils should learn next is not built on to what pupils know, understand and can already do in subjects.

50. At Key Stage 4 the *Transition Challenge* accreditation provides a framework for the curriculum but subject plans are not written with sufficient detail or with enough reference to the assessment of pupils. The lack of specialist accommodation for senior pupils also affects the breadth of the curriculum that can be offered, such as in art, science and design technology (resistant materials).

51. The curriculum includes the grouping of pupils by ability for academic subjects. This enables pupils to be taught content through an approach that is suitable for their different needs. However, there is some time lost, and on occasions pupils become unsettled, as they move to different rooms for their groups. The ability groups are very wide and teachers do not always plan sufficiently for those pupils with the most needs.

52. The curriculum provides an equal opportunity overall for pupils of different gender, ability and background. The school's *Equality of Opportunity Policy* states that they check to see if this is achieved. Lower attaining pupils are sometimes taught with higher attaining pupils and are also appropriately placed in ability groups, which provides a curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. Additional support is given, by a Section 11 teacher, to pupils and their families who speak English as a second language. Assessment is provided for the youngest children to find out if their understanding increases when their own language is spoken in lessons. The physiotherapists ensure that pupils who are withdrawn for treatment do not miss the same lesson every week. The school makes every effort to ensure that post-16 pupils, who are taught at the Park School site have opportunities to go to the Harding House site and opportunities to work with their peers.

53. The provision for pupils with additional educational needs has improved since the last inspection with the further development of the sensory curriculum. The groupings for pupils in English and mathematics and some other subjects helps to ensure that the needs of pupils with differing abilities are met. There is an efficient use of the time available from the speech and language therapists, which is centred mainly on the younger pupils. The school does not always fully meet the additional needs of pupils with visual and hearing impairments. For example, not all teachers consistently sign or include objects of reference in lessons where hearing-impaired pupils are present.

54. The provision for pupils' extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Activities include a *music club*, a *dance club* at the local arts centre, and an opportunity for seniors and post-16 pupils to attend an outdoor pursuits residential visit. There is also a summer play scheme which is open to all pupils. Due to changes in the rules regarding mini-bus driving abroad resulting in the need to fund a driver, the school no longer takes pupils to France.

55. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to develop the mainly good quality subject policies, the role of the co-ordinator, and there has been a positive development in the use of accreditation at Key Stage 4. However, the school's progress in subject planning, since the last inspection, has been limited. The staff have worked together to produce a good personal, social and health education programme, which also underpins the whole curriculum. However this is, at times, at the expense of providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to make progress in National Curriculum subjects. For example, some lessons focus on improving pupils' hand skills in isolation, instead of giving pupils meaningful and motivating

tasks from the design and technology programmes of study, such as making a model or a puppet. The weakness in the curriculum identified at the previous inspection with the under-emphasis of religious education and a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3, remains a difficulty.

56. The systems for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall. For children under five the systems are good, and for pupils at post-16 they are very good. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 the systems are satisfactory. There is a good new system of baseline assessment, which the school has recently developed together with other schools. The school carries out National Curriculum teacher assessment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. These are used to create charts, which clearly show what pupils know, understand and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. These are a strength but are not used to exemplify the attainment of other year groups.

57. The school is trialling the pre-National Curriculum scales for mathematics to assess pupils' level of attainment. This is being developed to provide information about what pupils know, understand, and can do in the subject and what the pupils should learn next. In English the school uses a published language scheme and this provides a good assessment of pupils' language skills. However, there is no consistent system for recording and assessing pupils' understanding of what is taught in other subjects across the school.

58. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) provide a focus for pupil targets in subjects. However, objectives are not always specific and measurable. This makes it difficult to use them to focus work in lessons and measure progress.

59. The assessment systems are utilised for planning in a satisfactory way for children under five and at post-16 this information is used well. At Key Stage 4 assessment is provided by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) *Transition Challenge* course and this also helps the school know what needs to be taught. At post-16 pupils work towards the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR) *National Skills Profile* and Accreditation for Life & Living Skills (ALL) *Life and Living*. The pupils' work at post-16 is seen as a model of good practice for other schools. However, at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 the way that assessment is used to inform what pupils should learn next is unsatisfactory.

67.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

60. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils including children under five. This is a change from the previous inspection when the moral and social aspects of this provision were judged to be excellent and the pupils' spiritual and cultural development was considered good.

61. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There is now a daily act of collective worship, which involves all pupils. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the act of worship did not comply with statutory requirements because it did not occur daily for all pupils. These sessions take place at the end of the school day and provide the pupils with opportunities to listen to music, and celebrate each other's achievements. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate on these occasions and good humour is very evident. They show their work to the whole school and show great delight when they receive praise for their efforts. One pupil was able to play a mouth organ well, which amazed many of the pupils. Pupils have written a school prayer and they take it in turn to read it at end of the day. There is a missed opportunity at this point because no time is allowed for reflection. The school uses sensory stimulation to help pupils learn about their environment, and in a religious education lesson pupils are given the opportunity to experience the smells and textures of the natural world. Some lower attaining pupils show amazement in information technology when they press a switch and a fan blows air in their face; also when they learn that they could turn

music on or off on a tape recorder. Pupils also respond with a sense of awe and wonder during a sensory drama session which involves the use and movement of leaves and branches, and when they see their cooked cheese and poppy seed biscuits emerge from the oven in food technology.

62.The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. Throughout the school good relationships exist between pupils and staff and this re-inforces the strong sense of community within the establishment. The staff are good role models and provide the pupils with a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and as a result pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. There are no formalised school rules, but acceptable boundaries are understood and accepted by the majority of pupils. The personal, social and health education policy provides appropriate programmes and is supported by the extensive use of pastoral time. Pupils are encouraged to make choices, share and listen to others and these sessions play a significant part in promoting their moral development. The relationships, which exist throughout the school, are good and they contribute the school's ethos and moral code.

63.Provision for the pupils' social development is also very good. The quality of the relationships between the pupils and the staff reflects the social skills the pupils have acquired. The school makes effective use of visits and links with the local community to extend the range of educational experiences and social contacts for the pupils. At the local bowling alley students are able to use the facilities independently, by collecting their own shoes and ordering their own refreshments. They are polite and thoughtful and promote a very strong image of the school in the local community. There are opportunities for a number of pupils to integrate with their mainstream peers and this effectively promotes their social development, as do the extra-curricular activities such as the *Dance Workshop*.

64.There is satisfactory provision for cultural and multi-cultural education. There is some photographic and art work evidence of work on other cultures, with pupils dressing up in national costumes and experiencing the sounds of the Caribbean. Pupils' own traditions are developed through visits to museums and there are limited opportunities to study other cultures in subjects such as geography, history and religious education. During a Roman Week pupils learned about the foods, dress and art associated with that period of history. The study of French culture has had a positive impact on pupils and they can identify features such as the French perfume industry, Paris fashion and the consumption of *L'escargot*. There are some opportunities for pupils to experience famous works of art by several artists including works by Lowry and Gauguin. Opportunities also exist for the appreciation of music such as pieces by the composer Beethoven.

72. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

65.The school's provision for the support, guidance and well-being of pupils is satisfactory and makes a positive contribution to the educational standards achieved. The standards identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained and there are now good seat belt arrangements in minibuses and staff are very careful to ensure that pupils are correctly seated and belted-in. Although there is good careers guidance for older pupils there is still no planned programme from Year 9. Pupils feel safe and secure and the vast majority enjoy being at school and benefit from the education provided, particularly the personal and social development programmes. Teaching and support staff effectively promote the caring ethos of the school with the support and help they give to the pupils. The well-being of the pupils is uppermost in the minds of staff at all times and the care they show for the pupils is of a high quality. They demonstrate a good awareness of the particular needs of pupils with severe physical difficulties, but in a small minority of lessons these pupils were not placed in the most appropriate positions to enable them to see what was going on and to maximise their contribution.

66. The school is well supported by specialist therapists and the full range of external agencies. Therapy staff provide effective support for pupils' needs although parents view the amount of time provided by the speech and language therapists and occupational therapists as inadequate. There is good communication between therapists and staff and most staff carry out the programmes provided by the therapists appropriately. Good physiotherapy support is provided for physically disabled pupils visiting local stables for riding lessons. The liaison between the nursery and speech and language therapist is particularly good and helps the children to make good progress with their communication skills. However, those pupils with the most communication needs do not always have access to simple communication aid technology. Good use is made of signs and symbols, but only a few pupils have symbol books. Where these are used pupils make a greater contribution to lessons.

67. Satisfactory procedures are in place to monitor individual pupil's personal development and academic progress. The annual review formally records progress and personal development and sets the broad aims for the following year against which specific targets can be set. Teaching and support staff effectively monitor day-to-day progress and informally review and refine targets for behaviour and academic work. Different departments within the school currently use different systems for recording pupil progress making monitoring across phases unnecessarily difficult. In some subjects there are few records kept and this makes it very difficult for staff and co-ordinators to check on progress. Aware of this problem, the school has been testing new ways of recording pupil's attainment which have proved successful and which it now intends to extend to the whole school as soon as possible. Any pupils experiencing difficulties with academic issues, or their personal development, are quickly identified and appropriate strategies are put in place to redress any problems.

68. Attendance records are now completed accurately by class teachers and the school effectively monitors individual and whole school attendance levels. The school has clear procedures for promoting and implementing the behaviour code. All staff operate as effective role models for pupils. They use praise and encouragement positively to promote good behaviour and secure an orderly community in which most pupils show a pride in their achievements and respect behaviour expectations. Staff know their pupils well and usually use appropriate, non-confrontational approaches and their good relationships to diffuse any volatile situations. Teaching staff monitor behaviour appropriately on a pupil by pupil basis but with no formal reward schemes monitoring and recording is less secure. The use of a short cooling off period outside the classroom can be an inappropriate and ineffective sanction for some pupils in the school. There are clear and positive views on bullying and harassment that are implemented effectively.

69. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are good and meet statutory requirements. There is a designated teacher with responsibility for child protection and the school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The school has appropriate written procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety and all adults are careful in ensuring adherence to safe practice. There has never been an external risk assessment of the site and its facilities, and the use of the formal reporting system for health and safety hazards has become casual. The headteacher is keen to commission an external risk assessment and the health and safety representatives are planning to reinforce the responsibilities of all staff, with regard to health and safety and the reporting of potential hazards at a future training session. There are termly evacuation practices and records of external inspections for equipment and electrical appliances. The school has trained first-aiders and there are good first-aid facilities at various locations around the school. There is now a full time nurse employed by the school who provides a good level of regular medical support and contributes to pupil's personal, social and health education. Medicines are appropriately and safely stored. In lessons observed during the inspection good care was taken to ensure pupils' safety although there were some hygiene concerns in food technology and in music where instruments were passed from pupil to pupil. There are some health and safety risks regarding the nursery outside play area and the concrete walled sandpit in the main playground.

77. Partnership with parents and the community

70.The school's partnership with parents and the community is good and the school has maintained similar high standards to the last inspection. The school's links with the community and business have benefited them well in the provision of the post-16 high quality accommodation near the town centre. A wide range of educational visits well related to the curriculum, successfully widen the range of pupils' experiences.

71.The school enjoys a good and supportive partnership with the vast majority of parents. Good systems are in place to enable communication between school and home and the information provided by the school for parents is widely valued. The annual review of pupils' statements of special educational need and the school's report provide an appropriate formal review of personal development and academic progress which is supported through effective, informal contact and discussion during the year. Parents universally appreciate the review process but some would like more comparative attainment information in order to judge progress. Daily communication with home through a home-school diary is much appreciated by the parents of those pupils with particular medical and behavioural problems, whereas other parents are very happy with the weekly newsletter which keeps them well informed. Attendance at official meetings and support for school events and functions is good. There is widespread agreement amongst the parent body that the school is welcoming and that staff are willing to answer problems and queries at any time. The information contained in annual reports about what pupils know, understand and can do is variable in quality but is satisfactory overall. Some give very clear information about pupils' skills in subjects, while other merely say whether a pupil has enjoyed the subject.

72.A number of parents contribute directly to pupils' education by helping in school; they make a very positive contribution to the standards achieved. The school works hard to promote the partnership with parents and provides good guidance for parents on how they can assist in development programmes. There is good evidence to show that the vast majority are involved in their children's learning. Fund raising activities and social events organised by the friends association make a significant contribution to the school and to the development of the partnership between school and home.

73.The school has very good links with the community which positively enrich the education provided. There is a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development through interaction with local community organisations, mainstream schools, trips and outings to local places of interest in support of curriculum teaching and residential visits for older pupils. Post –16 pupils benefit from having lunch at the local grammar school and having the opportunity to mix with the mainstream pupils at a lunchtime music club. Nursery age children are given the opportunity to visit a local primary school where they are supported for physical activity by Year 6 pupils. The school also has an excellent relationship with the local business and commercial community which in recent years has contributed significant funds and physical resource to extend and improve the accommodation and its environment. This is promoted well through the work of the governing body. Equally, a number of local organisations effectively enrich the education provision through making their facilities available for widening and enhancing the curriculum. Two local stables entertain senior department pupils each week for riding tuition which is enthusiastically supported by volunteers from *Riding for the Disabled Association*. Pupils benefit from visiting the bakery at the local supermarket and a nearby working farm.

81. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

81. Leadership and management

74. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is very committed to the school and the day-to-day management is largely sound. However, weaknesses in the curriculum result in pupils making limited progress in certain subjects and the time available for lessons is reduced due to the late start to the day and some slippage of time during the day. The headteacher provides sound leadership for the school and is successful in promoting a relaxed, caring and supportive environment for the pupils and is very supportive of staff. There is a clarity of vision for long-term developments such as the need for new post-16 facilities and for improving the quality of training using the Investors in People support and consultancy. However, the school's financial difficulties have impeded some of its work. This is because the focus of the governors and the management team has been on ensuring that there were enough staff to teach and support pupils rather than on planning for the immediate future of the school. The roles of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have now been clearly defined, a weakness identified in the last inspection. The school has a strong senior management team which reflects the departmental structure of the school. They meet regularly to discuss school development issues. However, this strategic planning role has only recently developed. The school has further developed the role of subject co-ordinators and has provided training. In addition, a phase co-ordination system has been established to strengthen the links between key stages, a weakness identified in the last inspection. Co-ordinator's job descriptions outline clearly their roles for checking teachers' planning in their department and the quality of teaching and some have undertaken this work across their department. A curriculum co-ordinator is now in place and has a role to develop a whole school view of the curriculum. However, this role is too new to have had an impact, as yet.

75. The school has found it difficult to balance its budget over the last two years. This is due to reductions in the amount of funds the school receives through the local management of schools scheme, changes in local authority boundaries, and the long-term absence of a member of staff. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body have focused much of their work on examining how the school spends its finances in order to see where it can cut back. It reluctantly took the decision to reduce the numbers of the teaching staff and support staff through voluntary and compulsory redundancies. This process has now been completed and, although there are less teachers, the ratio of staff to pupils is now slightly higher when support staff are included. The school's difficulties with its finance has diverted the management's attention away from whole school development issues and much time and energy has gone into successfully managing the financial situation. In addition, the local authority is reviewing its special education provision and governors consider that the future of the school is uncertain. As a consequence, some developments have been slow, yet the quality of the work, when it proceeds, is good. The headteacher and governors recognise this weakness and know that plans for improvement need to proceed with increased pace and rigour.

76. The school has made a satisfactory response to the key issue identified in the last inspection and has developed a high quality detailed monitoring and evaluation policy based on the staff's own views of what constitutes good teaching. It clearly identifies the necessary qualities to be evaluated through lesson observations. The practical monitoring of the work by the senior management team and some subject co-ordinators has only recently begun, but is satisfactory overall. Where monitoring has taken place against the policy, such as in the nursery, weaknesses have been identified, such as the pace of the lessons and the use of time, and have been subsequently rectified. These were not issues seen during the inspection and the quality of the provision in the nursery is good. Similarly in English, the checks on teachers' planning mean that there is a more consistent approach and that it takes account of

the need to develop pupils' skills, in small steps. Governors have also monitored the work of the school. During their lesson observations they have focused on specific aspects such as how the children in the nursery are assessed against the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and the standard of behaviour of pupils in the junior department. The quality and type of their evaluations have changed over time from checking on building issues to the actual work carried out by pupils in the classroom and how teachers plan, for instance. They are now much more evaluative and less descriptive.

77. The school's management plan is a useful document in guiding the management in the tasks it needs to perform over one year, such as devising a budget plan and establishing staff training needs. It is well structured into three sections relating to items which the school needs to continue, those it needs to develop and those which are intended to raise standards. It contains all the necessary elements of a good plan but the targets are insufficiently detailed and too broad. The actions refer mainly to the production of another plan, such as producing a long-term school development plan, and the criteria for evaluation often states that it is ongoing or there are no finance implications, when clearly there are. It is unsatisfactory as a strategic planning document for whole-school development and is, in parts, a repeat of the previous year's plan. Each subject co-ordinator and phase co-ordinator have brief short-term plans for their own subject and these give a clear steer for the development of their subjects. They also form the basis for the departmental development plans. However, they are limited by the management's requirement to produce a plan with no cost implications due to the tightness of the school's budget. Discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors indicate that they do think and plan strategically for school improvement, but do not always write down their targets; they know many of the school's weaknesses and are reflective of their own practice. They are suitably placed to make further improvement.

78. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors bring considerable expertise to the school and are very supportive on a day-to-day basis. Many are from business and financial backgrounds, and one is an Ofsted lay inspector. They are influential in attracting funds to the school through their links with the business community. Their role in supporting the headteachers' vision for separate post-16 provision has been achieved through the purchase of Harding House. They have a good range of appropriate committees in place and meet regularly. They monitor the work of the school by directly discussing developments with teachers during their visits, and from reports received from the representatives of committees, staff and the headteacher at governors meetings. Together with the staff, they have worked hard to produce a good range of high quality policies, with clearly thought out strategy, to support the work of the school. However, due to the inadequacies of the school development plan they are unable to monitor its progress as the criteria for success is limited. The governing body is developing a strategic role to provide a long-term vision for the school and they know that they need to plan in the short, medium and long-term. The need to tie finance into the school's development priorities has been established and the requirement for relating staff training to this has been identified through the school's commitment to Investors in People.

79. Since the last inspection the school remains a well-ordered community with a strong ethos. The headteacher and governors have been successful in their aim to enable students to feel positive about themselves, to be valued and accepted as individuals and to be sensitive to the needs of others. The school has shared aims and staff work towards promoting a caring environment where each student can be a happy and caring person, prepared for adult life. However, at times there is a lack of urgency directed towards promoting high achievement by pupils and the aims of the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to include the National Curriculum are not yet achieved.

80. The governors' report to parents does not fully meet statutory requirements. It fails to mention leavers' destinations, information on school security, a statement on the progress with

regard to the implementation of the school's action plan, and information about the implementation of the special educational needs policy. The school prospectus does not mention leavers' destinations or National Curriculum assessment results.

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

81. Since the last inspection financial difficulties have affected the number of teachers in the school and the resources to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school seeks bids from government and charitable organisations with varying success. Through connections with a charitable trust, the school has gained new high quality accommodation near the town centre for its post-16 students, freeing up space in the main Park School building. Although resources were adequate at the last inspection, the school has reduced its purchase of resources over the past three years and regularly seeks bids to enhance the provision.

82. The school has sufficient and suitably qualified teaching staff to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of all pupils. Despite the school's recent and severe financial difficulties resulting in the reduction of a number of teachers, the overall ratio of staff to pupils has improved slightly since the previous inspection. The considerable experience of many members of staff makes a positive impact on pupils' personal and social development and on their learning. Most teachers have appropriate training and qualifications to undertake the curriculum responsibilities they have been given. There are plans in hand to assess the skills of teachers in information technology and to provide appropriate training. However, most teachers lack the skills and confidence to use information technology in their teaching and this limits its use in supporting pupils' learning.

83. There is a very good number of support staff who are well-qualified and experienced. Trainees, and the many nursing students, also make an important contribution to the school's work. Support staff make a significant contribution to the teaching of the pupils and are a considerable asset to the school. They feel valued by their colleagues. The work of staff such as speech therapists and physiotherapists is greatly enhanced by the quality of the work from support staff who readily and willingly assist in following treatment and maintenance programmes for pupils. The recent appointment of a nurse to the school staff, from the school's budget, is already having a significant impact on the quality and level of medical support and the personal and social development of pupils through issues such as drug awareness. There is effective liaison between the speech and language therapist and other staff, which greatly enhances the curriculum opportunities for those pupils needing such therapy. Where the roles of different members of staff are clearly understood and agreed in advance support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. However, on a small number of occasions not enough is expected by teachers of support staff, and what they are to do in lessons is not made clear to them. The administrative staff are skilled and efficient. Domestic and kitchen staff members are committed to the school and maintain a clean and tidy environment. The site supervisor contributes to the efficient running of the school, ensuring it is clean and safe.

84. The arrangements for the professional development of all the staff are satisfactory. They have been given a real boost by the school's commitment to Investors in People and to valuing the contributions made by all the staff. Job descriptions have been rewritten for all staff. However, some responsibilities are still unclear and are not detailed in the staff handbook or in individual job descriptions. Continuing professional development is closely linked to the new appraisal cycle and the documentation that goes with the new policy links professional development to both school development and individual needs for the first time. The systems being put in place are too new for them to have an impact on standards but are of a good quality. The long-standing stability of the majority of the staff group has resulted in induction procedures being informal, but they are, nonetheless, effective for the number of trainees working in the school.

85. The school provides satisfactory accommodation for the pupils and classrooms are of an adequate size. The specialist room for food technology, the swimming pool and the large halls make a good contribution to the standards that pupils achieve, as do the sensory rooms. The

development of Harding House makes a significant impact for post-16 students but the very good quality of its provision serves to emphasise the weak features of the main school. The swimming pool, for example, has areas that require considerable maintenance because of their poor condition. Toilets and changing facilities throughout the school are of poor quality and decoration. The school is poorly furnished and the fabric of the building has weaknesses caused by the weather and squirrel damage. The absence of specialist art, design technology (resistant materials) and science areas continues to restrict the development of these subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4 and limits progress in the aspects of the subjects which would be well served by these facilities. Access to the nursery is problematic for those children with physical disabilities due to steep slopes and steps. They have to enter the main school via an outside route which is not sheltered and is difficult for staff to negotiate. The new therapy suite and the library are still under development, but the size of the new library area means that it will be inadequate for its use as a learning resource, equipped with computers and easy chairs.

86. The outside environment of the school and the provision of large play equipment give plenty of opportunities for pupils to let off excess energy and to make more creative use of their break times. The play area is spacious and interesting for pupils to explore. The empty sandpit and the enclosed play area for the nursery are potentially hazardous. The ongoing development of the sensory garden, in memory of a former pupil, is beginning to add a new dimension to the school with regard to providing wondrous experiences, thus aiding pupils' spiritual development.

87. The school's resources are inadequate, overall. The development of learning resources has suffered, until recently, from the absence of curriculum co-ordinators and the school's extremely tight financial situation. The absence of an overview of the school's resources and the lack of long-term subject planning has meant that the purchase of resources has tended to be haphazard and reactive rather than planned for. It is only recently that co-ordinators have established plans to develop their subjects, but this is still on the basis of no resource cost. The quality and amount of the resources that exist in food technology and personal and social education are good. In English, mathematics, art, and physical education resources are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. In design technology (resistant materials), French, humanities, religious education and science the quality and amount of the resources are unsatisfactory. Resources are poor in religious education. The use of information technology as a resource within the school is both underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. Although there is an adequate number of computers which are of good quality, the amount and suitability of the software is unsatisfactory. The school makes good use of the resources available locally both to supplement the school stock and to widen the pupils' horizons. There are regular visits to local places of interest and to museums. Visitors to the school, including theatre groups and Roman soldiers, make a significant impact on pupils which they remember for a long time afterwards. The school also purchases mainly consumable resources for its French and geography immersion weeks and these make a significant contribution to the pupils' understanding in these subjects. For instance, many pupils understand about the French way of life through eating food during their immersion week, such as l'escargot and grenouille. The school supplements its resources with high quality, teacher-made, equipment.

95. The efficiency of the school

88. The efficiency of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher, deputy head and governors are effectively involved in the financial management and a strategic planning group ensures a thorough approach to financial planning. Specific grants and donations are used well and grants for staff training are used appropriately.

89. During the past three years there have continued to be pressures on the school's resources and lasting uncertainties regarding the school's funding have contributed to difficulties in long-term planning. Costings, particularly for staff, are regularly reviewed; this

has been particularly necessary during the past two years when redeployment and redundancy have taken place. The school has undertaken a detailed analysis of all its spending and has focused on where it can make savings with the ultimate aim of producing a balanced budget.

90. Financial problems have been exacerbated by long-term sickness and this has resulted in a deficit situation. The headteacher and governors have taken this situation very seriously and have acted quickly. Through the process of staff redundancy they are working hard to swiftly eliminate the deficit. Through prudent financial planning and management a small surplus is now projected at the end of the current financial year. However, this depends on the school obtaining a similar amount of voluntary donations to previous years.

91. The school has planned well for its post-16 development and has been extremely successful in attracting substantial private funds which have been used to purchase and equip the new post-16 building, Harding House. This has also had the additional benefit of freeing up much needed classroom space in the main school. The school continues to rely heavily on additional outside funding for the purchase of resources.

92. The school's short-term development plan has aims which are expressed too broadly and lack the precision to enable the school to be sure that any funding linked to these is used in the best possible way. However, because of financial difficulties the school has produced a no-cost plan. This has the effect, however, of limiting the school's ability to prioritise what it needs to do for the future development of the school. It also makes it difficult for the governors to check whether it is on course to achieve its aims, and restricts their ability to adjust its planning where necessary. Governors recognise this and know that they need to financially plan more specifically in terms of whole school development and in the long-term. They have felt unable to do this because of the school's severe financial difficulties.

93. The school budget is very well managed on a daily basis. Day-to-day administration and financial control are very good and the school has further improved this standard since the last inspection. There are efficient procedures for monitoring expenditure, and the finance secretary and deputy headteacher are able to provide up-to-date, accurate information on request. Financial systems are well organised, procedures are good and budget information is constantly reviewed. The school has made a satisfactory response to the recent local authority audit, the recommendations of which focused on the refinement of existing good practice. The backup of the computer system is carried out daily, and there are other sensible security measures to protect data. The arrangements for the audit of the school fund accounts are entirely satisfactory.

94. Spending generally reflects the school's aims. The finance committee is provided with detailed reports by the deputy headteacher with the governing body receiving copies of the minutes.

95. Teaching staff are deployed effectively in terms of their skills and all staff are generally deployed well to ensure that there are sufficient numbers to deliver and support the planned curriculum. The school makes particularly good use of non teaching staff and they have a very positive impact on pupils learning. High quality planning for some subjects, such as science, ensures that learning can continue in the absence of the regular teacher.

96. Overall, the use of school learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory. However, there are some weaknesses relating to the use of time. The length of school day and slippage of time within it does not always lead to the best use of teacher's time. Occasionally, teachers are not used to best effect such as when two are present in a lesson but only one takes a significant teaching role; or in the senior department when a teacher carries out tasks during lessons which assistants could readily do.

97. Grouping and timetabling arrangements, particularly in the junior department, sometimes result in time being lost during frequent and complicated classroom changeovers although this did occur near the beginning of the new school year when teachers and pupils were getting used to the system. This, and congestion in the corridors, sometimes contributes to the

unsettled behaviour of some children, and has an adverse effect on the learning of the whole class. The make-up of some groups means that they are difficult for the teacher to manage, although some weaknesses relate to the teachers' lack of planning for pupils of different needs. This results in some pupils' restless behaviour when they are not actively involved, and so reduces their learning opportunities.

98. Within a limited range, the resources which are available are generally well used to provide satisfactory support for pupils' learning. Staff provide and make a good deal of high quality equipment themselves, which is well used, particularly in science and mathematics lessons. Following the opening of Harding House, resources are being reviewed. The way some subject resources are currently stored in classrooms sometimes compromises pupils' ability to act independently and develop good personal study skills.

99. The school generally makes effective use of all its available space, although sometimes the use of a single classroom for all senior break time drinks and snacks causes delays to the start of lessons.

100. The school makes excellent use of resources in the local and the wider community to enrich pupils' experience and enhance their learning. In the light of the levels of the satisfactory teaching overall, the positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils, and the satisfactory progress that they make, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

108. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

101. The school's nursery class contains children with a wide range of learning and physical disabilities, some of whom have very severe or profound difficulties. At the time of the inspection two children were under five with the majority aged five or six years. At times during the week children under five without any special educational needs (mainstream children) joined the class and provided good social and language role-models for the children. A particularly good feature of the work of the nursery is the way in which many opportunities are provided for children to have integrated experiences.

102. The children benefit greatly from the good provision in the well-staffed nursery. The quality of this provision has been maintained since the last inspection. The staff team is well led by the nursery teacher and a significant strength is the considerable knowledge they have about their children's needs and how to plan for them individually. The children make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all the six areas of learning. The nursery provides a good foundation for later learning.

103. Children's enthusiasm and a love of learning is positively encouraged by the richness of the activities provided by the staff. Despite the early developmental stage of many pupils, the way the activities are presented, and the close understanding relationships between the staff and children, helps to motivate them well and make good progress.

104. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. A three-year rotation of half-termly topics is planned and these are shared with parents. For example, topics include The Farm, Animals and Up in the Air (during the week of the inspection). The presentation of these topics using computer graphics for parents and support staff is excellent.

105. All staff are clear about learning objectives for different activities and these are displayed on apparatus within the classroom. Each pupil has their personal targets set out in their individual profile. However the planning does not provide sufficient detail of each activity and does not show how pupils' work is planned to ensure progression to prepare for, and include, the programmes of study of the National Curriculum as they proceed through Key Stage 1.

106. There are good systems for assessing the pupils' attainment and all staff record their daily observations which are then analysed by the teacher and transferred to the children's profiles. Steps are being taken to further enhance the already good quality of the information. Staff use these good systems to add to their knowledge of the children and use this information in a sound way to plan work to build on what the children have previously learned.

107. Children in the nursery respond enthusiastically and positively to the learning experiences offered. They enjoy the contact with the mainstream children. Some watch them carefully and imitate aspects of their language or the way they approach an activity; they gain well from this social interaction.

108. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in every area of learning but is stronger in language and literacy, physical development and personal and social areas. This is mainly because of the good knowledge staff have of the pupils and the good working relationships between the therapists and teacher. The staff's concern for pupils' personal development means that they take every opportunity to help the children to be as independent as possible. The support staff make a significant contribution to the teaching, are well organised and know the children very well. Their previous knowledge, experience and the informal training provided by the class teacher enables them to be part of a well run team. Day-to-day planning is good with activities carefully chosen to meet the diverse needs of the children. The way in

which the staff make experiences for the children meaningful, and integrate their learning into a variety of activities, helps the children to make good progress. The targets set for the children are clear, with activities suggested and clear criteria for success; this enables staff to easily assess pupils' progress against these. There is considerable emphasis on the children's independence both socially and in terms of communication. Praise is used well and this spurs the children on. There is a good working relationship with all the medical services on site and their staff, such as the physiotherapist and the school nurse, also work alongside the nursery staff team with individual children. The nursery makes good use of parents, helpers and students and these too make a good contribution to the children's learning.

109. The accommodation is spacious and reasonably well laid out into activity areas. There is a sensory room which is sometimes used as a quiet area, and another room which is used for group music, information technology and collective worship. Although staff try hard to make the environment stimulating with displays and interesting activity areas, the decoration is dull. The bathroom areas are poorly designed and do not make managing the children's personal needs, such as nappy changing, easy. The access to the main building is difficult because of steep stairs and children with severe physical disabilities have to be taken outside in order to enter the school by a safer route. The outside play area is separate to the main school play area but is un-stimulating, lacks physical challenge, and has a concrete area where the edge has quite a drop. Children are always well supervised but, nevertheless, this poses a safety risk.

117. ***Language and literacy***

110. Children develop the use of language through the structured group and individual programmes which are produced from the results of assessments and through the close working relationship between the speech and language therapist and teacher. Work is well planned and staff have a good knowledge of how to develop the language skills of pupils who are at a very early stage in their development. Pupils learn to sign, use symbols and some use objects of reference. Through gesture, sound and eye-contact they learn to communicate that they would like a turn in an activity. Children are sensitively helped by staff to make decisions and choices. Children develop well from a pre-verbal level of understanding to understanding single word commands. Some develop the use of single words and some have a growing vocabulary of these. Higher attaining pupils lick ice cubes and respond to the sign for "cold" in small group work led by the teacher and speech and language therapist. Due their special educational needs, the children's listening and attention skills are weak. The activities promote the development of these skills well and it is evident from whole class group work that they are learning to wait, take their turn and listen to simple instructions. Some children recognise their name.

111. The teaching of language and literacy skills is good. It is very good for supporting the children's self-expression, the understanding of spoken language and listening skills. All nursery staff support these effectively across the curriculum as well as in language and literacy.

119. **Mathematics**

112. Some children find matching and sorting difficult while others sort according to shape and colour and know that things that are alike go together. Many are able to insert pieces into a form board, some with increasing complexity. The lower attaining pupils are still unaware that when an object is dropped it has not gone forever, but many are developing a good understanding of the shape and sizes of objects, and which are the same and which are different. They gain practical experience of shape and number through play. They gain an understanding of capacity through pouring and filling activities. Through action and counting songs they begin to develop the idea of counting and some count from one to five in the correct sequence. However, the idea of oneness, or twoness is yet to develop. The quality of teaching is good and staff are confident in the subject and are careful to help the children apply what they are learning to a variety of situations.

120. ***Knowledge and understanding of world***

113. The topic during the inspection, 'up in the air', helps the children to gain an understanding of what air is and the different ways it can be felt. They create bubble pictures by blowing through a straw and marvel at the bubble effect. Some use the sensory room to feel the effect of the fan machine. The children are given opportunities to develop their knowledge of the world through the wide range of topics such as water, the jungle, and homes presented over the school year. They have also benefited from exploring their local environment. Children use construction materials with increasing creativity and are aware of how to create different shapes. Some remember the days of the week when prompted by adults and some have an idea of the broad sequence of events during the day. They use a single switch to select icons on the computer screen and make other pictures appear or create sounds. The quality of teaching is good. Staff provide good role models for children in talking about the world and exploit classroom activities well.

121. ***Creative development***

114. The children make good progress through aspects of art, music, sensory activities and role-play. They enjoy painting in different ways, such as making a stabbing movement with the brush or printing with a sponge, and using different textures and materials in artwork. Some lower attaining pupils are still at the stage of mouthing paint with brushes, but staff are carefully to modify the children's hold on the brush and model brush movements. For some pupils the emphasis is on increasing the time they will tolerate an activity. They use a range of materials to make sound, and to explore low and high sounds on a glockenspiel. Children handle instruments and sound producing toys well although some have little interest in the sounds produced. The children enjoy music sessions and some anticipate actions in familiar action songs. The quality of teaching is good and staff provide high quality opportunities with varied materials for art, music and role-play.

122. ***Physical development***

115. Most children develop confidence in movement and are willing to explore and try new ways of moving, encouraged by staff and physiotherapists. Children have a wide range of physical development; some are agile while others need a great deal of support for sitting and moving. Nursery staff make up for the limitations of their own external area by using the school hall for physical activities and a local primary school for specialist movement work, using Year 6 pupils from that school as partners. These activities are a significant strength. The high expectations of the staff result in the children settling quickly. They respond really well and there is a considerable willingness and confidence on the part of the children to try hard to carry out what they are being shown to do, such as rolling through a line of pupils making a tunnel. Children build up their confidence in the school swimming pool and those with physical disabilities have opportunities to develop strength in their lower body. Staff physically guide children in using a pencil or a crayon to make more controlled marks on paper, and some are adept with tools such as wooden hammers and hit objects with increasing accuracy. Some independently scribble while others know that they must try to keep inside an object, such as a circle, when colouring in. The quality of the teaching is good and particularly strong in the specialist movement session.

123. **Personal and social development**

116.Children take increasing responsibility for dressing and undressing, personal hygiene and self-help although they may still need the watchful eye of an adult and support to keep them focused on what they are doing. There is an eagerness among staff that children should do as much for themselves as they are able to and they rise to this demand and try really hard. Some remain as having severe difficulties in this area and need the support of an adult for most of their basic needs. Children are well behaved and in group snack time wait their turn well using a wide variety of ways of communicating their requests and greetings. Most are able to hold and load a spoon although for some this is a significant achievement. The children trust the adults around them in the nursery and have good relationships with each other. Personal and social development is supported across the curriculum in clear class routines at break and lunchtime, and through aspects of other nursery activities. The quality of teaching is good and is informed by children's individual targets and the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

124. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

124. **English**

117.Overall the pupils' make satisfactory progress in English across all key stages. Progress in speaking and listening is good for pupils of all abilities at all key stages and it is well supported by a specialist language scheme for younger pupils and drama for all pupils. The use of symbols and good teacher-made resources supports progress in reading and writing. However, progress in writing is restricted by the narrow range of types of writing. This maintains the position, including the weakness with writing, from the last inspection.

118.Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening across the school. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils respond to their names and show an understanding of simple instructions with signs. For example, they respond to "go and sit down", "pick up the pencil". By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils understand turn taking, and can use a few signs, such as "hello", "book" and "biscuit". At Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils say single words with signs and they anticipate parts of songs, adding the appropriate actions. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils sign and say, "I want the red brick and the white brick" in reply to "What do you want?", when looking at objects on a table. Lower attaining pupils sign by copying the sign and some say the word after the teacher.

119.At Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils speak, sign and provide actions in familiar stories. Lower attaining pupils anticipate the sequence of a sensory story of Robin Hood. They sign and capture the intonation pattern of songs they know. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils are prompted to give short answers to questions about a Romeo and Juliet video. Lower attaining pupils can say some words and point to symbols signing the words they have chosen for their writing about how to make a pizza. At Key Stage 4 in drama lessons, higher attaining pupils give commands to their "servants", when they play the part of the King, saying for example, "wash the floor" or "get the bread". Lower attaining pupils sign their commands and gesture to give their instructions. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils are prepared to speak in front of audiences in class and in drama. Lower attaining pupils sign and make themselves understood at a basic level.

120.Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading across all the key stages. At Key Stage 1 they point to some named pictures and match some of the pictures to objects. For example, they match the picture of a banana to a plastic banana and a real banana. At Key Stage 2 they read a school-made book of words with symbols by signing and saying the words, although their pronunciation is not always very clear. By the end of the key stage they can recognise their names and addresses and can match the word for a colour with the actual colour.

121. At Key Stage 3 pupils find and read text consisting of words with symbols which are computer-generated by staff, stick them on paper and read and sign them. By the end of the key stage they read from a reading scheme hesitantly, using picture clues and meaning to predict what word comes next. At Key Stage 4 they read more confidently and with the use of well-spaced symbols read back the short phrases that caption their work. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils can read to a range of audiences, such as the class and at assembly. Their reading of simple texts is generally accurate and shows understanding. They use strategies such as context and meaning to read more complex words. However, they do not show that they are using phonic clues very often. Lower attaining pupils point to words with symbols they have written and sign the words.

122. Pupils make satisfactory progress with writing across the key stages. However, they do not have the opportunity to write in many different styles or for many audiences at Key Stages 3 and 4. For example, they do little creative writing and do not interview people or write newspaper articles, rather than writing their "News" every week. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils develop their hand-eye co-ordination and practice pencil control activities by scribbling on the outline of an aeroplane, as part of their topic work on air. Lower attaining pupils have "hand-over-hand" help to draw on the aeroplane outline. By the end of the key stage they use crayons, pencils and paper working with an adult they can trace simple pathways with their fingers. At Key Stage 2 they use moulded pencils, and begin to enjoy drawing and staying within the lines of an outline. By the end of the key stage they are helped, through using computer-generated symbols, to write their own books about themselves. These are then laminated and used as their reading books.

123. At Key Stage 3 they recognise which letters sound like other letters. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils write their own name and copy under script with some letters well formed. Lower attaining pupils read symbols with words, which caption the work they have done. At Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils word process, copying from sentences, using "words with symbols" or hand write their "News" independently. Lower attaining pupils talk and sign their "News" and stick the words (with symbols) onto a page in their book to make a sentence. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils write about a topic of interest with words with symbols. Lower attaining pupils match pictures with symbols and sign when they caption their work on "I made a Pizza".

124. Pupils' response to English is good across the school. In drama it is excellent. Everyone becomes very involved in the story and gets very excited but then calms right down in response to instructions. Lower attaining pupils in the junior department respond very positively to sensory drama, beginning to pretend to drink and eat on a picnic. Senior pupils respond to being squirted with water when they are caught in the "rain" on a simulated seaside visit. Where the quality of the teaching is good pupils concentrate hard and follow instructions well. They respond to signing and sign themselves, which encourages their speech. When it is less good, they become distracted and wander about the classroom aimlessly.

125. The teaching of English is good across the school and in drama it is excellent. In all lessons classroom assistants make a very good contribution. For example, they take the lead role in many of the good language sessions, some of which are excellent. The excellent drama teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities are fully included. For example, pupils with autism are chosen to take lead roles in the drama and are assisted by their peers where necessary. The management of pupils, including some very large groups, is excellent. Resources, which are appropriate to pupils' needs and ages, are well used. For instance, school-made words with symbols reading books motivate the pupils greatly. However, in some lessons the work is not fully challenging. For instance lessons on "News" writing are insufficiently motivating or different as pupils progress through the school. In lessons on Romeo and Juliet pupils make masks, which limits the amount of time they spend on English work. Where lessons are taken by temporary teachers, the support of classroom assistants is invaluable. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, there is a lack of signing, use of actions or objects of reference to support the understanding of all pupils.

126. The curriculum for English is satisfactory. There is a suitable balance between speaking and listening, reading and writing which is supported by the good use of symbols. The use of the specialist language scheme, the literacy hour work, communications within the accreditation of *Transition Challenge* and drama all provide a structure for what is taught. However the breadth of the curriculum for writing is restricted. The approach to literacy in the junior department, based on the National Literacy Strategy, is beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' progress. There are few opportunities for creative writing such as poetry

or plays. The scheme of work is satisfactory, although it is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that temporary teachers have full guidance on presenting activities. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and they are used to support planning, although the school intends to improve the way it uses assessment to plan future work. Assessment systems include those linked to the specialist language scheme, individual educational plans, and the *Transition Challenge* accreditation. Teacher assessments for the National Curriculum tests are carried out and very good charts of what pupils know, understand and can do are produced. However, these do not extend to pupils in other year groups. Speech and language therapists and the teacher who supports pupils with English as an additional language, also carry out individual assessments.

127.English makes a good contribution to the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, particularly within drama lessons. The management and leadership of English is satisfactory. Very good training has been provided so that in the absence of the co-ordinator, support assistants are able to make an exceptional contribution to language lessons. Teaching is not monitored consistently although a start has been made. Teachers' plans are not always fully evaluated, and the curriculum is not yet fully developed, although these are targets identified in co-ordinator's development plan. English, and particularly drama, provides a very good ethos for learning for the pupils.

128.Teachers and classroom assistants have received training to help them improve the quality of teaching in English and their use in the classroom is very good. They have taken part in training for the school's specialist language scheme, the literacy hour and signing. However, temporary teachers do not use signing consistently. Resources are satisfactory overall and they are used well. There are good school-made resources using "words with symbols", which are highly motivating for the pupils. There is no library in operation at present as it is being moved to a new location.

136. **Mathematics**

129.Progress is satisfactory overall in mathematics. It is good at Key Stage 1. Pupils explore numbers from one to five through a variety of activities including music and movement. Some begin to recognise numerals and develop the idea of a number representing a group of objects. They clap out numbers and sing musical rhymes. They sort colours and simple shapes. Lower attaining pupils have access to a variety of cause and effect toys to develop their ideas of an action on an object. Higher attaining pupils work towards understanding transactions using plastic money in exchange for snacks at break times. They work on a wide variety of activities to develop their understanding of numbers from five to 10. Lower attaining pupils aim towards achieving eye contact through concealing objects, which are stimulating, to encourage them to concentrate. Numbers are tapped out or sung to try and develop an understanding of object permanence.

130.At Key Stage 2 progress continues to be good. Pupils are able to handle simple data. They produce simple bar charts for their favourite character from Winnie the Pooh and explore the use of tallies. Low attaining pupils are able to point out requested numbers from a choice of two cards. They are introduced to a variety of mathematical vocabulary such as *long* and *short* which is reinforced with practical activities. Higher attaining pupils can sort and match independently and are able to give names of simple shapes such as circle and square. They are able to solve simple number problems using number bonds up to 10. Pupils use a variety of practical apparatus such as pegs and counters to solve simple addition sums. They are beginning to notice how they can correct the mistakes they make in computation and adjust their pegs, with support, when the sum is incorrect.

131.As pupils move into Key Stage 3 their progress is satisfactory. Low attaining pupils join numbered outline dots to make a house. The idea of *big* and *small* is revisited as are the

numbers from one to 20, and regularly re-inforced to ensure that pupils fully understand what the numbers represent. High attaining pupils ring the differences between tall and short on a worksheet. They match numbers to objects and order numbers from 1 to 10. They can use

simple words associated with capacity such as *full* and *empty* and estimate how many glasses will fill a given container.

132. By the time pupils reach Key Stage 4, their progress is satisfactory overall although lower attaining pupils tend to repeat work they have already done and are not sufficiently stretched. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress because of the accreditation course they follow but there are still limitations in the work they cover. Often, low attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress because of the repetition and narrowness of the curriculum presented to them. Some pupils continue to repeat number work based on numbers between one and 10 in order to consolidate their understanding of number. They continue to practise formation of numbers as a handwriting exercise. Higher attaining pupils complete work based on adding numbers one to 20. Although the accredited course is followed, there is limited evidence of the use of calculators, limited work on shape and lack of work related to the practical use of mathematics such as working with simple co-ordinates. Lower attaining pupils colour large and small shapes using different colours. Some are counting and colouring numbers up to five. Higher attaining pupils measure units of food and liquids such as estimating how much a milk container holds compared to a glass as part of their accredited course. This stretches them well but, at other times, activities are too simple, such as sorting activities by hair and eye colour.

133. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are satisfactory overall. They vary across the school and range from unsatisfactory to very good. Younger pupils are motivated, and show interest and are able to sustain concentration because of the challenging nature of the work presented. Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 respond well to questions and are quick to congratulate each other's successes. All staff use praise to good effect. Weaknesses occur when lessons do not engage older pupils' interest. They become bored and restless as a consequence. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and provides little incentive for pupils. The use of some reward methods, such as smiley faces, is inappropriate for older pupils.

134. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 lessons are well-planned and reinforced with suitable practical resources. A range of stimuli is used such as concealed objects in boxes and musical tapes to promote positive learning experiences for pupils. There is very good use of support staff and a particular strength in engaging the concentration of the most challenging pupils. At Key Stage 2 the teachers' planning and assessment of pupils' progress is strong. Lessons are well structured, assessed on a daily basis and evaluation is used to inform future planning. There is good use of planned resources. However, there is little individual teaching in classes which results in higher attaining pupils not being sufficiently catered for. Higher attaining pupils help other pupils rather than being extended themselves. At Key Stage 3 work appropriately matches pupils' abilities and vocabulary is suitably extended to include a variety of mathematical terms such as the names of simple shapes. Only a small number of lessons were seen at Key Stage 4 and these were unsatisfactory. The teachers' expectations are low. For example, they use number songs meant for a much younger age group. Lesson plans are sketchy and records of pupils' progress are not used to inform future planning. The behaviour of some pupils has a significant effect on the learning of others and, because they are not always managed well, this has a negative effect on other pupils' concentration.

135. The curriculum overall is satisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 1 appropriately continue with work relating to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. There are good records for areas of the mathematics curriculum which detailed information about ideas, skills, activities, resources and opportunities for assessment and evaluation. Significant progress is recorded in pupils' individual records of achievement. Links to Key Stage 2 are being addressed through meetings although there is no structured approach to this process as yet. A modular approach is adopted as pupils move into Key Stage 2, with work planned for each group and matched appropriately to the pupils' needs. However, the six modules do not include money or time as

specific areas but there is good attention to shape and space and number. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in continuity and progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The pre-National Curriculum assessment scales have been adopted in order to track coverage and progress by each pupil and good use is being made of these. The phase co-ordinator highlights what has been done and then passes these records onto the other phase co-ordinator. Individual education plans at Key Stage 2 are detailed and contain good quality targets. They become less informative for older pupils where targets are not measurable or specific. Evaluations are based on pupils' personal and social skills rather than their progress in mathematics. For example, they sometimes refer to 'enjoyed the topic of shape'.

136. Management of the subject is satisfactory although there are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum development. The co-ordinator is working hard to improve the provision within the subject. Key Stage 1 is well-managed as pupils' progress is monitored on a daily basis. The curriculum topics are carefully chosen to ensure that all opportunities for learning are developed. The last inspection highlighted the need for liaison between key stages and this is improving due to the efforts of the mathematics co-ordinator. Meetings are held regularly and these are minuted with points for action. A *junior mathematics summary* is kept which accurately records pupils' attainment and can be passed on as the pupil moves up the school. There is no formal mechanism at present for ensuring that the mathematics co-ordinator can disseminate the excellent assessment, recording and reporting at Key Stage 2 through the upper school. However, the co-ordinator has amalgamated the previous three policies into one and started reviewing formal assessment procedures. There was little use of information technology seen throughout the inspection.

137. The co-ordinator has had support from a mathematics consultant working on the programmes of study linked with the National Numeracy Strategy. Staff have had training and consider it a positive step towards raising achievement across the school. The subject development plan indicates that there is an audit of resources planned for the summer term. There is a lack of software and a limited range of resources. What the school has is of good quality and is accessible; much of the equipment is made by staff and is of good quality. There is no delegation of financial responsibility to the co-ordinator but bids are made to the departmental leader.

138. The quality of resources in the department as a whole is satisfactory although there is a limited range available. Resources are accessible and much of the equipment made by staff is of a high standard. There is a planned audit of resources in the summer term. The co-ordinator does not have a delegated budget to purchase resources. She has had recent support from a mathematics consultant working on the programmes of study linked with the numeracy strategy. Staff have also had training on this aspect of the mathematics curriculum which is considered to be a positive step towards raising achievement across the school as a whole.

146. **Science**

139. The pupils' make good progress in science, overall. Standards have largely been maintained since the last inspection. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in all the science attainment targets. At Key Stages 3 and 4 their progress is satisfactory overall. The pupils make good progress in lessons concerned with 'forces and motion' but there is more limited progress in the other areas, due to limited opportunities within the curriculum. Lessons are often directed to the whole class and experiments are conducted by the teacher. Pupils have limited opportunities for setting out the equipment, or moving on to a 'hands on' experience to promote more independent learning.

140. At Key Stage 1, pupils are developing an understanding of forces and motion through the use of their own bodies in practical experience of 'pushing', 'pulling', 'slipping and sliding'. They understand that there are many sources of sound and that sounds have different dynamics, such as loud or quiet. They have a growing awareness of the changes which take place in certain materials such as when ice cubes change into water, chocolate melts, sugar dissolves, and toast burns. They experience living things and learn about the life processes of creatures and plants in the classroom environment. Lower attaining children participate in sensory play with a variety of materials. They develop their ideas of the properties of different materials and make simple comparisons through handling materials and objects that contrast, such as cooked and dry pasta.

141. By the end of Key Stage 2, some higher attaining pupils know how to complete a simple electrical circuit to make a light work by connecting wires to a battery. They develop an understanding of magnetism when handling magnets and distinguish magnetic from non-magnetic objects. Most demonstrate an understanding of the forces of pushing and pulling and some are beginning to develop an idea of friction when pulling objects along sandpaper in contrast to a smooth mat or bed of marbles. They can relate sounds to objects and have practical experience of sounds produced by vibrations through the strings of a guitar. They have a growing knowledge of the parts of their bodies, can distinguish living and non-living things and, through growing plants from pips and seeds, understand that plants need water and light in order to grow. They increase their knowledge of the properties of materials such as solutions through their investigations. They observe that solids such as salt and sugar can be dissolved in water to produce solutions but materials such as sand and chalk, cannot.

142. Over time, some pupils have developed good experimental and investigative skills and are able to set up a classroom experiments which they have remembered from the week previously. They are beginning to compare the outcomes of science activities through class review and are beginning to record their findings by constructing simple graphs.

143. Through a sensory curriculum, lower attaining pupils make progress in understanding that materials have different properties, comparing different outcomes when sticks or play-dough are stretched, squashed, bent and twisted. They begin to develop a knowledge about plant growth by planting seeds, examining soil and observing changes which take place over the time the seeds germinate.

144. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They develop a simple understanding about the properties of air. They know that a balloon can be filled with air by blowing and propelled by the escaping air when released. Several understand that a balloon can not be blown up inside a glass bottle because of the presence of air inside.

145. Ideas are regularly re-inforced through topics regularly re-visited by teachers and this has a positive effect on their progress. Through this, the pupils are beginning to more accurately predict outcomes. For example, they know that candle will go out when an inverted bottle is placed over it, or the direction a balloon will move along a wire when the air was released from it in a controlled fashion. They are starting to consider why things happen and hypothesise answers. For instance, some could say that the candle used up the air in the bottle. Some remember that oxygen is the important part of air which the candle required.

146. For pupils with more complex difficulties, teaching via a sensory curriculum enables them to make good progress in developing concepts such as *air* and *wind*, *light* and *sound* and they respond with pleasure and anticipation when they work in the sensory room. The limited information available in teachers' planning files and pupils' records indicates that their progress in the other attainment targets is satisfactory.

147. The pupils' response in science lessons is good overall. Throughout the school, pupils

respond with fascination when carrying out experiments and investigations, particularly when they are actively involved and are given 'hands on' opportunities, such as in the junior department. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have regular opportunities to participate, for example, by sliding objects along a 'jelly mat' or sandpaper, or by pulling another pupil along the floor on a blanket. When offered such opportunities they are keen to participate. They recall words such as push, pull and heavy from the lesson the week before and are eager to show others what they did during the plenary session. A few pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are beginning to question, and have the confidence to predict outcomes when they are asked questions such as 'why did it happen'? They show particular interest in practical experiments; and in an experiment on air, pupils of all abilities watched in fascination and anticipation as a balloon was released.

148. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall, with interesting practical work being presented in ways which are appealing to the pupils. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is good. The most effective lessons are presented with a dramatic approach which is motivating for the pupils, captures their attention and encourages them to participate. Resources are chosen to appeal to the pupils and all are able to enjoy a 'hands on' experience. For instance, one group was presented with a bucket with strings hanging from it and asked to pull out an object inside. These were carefully chosen to have contrasting attributes such as a feather and a brick, and the use of charts and graphs motivates them and helps them understand the results. Plenary sessions, at the end of lessons, are very good. The teacher recaps on what the pupils have done and, by selecting groups of pupils to demonstrate what they have learned, reinforces ideas well.

149. At Key Stages 3 and 4 teaching is satisfactory overall. When presenting ideas, teachers show a good balance between describing and questioning and encourage pupils to think and to work things out for themselves. There is a good emphasis on 'why' something has happened and clear explanations are offered. Resources are well chosen to capture the pupils' interest and the lessons have a good pace. Organisation is less effective when whole class teaching, at a single table, reduces opportunities for the pupils to take initiative or responsibility, to allow them to try the experiments for themselves, or to collaborate. Although planning for individual lessons is good, the lessons do not always form part of a longer-term plan and there is limited recording of pupils' progress. Pupils have interesting but, sometimes, random experiences.

150. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is very good. The co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and uses this in very clear planning to support other teachers in the junior department. Planning documents are well balanced to ensure coverage of all the attainment targets over a three year period. The individual modules of work are also of very good quality. They are very clear and describe equipment and methods in detail so that they can be followed by teachers, including temporary teachers, or the support assistants. Assessment is good and based on concise, informative comments about what pupils actually did. This information is used to inform future planning and is the basis for tracking the pupils' progress. However, this approach does not yet extend to the senior department, and makes it difficult for teachers to track pupils' progress.

151. At Key Stages 3 and 4, there are no schemes of work and science is project-based and planned mainly alongside the technology curriculum. For some pupils, it is targeted to meet the needs of the accreditation used. The disadvantage of this approach is that there is no logical, planned development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in all four science attainment targets. The staff are aware of this and intend to introduce extended schemes of work and to extend the excellent junior department planning throughout the school. They realise that this is essential to ensure continuity and entitlement.

152. There is no specialist science room and lessons take place in the classrooms. This can be

a particular disadvantage when potentially hazardous equipment such as kettles are required for an experiment. Resources are limited, but admirably boosted by the very effective equipment made by the staff. The school makes sound use of the outdoor areas to promote environmental awareness. There is an attractive sensory garden with scented plants and a water feature, and a horticulture area which is not in current use. There have been some valuable educational visits to support classroom work, including a very successful visit to the science museum in London. The school is planning a science week in the spring.

160. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

160. Art

153. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art, overall. Pupils make good progress in art at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are taught together in 'senior groups'. Art is merged with design and technology on the timetable and is topic based. Progress is unsatisfactory at these two key stages because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge within a comprehensive, planned art curriculum. Similar standards have been maintained since the last inspection but the weakness in the curriculum also remains from the last inspection.

154. At Key Stage 1 the pupils create paintings and print with their fingers, beginning with shades of a single colour. They paint freely using thick brushes and experience 'junk' painting. At Key Stage 2 they use implements, including brushes, to apply paint in a more controlled way and develop ideas about colour and colour mixing. They work with starch resist and marble rolling techniques, and use sponges, washing up brushes and other implements to create prints, which are attractively mounted and displayed. The pupils develop skills in a wide range of techniques and through a large scale project using wool, strips of textured fabrics, plastic bags and other waste materials, develop weaving techniques resulting in the making of a gigantic group collage of a jungle scene. Some weave on a smaller scale using home-made circular looms, and are able to thread coloured ribbons and wool to create simple patterns and select textures and colours. As a pre-handwriting exercise, some pupils create 'line' and 'squiggle' paintings using rollers and paint on a huge sheets of paper, hung vertically on a wall. All pupils in the department are introduced to the work of various artists including *Seurat* and *Van Gogh*. They appreciate aspects of style and form and begin to paint in the style of these artists. The pupils appreciate details in paintings and by careful examination, some eagerly identify features such as 'the girl in the white dress' and dogs, ducks, trees and babies, in a *Seurat* print. They also enjoy looking through a magnifying glass to examine the 'dots'. They develop the use of this technique to print dots themselves, using a cotton buds dipped in paint. Some pupils recall the names *George* and *Seurat*, remember that he lived in Paris and that he painted in 'dots'. Some pupils begin to produce good observational drawings of fruit and flowers using chalk on black paper and pencil drawings which are recognisable as figures.

155. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the pupils are taught in combined groups and art is planned jointly with design and technology. The subject does not have a distinctive curriculum and there are insufficient opportunities overtime for pupils to make satisfactory progress. Pupils also lack opportunities to make systematic progress in art because there is no planning to enable skills, knowledge and understanding to develop in a systematic way which builds on their previous learning.

156. In design and technology there are some opportunities for painting and, occasionally, drawing. Some pupils make progress in designing and making autumn collages using hessian stretched onto a frame and decorated with stitching, beads and scraps of fabric, but they require a good deal of help with simple stitching. Many pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are unable to cut accurately and in a cutting and sticking activity cut through the pictures instead

of round them. Few are able to attempt to draw a simple face without physical help. Some older pupils with additional sensory problems respond well to printing, using cut fruit and vegetables, or drizzling thickly textured paint onto paper.

157. Most pupils enjoy their art lessons, co-operate willingly and concentrate well. When they are given opportunities to look at artists' work, they show interest and sensitivity. Key Stage 2 pupils concentrate well when applying paint within the confines of a stencil using a cotton bud. Others excitedly roll paint onto a large sheet of paper hung on the wall, and laugh with pleasure during the experience. Older pupils concentrate well when they are helped to create their autumn collages and show pride in the results of their work. During the cutting-out work, they persevere, even though much of their cutting is very inaccurate, and they sometimes rip the paper. However, they readily accept an adult finishing their work and sticking pictures on the worksheet for them, instead of helping them to improve their skills.

158. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Art is taught by the co-ordinator who plans lessons well to ensure that all the pupils in the department have opportunities to take part in both creating and appreciating art. There is good use of attractive books, prints and pictures which motivate pupils and improve their observational skills. By providing them with a good range of resources, such as a magnifying glass, they are able to study and appreciate fine details. Materials are prepared well with good use of books and materials teachers have brought to school; there is also a good use of interesting scrap materials. In the junior department, each lesson is re-visited the following week before moving on to the next module. This gives pupils opportunities to practice skills and reinforce learning, and is effective. The teaching offers a wide range of imaginative opportunities for the pupils and lessons are well supplemented by visits and theme days. The teaching of art is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4; work is planned and combined with design and technology activities.

159. The co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for art which is used to ensure that all the pupils in the junior department have wide ranging creative opportunities. Long-term planning is at an early stage of development and currently restricted to a term-at-a-time. Detailed modules of work are prepared for the whole junior department and all pupils take part in them. There are no whole school programmes of study to ensure that skills learned in the junior department are systematically developed at Key Stages 3 and 4. This limits the progress pupils can make as they move through the school.

160. The co-ordinator has not yet had time to monitor the subject. Art portfolios are kept for each pupil in the junior department and there are photographs in some of their records of achievement to show work done. An assessment, recording and accreditation policy has been prepared, but has not yet been adopted in the school.

161. Displays of children's work in the public areas and corridors are of good quality, and enhance the school environment. Resources for art are adequate. There is, however, a shortage of books and good quality prints to support work in the subject and promote an understanding of art.

162. The curriculum is enriched by excellent initiatives such as an arts day entitled *Caribbean colours* which is the focus for a good deal of exciting work using vivid colour and a wide variety of techniques. The junior department enjoy a successful visit to the National Gallery, in London. The 'Grasslands' project offered older pupils a day at an environmental centre, where they enjoyed working with two artists.

170. **Design and technology**

163. Overall, the progress which pupils make in design and technology is unsatisfactory. The

progress that pupils make over time in design technology at Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Although they made satisfactory progress in lessons during the inspection, and there is good attention to food technology, the curriculum insufficiently developed and there is limited attention given to resistant materials work. The strength in food technology has been maintained since the last inspection but the imbalance between work in resistant materials and food means that pupils do not make enough progress in design and technology overall.

164. At Key Stage 1 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the world to build simple bridges and make boats using different kinds of bricks and building blocks. They use different tools to make patterns and tracks in, and on, different materials. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils mix different foodstuffs together and roll out the resulting dough before using cutters to shape their biscuits. They follow photographic and symbol sequences to make different kinds of sandwich. They make simple comparisons between Roman oil lamps and a modern torch. *Theme weeks* in other subjects extend the pupils' awareness of the different uses of technology. This also helps to establish an understanding of historical change and geographical context. The summer play scheme allows pupils to design and make a wide variety of objects such as hobbyhorses, finger puppets and hot air balloons using different materials. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 develop three-dimensional interpretations of photographs of vegetables and make appliqué hangings. They learn to weave a variety of compliant and resistant materials in preparation for a visit to see how medieval houses were constructed and this work is linked into topic work covering science and the humanities.

165. Throughout the school pupils respond well in design and technology lessons when they are actively involved and allowed to take some initiative about organising their time and their work. When they are not involved in this way their behaviour is more unpredictable and they are less well motivated. They enjoy food technology, in particular, and take care over their work. For example, the pupils know that the care and effort they put into preparing food through following instructions will result in enjoyable baked apples at the end of the day. Older pupils take on the responsibility for tidying up without being asked to do so and are particularly supportive of one another's work. Some of the older pupils who find speaking difficult are able to access, but not print out, symbols on a computer to personalise their coats of arms when designing and making heraldic shields. Pupils gain a sense of awe and wonder when they see their cooked cheese and poppy seed biscuits emerge from the oven. They are also proud of their efforts building a wattle hurdle, which not only looks like a fencing panel but also forms the basis for the construction of a wall of a medieval house.

166. The quality of teaching is good overall. However, there is considerable variation in the quality within each key stage and related to variations in teachers' knowledge at different key stages. In addition, teachers expect more of pupils in food technology and the good quality of teaching is well supported by good curriculum planning. The teaching of resistant materials element of design and technology is weaker by comparison limited by weak curriculum planning and a lack of resources. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stages 1 and 2. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and staff encourage pupils to contribute their ideas in lessons. At Key Stage 1 teaching and non-teaching staff record pupils' achievements carefully and use their annotations both as the basis for reporting to parents and to inform future planning. Staff make their expectations clear and emphasise the key learning points. At Key Stage 2 staff expect pupils to do more things for themselves but stress being safe and taking care. In repeated food technology lessons teachers alter their approach to suit different groups. There is a clear, planned sequence between food technology lessons but in resistant materials lessons the sequence is unclear and lessons are repeated with little regard to individual needs. At Key Stages 3 and 4 good teaching ensures that all pupils are actively involved throughout the lesson. In food technology staff stress the importance of careful measurement so that the balance of different ingredients is not altered and the amount made is sufficient for its purpose. Unsatisfactory teaching, by contrast, is characterised by the

teacher's apparent lack of interest in the outcomes of the lesson. Another feature of unsatisfactory teaching is poor time management and weak planning so that those pupils, who finish a task earlier than anticipated, waste time on fill-in activities. Support assistants are generally used well in lessons throughout the school. They make sure that pupils are motivated and kept on task and they complete some of the assessments and record forms that are in use. In some lessons there is an inappropriate emphasis on whole group teaching and pupils waiting their turn. This results in support staff and pupils alike having very little to do for long periods of time and pupils become restless while they wait.

167. Although subject co-ordinators have been appointed within the school their role has yet to be developed and there is no overview for the future direction of the subject. Schemes of work have yet to be developed in full. Although planning relates to the National Curriculum orders for the subject, there is very little evaluation against specific targets except in food technology at Key Stage 2. There is some uncertainty about how best to deliver design technology at Key Stage 2 to some pupils. This results, for those pupils, in an emphasis on the development of their 'finger skills' in isolation rather than incorporating them in the practical tasks of designing and making. Teachers find it very hard to track pupils' progress and this is made worse by the absence of any systematic form of record keeping, although the accreditation system at Key Stage 4 aids this process. Good links with other subjects are sometimes made, such as with humanities and science, but they are limited by the underdevelopment of the subject.

168. The absence of a specialist design technology room for resistant materials also limits what can be taught to pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. The food technology room is a valuable, well-resourced and well-used facility for the whole school. Although it motivates the pupils who use it, accommodation and resources for the subject are unsatisfactory overall.

176. **Humanities**

169. Except at Key Stage 1 geography and history are taught in 'blocks' of time. Each subject is allocated an amount of time during a specific school term and appears on the timetable under the heading of one of the humanities. Work in this subject features as part of topic work and community activities for all pupils in the school. It is also the basis of separate *theme weeks* or *days* at different points in the year. Due to timetabling arrangements only one lesson at Key Stage 1 could be observed. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in humanities and judgements about pupils' progress are based on discussions with teachers and pupils and an examination of teachers' records and pupils' work.

170. The pupils' progress is unsatisfactory overall. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is systematically developed through a variety of activities, such as treasure hunts and dressing up as pirates. Over time, the sequence of activities undertaken contributes to their emerging sense of history. Elsewhere in the school there is limited evidence of pupils' progress as there is no systematic record keeping and few samples of pupils' work. Even when objectives are set for one of the *theme weeks*, insufficient attention is paid to them when pupils are being assessed. This results in valuable curriculum information being lost although personal and social details, such as the degree to which pupils enjoyed a visit, are recorded. The increasing reliance on *theme weeks* to maintain coverage of the history and geography in the curriculum also means that there is little continuity of learning. There are long intervals between the weeks and, when they are produced, the same objectives tend to be repeated. As a result standards are now less than at the time of the previous inspection.

171. The response by pupils in the one lesson seen is very good. They are all very interested and participate well in the range of activities provided.

172. Some informal evidence shows that elements of geography and history are taught

through other subjects. Although the pupils in Key Stage 2 visit a farm, experience different modes of transport and use the local environment to look for a shop that sells shoes, little of this work is recorded systematically in a way that relates to the geography requirements of the National Curriculum. Within the curriculum for post-16 students the integration of geography and history into the overall curriculum is much more clearly organised and pupils' progress is recorded in their independent travel diaries, for example.

173. The co-ordinator for humanities has been recently appointed and plans for the development of the subject are still being formulated against the timescale in the school's curriculum review documentation. The development of new schemes of work is in hand but the awareness of staff about just how much geography and history they are currently covering through other subjects is unsatisfactory. When curriculum objectives are written into individual education plans they are not written as manageable and achievable targets but in global terms that paraphrase the National Curriculum orders. When these are then discussed at the annual review, what pupils know, understand and can do in the subject is not stated. Instead there are bland statements about a pupil having enjoyed a visit to Berkhamstead Castle or Aldbury village, for example.

174. Photographic records of pupils' work during outside visits and during theme weeks show pupils exploring clothes and artefacts from different periods and using a touch screen on a computer to find out more about Roman coins. There are similar records of visits to a local windmill, to a refuge for hedgehogs, a garden centre and an open-air museum. There are also very brief written records that detail links to other curriculum areas such as literacy and drama, science, mathematics and design technology but none of this information has been collected together and the quality of the information that exists is unsatisfactory. Displays around the school are useful reminders for pupils about their work and are also good prompts for conversation, which include some reflections about the visit of a Roman soldier who allowed pupils to touch his armour and wear his helmet. However, some displays miss opportunities to enhance geographical and historical awareness and a display of holiday postcards was presented without any reference to a map.

175. Beyond Key Stage 1 resources to support the humanities are unsatisfactory throughout the school and the time for the subject, limited.

183. Information technology

176. The pupils' progress is unsatisfactory overall. Only a small number of lessons were seen during the inspection and some which were identified as having information technology content as part of another subject sometimes had little teaching of the information technology skills themselves. Judgements are based on discussions with staff, their records, pupils' work, and observations of pupils using computers.

177. The pupils have too few opportunities to use computers, either in separate lessons or as part of other subjects. For higher attaining pupils the limited opportunities provided do not extend their knowledge, skills and understanding far enough for them to make progress. Much work goes into helping lower attaining pupils across the school gain an understanding of cause and effect and progress with these pupils, in this area, is satisfactory overall. The use of the schools' sensory room is good and some examples of individual pupils making satisfactory progress were seen. Some pupils develop an idea that a fan can be switched on, and there is evidence that a small number are beginning to understand that when it switches itself off, it can be turned on again.

178. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 select objects from the screen using a touchscreen. They know that different icons may produce different sounds and pictures. Some consistently choose an appropriate icon on request. Others use a switch that talks, to greet people and

respond to a request but generally the use of simple communication aids in this way is limited. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' confidence with the hardware has increased. Teachers frequently use a symbol-producing program to aid pupils' understanding and literacy and some pupils are gaining a good knowledge of symbols. However, most pupils are unable to use the program themselves as the school does not have the software to do this. Teachers resort to typing text to produce the symbols which pupils want, and are, in effect, doing the writing for them. A few higher attaining pupils are reasonably confident with the computer keyboard and can type words letter by letter. However, few use any word-processing facilities and are unaware that a *spell-checker* can help spell words they are unsure of.

179. The pupils' response is satisfactory. In those lessons where pupils used computers they were generally keen to work and pleased with their results, especially when something happened on the screen or when their work was printed. However, some pupils become passive when watching staff do the work for them or when they have to wait their turn. Occasionally, they become frustrated when they use a device, such as a mouse, which is too difficult for them to control.

180. Overall, it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching as little was seen during the inspection. In the small number of lessons where the teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection it was satisfactory. Although their skills are developing, many staff lack the knowledge and confidence to use information technology in their subjects. The school has recognised this and an audit of staff's skills is planned so that training can be directed to those areas where they are weak. The school's software is very limited and some staff know and use what they have well. However, this is often too limiting for the many pupils who are able to extend their skills well beyond the programs used. Sometimes the response and progress of the pupils is affected by their own positioning or the positioning of the equipment. For instance, some staff are unaware when some pupils can not see the screen or easily reach a switch. Some pupils do not have appropriate equipment and struggle to use a mouse when a roller ball is available. The knowledge of the support staff is often good although not all are computer literate. The school uses the skills of one of its support assistants well and she contributes much to the smooth running of the equipment and to the training of staff.

181. There is a satisfactory policy for the subject and the school has given thought as to how it can cater for the wide range of pupils' abilities. However, there is no scheme of work on which teachers can base their planning and the school has no way of assessing and recording pupils' skills. The school intends to produce planning based on published material for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and extend this to meet the needs of all pupils. The steps are small and the system proposed should be useful to help record pupils' progress.

182. Since the last inspection the amount and range of computers has increased and all pupils in Key Stages 2 to 4 have lessons in information technology, sometimes as part of another subject. At Key Stage 1 these are part of the activity programme the pupils undertake based on the areas of learning. Individuals have regular access to the new computer based in the nursery and are specifically taught skills by the teacher and support assistant. However, the subject has developed little since the last inspection. The reasonably knowledgeable co-ordinators have a clear view of how they want it to develop, but the pace of development is far too slow.

190. **Modern foreign language**

183. Since the last inspection the school has addressed the issue of teaching a modern foreign language to pupils at Key Stage 3 by providing an *immersion week* in the summer term when pupils study the subject for a whole week. This is instead of lessons taking place throughout the school year and is for all pupils from Year 3 to Year 14. At the time of the last

inspection the school made several trips to France each year. This opportunity has now ceased due to European legislation requiring the hire of a minibus driver and funds in the school being extremely limited.

184. In order to obtain evidence about the pupils' progress their records, a photographic file, and a videotape recording of the week's events were examined. A small sample of pupils were also interviewed.

185. The pupils' progress in French at Key Stages 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. The school's provision during its *immersion week* is a strength and there are good opportunities for music and drama to contribute to pupils' understanding of the language and culture of France. However, the fact that the school does not continue to provide pupils with opportunities to learn French throughout the year is a significant factor in their lack of progress.

186. Through a range of activities during the week, pupils learn in a meaningful way about key features of France such as the French flag, the significance of Paris and products made in France such as Champagne and perfume. A few know that Paris is famous for fashion and that some French people like to eat snails. Some remember numbers in French, and recite these from one to ten. Many recognise the French flag hanging in a classroom and a small number know that it is made up of three colours and state these correctly as *rouge, blanc, bleu*. Some pupils, in the post-16 department, have had additional sessions following the week but the majority of pupils will not study any French again until the next *immersion week* is planned.

187. The pupils make a really positive response to the teaching they get during the *week*. The work captures the imagination of many pupils; they use vocabulary with confidence and are not afraid to try new words. The pupils are really enthusiastic, say that they really enjoy the week and feel that they have learned a great deal about France and French culture. The programme of events seen on the video and in the album is comprehensive, but pupils have little opportunity to practise and consolidate the skills they have learned. As a result many have forgotten the French vocabulary, although with the support of pictures and prompts, a few remember well. All are enthusiastic when the week, and their work, is discussed with them.

188. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of the teaching. However, from video observation of the teaching of the school's co-ordinator and specialist temporary teacher the school engages for the week, there is a good knowledge of the language. Teachers know how to put it over to pupils in a meaningful way. The teaching is lively and imaginative and helps promote the pupils' interest and motivation.

189. Apart from the largely consumable resources bought for the *immersion week*, and those which parents send into school, there is little equipment to help pupils learn the language. There are no CD-ROMs, no published scheme to support planning and few artefacts. There are a few games, some story and song tapes and some software for producing computer generated symbols to promote literacy in the subject.

190. There is no planned programme for the language and the written planning for the *week* is limited to activity and event sheets. The school has some ideas for planning and the use of accreditation, but this is at an early stage of development. There was planning for the *week* in the junior department only, which lists reasonably clearly what the pupils were to learn.

198.

198. **Music**

191. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in music. This is a change since the last inspection when standards in music were good. The pupils' progress is satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and they make good progress at Key Stage 4. The pupils make progress in performing skills as they move through the school and gain in confidence when working in groups. They improve in their listening skills and older pupils can appraise compositions critically.

192. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are given opportunities to control the sounds of their voice and taught to sing from memory using a variety of songs, instruments and taped music. Their attention is drawn to the dynamics of pitch and tempo in music. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to participate through movement and difference in sounds to promote eye contact. These activities have a positive impact on their learning. At Key Stage 2 pupils learn from participating in a variety of activities matched to their needs. Pupils with limited fine motor skills have hand-on-hand help to play untuned percussion instruments. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils appraise each other's musical compositions and use musical terms to describe them. Key Stage 4 pupils with additional needs make good progress in this subject. They are

given access to stimulating activities which allows them to participate and perform. The production of 'Oliver with a Twist' showed that several pupils had made significant progress over the time they are in the school and culminated in good quality solo singing performances on stage.

193. The pupils respond positively to music. They enjoy lessons and participate in a lively manner. They are keen to contribute and value each others' suggestions. Younger pupils laugh and enjoy songs which have movements attached to them, such as 'popping peas'. One Key Stage 2 pupil commented on the 'lovely music'. The weak teaching in some lessons occasionally contributes to less favourable responses from pupils because activities such as the distribution of instruments take too long and pupils become distracted and bored. However, the enthusiasm in delivery by staff across the key stages ensures that pupils are stimulated, interested and able to sustain concentration in their music lessons.

194. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory although it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Work is appropriately matched to the pupils' needs and there is a positive reinforcement of their skills. Lessons proceed at a good pace and this helps maintain pupils' interest. The management of pupils at Key Stage 1 is skilful and focuses on as much pupil participation as possible despite the fact that some pupils have severe physical limitations. When teaching is good, such as at Key Stage 2, lesson plans are clear and structured. There is good pupil management and teachers' expectations are high. When teaching is unsatisfactory, pupil management is poor, planning is weak and activities are not matched to the pupils' abilities. At Key Stage 3, the teacher has a secure knowledge of her subject and high expectations of the pupils. There is a complete range of the attainment targets in lessons. There is an informal, but effective, method of assessing pupils' progress on tick sheets. At Key Stage 4 teaching is satisfactory. Although planning is informal, pupils learn relevant musical knowledge including the names of a selection of percussion instruments, such as cow bell.

195. The pupils with additional needs are ably taught music by support assistants based on teachers' planning. Expectations are high, and pupils are well-managed. This has a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The use of resources and musical tapes are appropriate and stimulating.

196. At present, there are weaknesses in the curriculum. Current schemes of work are too sketchy although teachers do their best to build on the pupils' previous experiences. However, there is a draft scheme of work for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils which is detailed, has reasonably clear objectives and is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. At present, there is no uniform approach towards planning, assessment or recording by staff teaching music. The recording of pupils' progress is inadequate and not used to inform future planning. Pupils make progress through the teacher's individual skill and intuitive knowledge of what to teach next rather than a planned format.

197. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the shortcomings in the curriculum and has had meetings with a music consultant to improve long-term planning. The subject development plan indicates that there are plans to trial schemes of work for seniors and continue work on whole school programmes of study. Co-ordination between the staff who teach music is weak and this contributes to a lack of awareness when issues of continuity and progression arise.

198. There are plans to equip a specialist music room which has already been cleared for this purpose. Resources are mostly sufficient although the range of instruments is restricted mostly to tuned and untuned percussion instruments and there is a limited selection of instruments from other countries, including a rain stick and a buffalo drum. There is no planned long-term purchase of equipment. There is little use of information technology although pupils use a resonance board and soundbeam effectively to assist their learning. There is little in the way of software to enhance pupils' skills and knowledge in music. There were no displays of instruments which would have supported pupils' knowledge.

199. There is a highly successful music club which is run at the local grammar school. Pupils are integrated and share positive interactions with their peers. This is a significant strength of music teaching for these pupils and promotes integration for future inclusion into society. It also makes a significant impact on their progress. There has also been a visit by a dance group which culminated in the pupils' performance at the Civic Centre, Aylesbury.

207. **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)**

200. Pupils' progress in PHSE is generally good throughout the school and the quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Since the last report, the school has produced thoughtful and detailed guidelines for PHSE which are providing a sound policy framework for the whole school. In particular, the *Community and Independence policy* involves pupils in a wide range of planned experiences within the wider community. This is having a very positive effect on their social development, independence and self-confidence.

201. At Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils greet their friends and teacher and most identify their own name card to say they are in school. Some take the register, put files and work away, look at their timetables and then complete their individual tasks. Several change their clothes independently for physical education. Most pupils make a good attempt at eating independently and behave well at the meal table. They are also beginning to learn about healthy foods and take part in simple cooking activities based on 'hedgerow foods'.

202. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make very good progress in learning what to do if approached by strangers. They take part in role-play and say, or sign, 'Go away!' to the 'stranger'. They understand to sign, or say, 'Hello, come and sit down' when appropriate. Many pupils understand and follow the class rules. They appreciate that some things are 'private' and some can state their address and telephone number. They take a pride in their 'record of achievement' files and enjoy showing them to visitors, pointing out their families and friends. They are beginning to choose appropriate clothing for various activities. Some competently use the telephone, are able to plan their shopping for a meal or to buy plants for the garden. When shopping in the supermarket, many pupils understand the necessary conventions, selecting appropriate items and making sensible choices related to healthy eating. During food technology activities pupils display a high degree of co-operation with others, and they also show confidence and independence when cooking food or using sharp implements.

203. Some lessons for pupils with additional communication difficulties focus on relationships and friendship. Often through games, the pupils learn to relate well to others and to co-operate when appropriate. By joining in simple organised sports, such as throwing balls into nets, and parachute games, pupils interact very positively with staff and with each other and show great pleasure in so doing. In the soft playroom at Manor House Hospital, they are encouraged to use swinging and see saw type equipment which is designed for two people to work co-operatively, and this is very successful. Pupils are generally enthusiastic in their PSHE lessons and older pupils are gaining confidence in role-play situations. They respond very well to the pictures of themselves, friends and strangers used in the sessions. Many pupils make an active contribution to discussions about health, friendship and privacy.

204. The quality of teaching is good overall; occasionally it is excellent. Teaching by support staff makes an effective contribution to the pupils' learning. At Key Stage 2, in the pastoral sessions, classrooms are well organised with registers and name cards ready and work trays in place. This encourages security, co-operation and independent learning. The use of the specialist movement techniques such as *Veronica Sherbourne* activities, encourage a sense of belonging and promote trusting relationships and friendship.

205. At Key Stages 3 and 4, food technology lessons are well taught and supported, with

pupils encouraged to be as independent as possible and resources in this area are used well. In a minority of lessons, teaching is ineffective when the task chosen is inappropriate. For example, in a lesson about 'appreciating myself', Key Stage 3 pupils who were unable to draw were asked to study their reflection in a mirror and draw their own face on a worksheet. However, in the same lesson, group discussion about rules and privacy was well led by the teacher and pupils responded positively with their verbal contributions.

206. Resources for food technology are good and include a comprehensive and challenging range of kitchen tools and utensils. These are well used to promote independence and co-operation. Resources used for role-play are also good and include effective photographs of friends in school and of 'strangers'. The use of the soft playroom in the hospital and the school's sensory room is very well thought out to maximise opportunities for relationships and co-operation to develop.

207. The school's policy document provides a good framework for more detailed medium-term planning throughout the school. There are comprehensive schemes of work for the junior department and the senior department has a useful commercial scheme from which teachers plan their individual lessons. The subject policy includes sex education and health education and this work is undertaken as part of the subject. It does not contain an assessment and recording policy. Social and behaviour policies in the senior department focus unduly on negative aspects of behaviour, rather than on what pupils know, understand and can do. A draft policy on drugs education has just been prepared by the new school nurse but has yet to be implemented.

208. The school's good use of the wider community has a positive effect on pupils' personal and social development. These activities include visits to supermarkets, garden centres, museums, galleries and sports venues. There are also expressive arts initiatives where pupils perform alongside mainstream peers, an after-school dance club and a summer activities week. Photographs of pupils engaged in rock climbing, abseiling and other outdoor activities show evidence of personal independence and self-confidence as well as a developing ability to co-operate with others in a practical and enjoyable way.

216. **Physical education**

209. Physical education is given a high priority on the timetable and, overall, the pupils' progress throughout the school is good. At the time of the previous inspection progress was also good with some outstanding features and the school has largely maintained its standards since then.

210. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils take part in a wide range of physical education activities. At Key Stage 1 many pupils develop a good awareness of the space around them and how to move safely in it. This is particularly so in the hall where they are beginning to use the apparatus well. They respond well to signals and are able to run around the hall when a tambourine is playing and sit down when it stops. Pupils are beginning to develop their hand and eye co-ordination and roll hoops, throw balls and slide down a bench. In music and movement, at Key Stage 2, the pupils are able to interpret a piece of music and imitate animal actions, such as an elephant moving slowly. By following instructions pupils are able to work on a set dance routine, which involves a range of movements. They are able to form a circle, hold hands and move in different directions. Pupils' hand and eye co-ordination is developing well and some can throw and catch objects confidently.

211. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the pupils continue to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Many understand the purposes of exercise and can apply this knowledge to warm-up activities at the beginning of sessions. They have learned that they need to prepare their bodies for vigorous exercise and that they need to slow their bodies down at the end of the session.

Pupils are able to balance, transfer weight and travel on apparatus at various heights using different body parts. They travel confidently over, under and through the large apparatus. Through this good work they develop a good range of gymnastic sequences and skills. They are able to balance on certain parts of their body and then transfer this weight to another part. Pupils find their own way of rocking, sliding and balancing. In athletics pupils have taken part in an inter-school special event at *Stoke Stadium* and activities have included sprint as well as relay races.

212. Pupils make good progress in swimming. At all key stages pupils learn to swim and many are showing increasing confidence in the water. Pupils with more profound physical needs have very regular periods of hydrotherapy and make good progress over time, particularly in floating, relaxing and developing confidence in the water. A small number of these pupils miss other physical education sessions at the expense of hydrotherapy. While this contributes much to their development, there are some weaknesses in the breadth of the physical education curriculum being offered to them and this limits the progress they can make in these areas. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils enter the water with confidence and are developing basic swimming strokes. Some pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are able to extend these skills further at the *Civic Centre* pool, where emphasis is placed on developing stamina and style. Many of the pupils are able to swim independently and are working towards a range of distance awards.

213. The response of pupils is good overall. It ranges from poor to very good. Where the response is poor younger pupils are not sufficiently challenged and become bored with the activity. Pupils are restless and remove themselves from the group or do not concentrate on the task. However, the vast majority of pupils have a positive attitude and show respect for each other by taking turns. Some of the older pupils have a good awareness of safety issues, both in school and off-site lessons.

214. The quality of teaching is good overall, but the teaching in one lesson seen during the inspection was poor. This is a variation from the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be very good and often excellent. Where the teaching is good, staff have good subject knowledge, high expectations and the confidence to make demands on all abilities. Where teaching is poor there is a lack of organisation, with low expectations of the pupils. During this lesson the activities chosen did not challenge the pupils fully; they were rolling and throwing balls to each other, which they could do easily. The teacher did not attempt to extend their ball skills further. All staff wear suitable kit and serve as good role models during the lessons. Support assistants are well deployed and motivate reluctant pupils to become involved in the sessions. There is an effective use of joint planning and teaching with the physiotherapists and this is good practice. Physiotherapists demonstrate a good understanding of the pupils' needs and manage them with empathy. They use their skills confidently and make a good contribution to the teaching of activities related to the physical education programme.

215. The curriculum co-ordinator has a specialist qualification and is keen to develop the subject further. She has recently reviewed the policy statement and produced an appropriate curriculum development plan, which highlights the need to implement a whole school programme of study. The current arrangements for curriculum planning are unsatisfactory because departments plan their own schemes in isolation and this does not ensure continuity and progression across the key stages. Overall, methods for assessing pupils' progress in physical education are satisfactory, but there is a lack of a consistent approach throughout the school. Where assessment is good, pupils' progress in a session is noted and this informs future planning. It is less satisfactory when the evaluation of the lesson is concerned with organisational difficulties, rather than on pupils' achievements. Certificates are awarded for swimming and athletics and these are included in the pupils' record of achievement files.

216. The curriculum is enhanced by participation in *Rebound Therapy* trampoline sessions and involvement with the *Riding for the Disabled*. Older pupils take part in a weekly integrated dance group, which is taken by a specialist teacher after school. There is a satisfactory range of resources which are stored in a central area, and are easily accessible. There is a large sports hall with a range of large apparatus and wall bars. The changing rooms at the back of the hall are unsatisfactory because the decoration and ventilation is poor. The school makes good use of the local community resources such as the Leisure Centre and the Soft Play Activity Room. The hydrotherapy pool is a good feature, particularly for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. However, there are problems with condensation which contributes towards the unsatisfactory condition of parts of the facility. The school sports day organised by the curriculum co-ordinator and is a good opportunity for pupils to show and enjoy their skills.

224.

224. **Post-16**

217. The provision for students at post-16 is a very good feature of the school.

218. Lessons take place mostly at the new base at Harding House or at Park School. Harding House is a recently acquired building, which is situated near the centre of Aylesbury. Students who attend this base have a wide range of educational needs, but are generally physically independent. The students in the Park School group have profound and multiple learning difficulties and the school has decided to place them in an environment which can meet their medical, physical and sensory needs. However, it is recognised that these students have entitlement to broad post-16 education and, although there are some good opportunities to enable them to work with their peer group either at Harding or at Park School, the school acknowledges that this needs to be developed further.

219. The students make good progress overall and respond well to the high expectations of teachers and support staff and to the challenges they are set. Their independence skills are developing well and most students are showing good levels of social maturity. The curriculum, which is largely based on two accreditation schemes, is effective in promoting key areas of learning in preparation for further education, employment and transition to adult life and their personal development, in general. The courses are designed with a strong vocational content and are well matched to meet individual needs.

220. In all lessons students make good progress in literacy and communication. They are developing skills in speaking and listening and are able to talk confidently to visitors. Higher attaining students are able to read instructions and complete written tasks independently. Other students are able to understand requests and instructions when supported by signs and symbols. This is particularly effective in pastoral time when discussing the structure and content of the school day. At these times students read their individual symbol timetable well and are able to talk about the content of the sessions and some are able to re-call what they have done in the previous lesson. Students are able to either sign their name or stick their photograph on a memo to indicate a choice for a lunch-time club. Students who have more profound difficulties use objects of reference and sensory clues to enable them to have some understanding of their timetable.

221. Students make good progress in mathematics. In numeracy higher attaining students are developing a good understanding of counting, money handling and time. They have several opportunities throughout the week to use these skills in real life situations; such as shopping for ingredients for home management or buying their own lunch at a local high school canteen. Some students are able to make a comparison of values and have a basic understanding of expensive and inexpensive goods. During a shopping session, students were able to select products based on their price and what represented the best value; for example two items for the price of one.

222. In most of the other curriculum areas students make good progress. Students make particularly good progress in food technology and physical education. A home management module enables students to improve their practical skills by preparing and cooking their own lunch. They compile a shopping list, visit the supermarket to purchase goods, prepare and cook the meal followed by the washing up. Students are able to wash and prepare salad, cook oven chips and pizza. Some students are able to read cooking instructions from the packet and calculate the cooking time. They show a clear understanding of food hygiene and safety considerations whilst working in the kitchen. In sports and leisure students carry out a range of activities within the local community and these include; swimming, keep fit, dance and bowling.

223. Progress in information technology and art is satisfactory. In information technology the students make progress in identifying equipment in society which is computer controlled such as a security system, a cash machine and a fax machine. They know that some equipment transmits data and are making satisfactory progress in learning of operate equipment such as a photocopier, and a fax machine. However progress is poor in religious education because of the lack of dedicated time on the timetable.

224. Students with profound learning difficulties make satisfactory progress from a range of physical activities and these include; Rebound Therapy, Sherbourne Movement sessions and regular hydrotherapy. Occasionally progress is limited when they remain unoccupied for inappropriate periods of time, for example when waiting for their turn on the trampoline.

225. Higher attaining students are developing high levels of independence; several can find their way to and from the local amenities such as the bowling alley and leisure centre. Some students are capable of independent travel to and from the Harding House base.

226. A small number of the students have been chosen to represent the school by becoming members of a *Student Council*. This is a well-established group, which meets on regular basis with the headteacher. Their views, ideas and suggestions are greatly valued and the students are treated with dignity and respect. These sessions are a valuable contribution to the development of the students' self esteem and awareness of citizenship.

227. The students' attitude to their work in both settings is good overall. Occasionally it is very good and during an integrated *Music Club* the students' response was excellent. Their behaviour is good and they show respect for their own personal property and the learning resources. Relationships between students and staff are very good and one outstanding feature is the support and encouragement that they give each other. This was particularly evident during pastoral sessions and in a *Sherbourne Movement* session. During the movement lesson higher attaining students were working alongside their less able peers; the relationships which developed were based on trust and tolerance of each other.

228. The quality of the teaching for post-16 students is good overall. On one occasion, during the *Music Club*, teaching by a specialist teacher was excellent. Lessons are very well planned and teachers clearly outline what students are to learn. The work planned caters for the wide range of individual needs and is well matched to them. All staff have very good relationships with the students and treat them as maturing adults. It is evident from the planning that teachers ensure that students are managed in an age-appropriate way and the resources selected to support their learning are also matched to their age group. They chose ways of working with the students which maintains their interest and are careful to ensure that the students fully understand what is required of them and that they achieve the goals set for them. They have a variety of ways of checking on the students' knowledge and understanding and as courses are very practically based, students are often keen to demonstrate their newly acquired skills.

229.The support assistants work well with the teachers and their relationships with the students greatly impact on their learning. They make a positive contribution to the teaching in post-16. For example, when they work on individual basis in the school's hydrotherapy pool or when they speak quietly to students to encourage more positive participation in a session.

230.There is very good provision for careers education and higher attaining students have the opportunity for work experience placements. This programme is effectively supported by a careers adviser, who has realistic but challenging expectations of the students. Personal interviews are carried out in the careers office and action plans are drawn up to help students plan for the next part of their lives. Students with more complex needs also have the opportunity to visit places of work, including *The Thrift Farm Project* which enables them to develop an understanding of caring for animals. There is a careers library and students have access to an database which gives details of various occupations.

231.The post-16 curriculum is good and a large proportion of the work is planned from the accredited courses followed by the school. These are modules from the *National Skills Profile* and the *Life and Living* programmes. The work that the students are following clearly develops their skills in the four core areas of communication, numeracy information technology and personal development. There are very good systems for assessing students using the accredited schemes and the information is used well to plan subsequent work. Students are responsible for evaluating their own performance and are encouraged to set targets for improvement. Some students are able to take responsibility for completing their own portfolios. Students in the post-16 department at Park School site follow a predominantly sensory curriculum and which is relevant, broad and balanced with a good range of accreditation.

232.The accommodation at Harding House has been recently acquired through a major funding initiative involving local trusts. The building provides very good accommodation, although some of the teaching areas are small. The rooms are appropriately decorated and furnished to reflect the age of the students and in particular the dining area has a café style atmosphere. There is a lift, which ensures access for all students, and the outside area has a small patio. Plans have recently been drawn up for a sensory garden in order to further enhance the provision. One of the biggest advantages of this building is its very close proximity to the town of Aylesbury and the local amenities and enables staff to provide increased opportunities for students to develop life skills

233.The Park School post-16 base is a bright and attractive room, which contains a good range of sensory resources. Overall the level of resources in both bases are satisfactory.

241. **Religious education**

234.At the time of the previous inspection it was not possible to make a judgement on pupils' standards in the subject or the quality of learning and teaching. Too little attention was paid to the subject and pupils had limited knowledge and understanding.

235.Evidence taken from the small number of lessons seen and an examination of the pupils' work and teachers' records shows that pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. However, throughout the rest of the school progress ranges from unsatisfactory to poor at the end of Key Stage 4. Progress is poor due to insufficient experiences offered to the pupils and the limited time for the subject on the school timetable. For example, at Key Stages 3 and 4 only three modules of study are taken from the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and there is limited evidence in planning to show that school is building on what pupils have learned previously.

236.Where progress is good, pupils gain an appreciation of the living world and a respect for animals. They celebrate major festivals, and are beginning to develop an understanding of

some of the main Christian messages such as caring for others. All pupils have taken part in a special assembly, which focussed on the celebration of Eid. They understand about the religious significance of food, presents and clothing associated with this occasion. Some pupils know that Eid is celebrated by Moslems and that Mecca is the birthplace of Mohammed.

237. From the small number of lessons seen, and the photographic evidence available, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory.

238. There were only two lessons of religious education taking place during the week; it is not, therefore, possible to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching. At Key Stages 1 and 2 lessons are planned from a limited range of themes from the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils have a regular session of religious education each week. For older pupils the subject is taught during the autumn term of each year but there is limited evidence in pupils' files or in displays to record that this work has taken place.

239. The newly appointed curriculum co-ordinator has had responsibility for this subject for only three months. A policy is now in place, together with a development plan, which outlines current priorities. The proposed developments are appropriate, although the timescales for some are too long and not costed. There is also some confusion about the development of the whole school assembly under the umbrella of the religious education curriculum, which is not appropriate. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum are not in place and resources for the subject are poor. Although the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus has been appropriately adopted by the school the curriculum is limited and does not offer breadth. There is limited evidence of progress across the key stages and this also extends to students at post-16.

247. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

247. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

240. A team of seven inspectors including a lay inspector carried out the inspection over a period of four and a half days, to a total of 28.5 days. Inspectors spent 82 hours and 50 minutes observing a total of 102 lessons, looking at pupils' work, and teachers' records. Lunch and break times, acts of daily worship, assemblies and arrangements for arrivals and departures were seen. Inspectors scrutinised the samples of pupils' work provided as well as examining pupils' records to inform them about pupils' progress and the curriculum.

241. Professional discussions were held with staff. Discussions, both formal and informal, were held with the chair of governors, the governor for finance and the governor for the curriculum. The school's finance officer was interviewed about the daily administration and finance in the school. Inspectors also met with the headteacher, senior departmental managers, subject co-ordinators, teachers, support assistants, and other professionals, such as the speech therapist, and physiotherapist who support the work of the school. Some pupils read to inspectors, and talked about their reading; others talked informally about their work. Statements of special educational need, annual reviews, individual education plans, records of achievement, and other reports were examined. All the school's available curricular documents and those relating to school organisation and procedures were read. The current school management plan, together with previous school development plans and the action plan from the school's first inspection were also examined. The minutes of the governors' meetings were read. A meeting to hear parents' views was held, and a total of 13 parents and carers, representing 10 pupils, attended this. Responses to 17 parental questionnaires were analysed. During the preliminary visit to the school, meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and the governing body.

242.DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
N – Y14	76	77	N/A	24

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (N – Y14)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7

Education support staff (N – Y14)

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked each week	498

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	776 129
Total Expenditure	795 053
Expenditure per pupil	9 354
Balance brought forward from previous year	11 320
Balance carried forward to next year	(7 604)

Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	77
Number of questionnaires returned:	17

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	29	59	0	6	6
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	47	35	12	6	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	35	24	6	6
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	41	47	0	12	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	47	35	6	12	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	35	53	12	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	59	24	12	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	18	29	35	0	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	65	24	12	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	53	29	18	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	71	29	0	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

- .Not enough therapy for pupils.
- .Too little finance for the school and few resources can be afforded.