

INSPECTION REPORT

BETTRIDGE SCHOOL

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire LEA

Unique reference number: 115821

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Saunders

Reporting inspector: Dr D. Alan Dobbins
27424

Dates of inspection: 17 January 2000 – 20 January 2000

Inspection number: 189276

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties
Age range of pupils:	2 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S. Banner
Date of previous inspection:	16 September – 20 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr D. Alan Dobbins	Registered inspector	Science; physical education	The school's results and achievements; How well pupils are taught; leadership and management;
S. Watts	Lay inspector		Attendance; links with the community; how well the school works in partnership with its parents
H. Evans	Team inspector	Design and technology; modern foreign language; religious education	Efficiency, resources, grants and additional funding
H. Jones	Team inspector	Under fives; mathematics; history	Curriculum; spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision
H. Eadington	Team inspector	Art; geography; music	Attitudes, values and personal development
M. Smith	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology	Assessment and monitoring of academic and personal development; support and guidance

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bettridge School is a local education authority mixed day special school, which first opened in 1972 for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school provides for 72 full-time pupils, 47 boys and 25 girls, from 5 to 16 years of age. Fourteen pupils under-five attend the nursery, 10 boys and 4 girls, on a part-time basis.

The population of the school is changing. Most pupils have severe learning difficulties. An increasing number have profound and multiple learning difficulties or have been identified as having autistic spectrum disorders.

As a consequence of their learning difficulties, pupils' attainment on entry is considerably below expectations for age.

The school provides regional specialist provision for the North Cotswold area of Gloucestershire, including all of Cheltenham. The social background of the pupils reflects that found over this large, mostly, rural area. Twenty-seven percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Two pupils are from ethnic minorities. The school was last inspected in September 1996. The headteacher was appointed in September 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bettridge School is a very good school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well designed to meet pupils' needs. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher, who provides a clear direction for the work of the school, receives very effective support from the governing body and the senior management team. They have developed, and operate, procedures that very effectively monitor and evaluate all the work of the school. Teaching is very good. The relationship between pupils and all adults is exceptional and is based on mutual respect and trust. Pupils make good or very good progress over all the subjects. When account is taken of their difficulties with learning, the standards they attain and the progress they make represent good achievement. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Promotes good or very good progress over all subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils are good at their learning, behave well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers are very well supported by well-deployed learning support workers.
- The leadership and management are very good. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, as the first step to continuing improvement, are very effective.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. It prepares pupils very well for life after school. It has very good provision for promoting independence. Pupils' additional needs are well met through the good provision of speech and physiotherapy.
- Schemes of work are very good, as are pupils' individual educational plans. Both help pupils to progress by promoting a very good match between pupils' needs and lesson tasks.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent, as is the provision for their spiritual and cultural development.

What could be improved

There are no key issues for the school to address, but in the context of its many strengths the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan.

- The school should continue to improve the accommodation to best match the demands of the curriculum.
- Procedures should be developed to enable governors to make a judgement of the effectiveness of the school's provision against external criteria.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. All but one of the issues for action identified then have been tackled successfully.

- The school is now well resourced. Resources are beneficially matched to topics in the relevant Programmes of Study.
- The system that allows subject co-ordinators to perform their roles now operates very effectively.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils have developed so that now achievement and progress are easily identified. Moreover, this information is well used in planning for teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is broad and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. It is balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. Pupils benefit from the time allocated to personal, social and health education. Those with additional needs benefit from the specialist support of the speech and physiotherapists, the school's nurse and the specialist teachers for pupils with vision and hearing impairments.
- Statutory requirements are now met, regarding the keeping of registers and the governors' annual report to parents.
- All pupils from Key Stage 1 onwards have appropriate Statements of Special Educational Need.
- The school has made a considerable effort to improve the specialist facilities for teaching science and aspects of design and technology and in securing increased privacy in some of the toileting areas. However, each has been achieved only in part.

The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are very effective. They make an important contribution to the to the higher quality of teaching seen throughout the school and to the better progress pupils now make in many subjects.

STANDARDS

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

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

IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

The school's targets are appropriate and well formed. The precise targets for learning that are written in pupils' individual educational plans link very well with schemes of work for the subjects and allow detailed lesson planning to meet the different needs of all pupils. The school's focus on communication skills in English lessons, in lessons in other subjects and at lunch-times and play-times, leads to very good achievement in reading, in speaking and listening and, for pupils with difficulties with speech, in communicating through signs and symbols. Pupils achieve at a good level in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school, take pride in their work and consistently strive to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In lessons, during assemblies, at playtimes and lunchtimes and when pupils visit other schools, colleges and local sites, for example shopping centres or churches.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The relationship between staff and pupils is based on mutual respect and trust. This and the emphasis the school gives to the development of personal and social skills, helps fully develop pupils character and personality, and the skills of independence.
Attendance	Very good.

The excellent relationship between staff and pupils makes pupils feel valued and be confident learners in an environment in which they are safe and secure. Their desire to do their best for their teachers, contributes to the very good attitudes they have to school, and

the very good and good progress they make in their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In lessons in English, mathematics and science, the quality of teaching is very good. The skills of communication, including the use of signs and symbols as aids to communication, are very well taught throughout the school. In lessons in personal, social and health education, teaching is also very good and is well supported by individual counselling sessions for pupils on specific issues that relate to them. Teaching is excellent in 11%; very good in 36%, good in 46% and satisfactory in the remaining 7% of lessons. Schemes of work are very good, as are pupil's individual educational plans. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' work. They manage pupils' behaviour very well. Learning support workers are effectively deployed. Each contributes to lesson time being very well used and to the positive attitudes pupils have to their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. It is balanced, relevant and well designed to meet the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development, social and cultural development is excellent. Provision for moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils are safe and secure. The procedures for fostering pupils' personal development are excellent. The procedures for monitoring and promoting academic development are very good. Collectively, both contribute to the good progress pupils make in learning and in their personal development.

The school works well with parents. They are appreciative of the work of the school. A high number are active members of the parent-teacher association. The school's curriculum pays due regard to the National Curriculum, and for pupils under-five to the early learning goals. It provides a very good range of opportunities to promote gains in personal, social and health education, and in the skills of literacy and numeracy, so that pupils can grow to be as independent as possible. It prepares pupils well for life after school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, who is very well supported by the governing body and the senior management team, provides a very clear educational direction for the work of the school. The senior management team, through the very thorough procedures they operate, ensure that effectiveness of all the work of the school is known to the headteacher and the governing body. All staff fully share a commitment to make the school as effective as possible in all its work.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very well. The governing body fully meets its role of 'critical friend' to the school. All statutory requirements that relate to its work are met. Governors make a significant contribution to the evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school and to its further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The excellent procedures that exist to monitor and evaluate, for example, the progress pupils make, the curriculum and the quality of teaching provide a solid base for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning and administration are very good. The letting of the swimming pool and soft play area, and the large amounts of money regularly donated by the parent teachers association, meaningfully extends the work of the school. For example, through the provision of a play scheme during the summer holiday.

The appropriate number of staff and learning support workers are effectively deployed. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good or good in most subjects. Financial management is very good and the governing body operates appropriate procedures to ensure best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like going to school. • The progress their children make in school. • That the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • That the school helps children to become mature and responsible. • The close links the school has with parents. • The ease with which they can approach the school with a question or a problem. • The information they receive from the school on the achievements and progress their children make. • That the school is well led and managed. 	

Inspectors' judgements confirm the high regard which parents have for the work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment and achievement take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.
2. Pupils under five make good progress towards each of the early learning goals. The very good facilities, for example the laser room and the soft play area, and the very good support of the speech and physiotherapists, help teachers and learning support workers to prepare pupils very well for their work at Key Stage 1.
3. In English, over all key stages, pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening skills and in reading and good progress in spelling and writing. During Key Stage 1, they improve their communication skills by extending their knowledge of Makaton signs and symbols and because of this, they become better at learning over all the subjects. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils are recognising letters and matching and saying small words. They can handle pencils with increasing control and are good at copying lines and shapes. They speak with increasing confidence over Key Stage 2 and learn to use their increasing vocabulary to explain their feelings, their point of view or to give instructions. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils are reading many high frequency words and sentences with only a few symbol prompts. The lowest attaining pupils make good gains in signing and in the recognition of symbols, so that by the end of the key stage, they can easily communicate their basic needs. During Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils become good at reading books, television guides, timetables and the Internet to find new information. Their speaking, signing and listening skills continue to make very good progress over the key stage. They speak fluently and are good at using technical words to explain what they have learned. Over all the key stages, pupils make good progress in spelling. The curriculum in English at Key Stage 4 focuses on the use of English in the adult world. For example, pupils have many opportunities and make good progress in writing letters of application and in completing forms. They confidently use word-processing programs to write to a task, for example a letter of invitation or when free writing. By the end of the key stage most pupils are functionally and socially literate.
4. From knowing little mathematics at the beginning of Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress over each of the Attainment Targets, so that by the end of Key Stage 4 the highest attaining pupils are reading bus and train timetables and planning journeys, with due regard to time. They confidently plan an evening of television watching and are good at controlling a video-recorder to start and stop at the appropriate time, to record their favourite programme, on a 12 or 24 hour clock.

They are good at calculating and presenting the correct money when purchasing goods. They use their knowledge of measurement, for example when preparing meals. They apply their skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to real world issues. For example, calculating how much it would cost to go by public transport to a local cinema to see a film. As is the case in English, by the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils are functionally and socially numerate.

5. As a consequence of the reduced time allocated to learning science, the Programmes of Study of the subject are not covered in full. However, over each key stage pupils make good progress in learning about many important topics. For example, they learn about living things and are gaining a good understanding of their own bodies and how plants grow. They learn about unseen forces such as wind, electricity, magnetism and gravity and about how light is made up of a number of colours. They also learn about the procedures of science, for example when they classify objects into similar and different types. They apply their increasing vocabulary of scientific terms well over the key stages. By the end of Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils know that designing an experiment is an important way of finding new information and can explain the results of their experiments using appropriate scientific terms, accurately and confidently.
6. In the other subjects, pupils make good progress at each key stage in art, design and technology, music and religious education. In geography and history they make very good progress at Key Stage 2 and good progress in each of the other key stages. In physical education they make very good progress in swimming and good progress in the other parts of the subject. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make very good progress in speaking and listening in French, the only key stage at which the language is taught. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills.
7. The progress pupils are making is improving. Since the last inspection, progress is better in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, French and religious education. The high standards seen in physical education in the last inspection are being maintained. Boys and girls make equivalent progress, as do the very small number of pupils from ethnic minorities.
8. The school's targets for increasing the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make have been sensibly set with reference to the learning difficulties of individual pupils. Early indications, from comparing the gains against 'P' levels and the targets, which are written in their individual educational plans, are that these are being met in full.
9. When account is taken of their learning difficulties, the progress that pupils make in all subjects reflects good levels of achievement. The development of speaking and listening skills for most of the pupils, and the effective use signs and symbols by those with substantial difficulties with speech, reflects very good levels of achievement. Pupils also achieve very well in swimming.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to their learning were good at the time of the last inspection. They have improved. Now, their attitudes to their learning are very good or better in one lesson in two and good in nearly all the lessons. Behaviour is also very good. Each contributes positively to pupils' learning, to the good and very good progress they

make throughout the school and to the good and very good levels at which they achieve. Parents are happy with the attitudes and values that the school promotes.

11. Pupils are keen to come to school. They take pride in their work and consistently strive to do their best. They work hard and join in activities to the best of their abilities. Pupils are proud of their own achievements, but also take pleasure in the success of others. It is to the credit of the staff that pupils, including those with severe difficulties in communication, confidently contribute in the questioning and discussion sessions that feature strongly in lessons, at lunchtimes and at playtimes.
12. Behaviour is very good in lessons, during assemblies and as pupils move around the school. Pupils behave very well when they visit public places, such as a shopping centre, church, the local college of further education or the local college of agriculture. They also behave well in unfamiliar situations in school, for example in lessons that are taken by visiting teachers, or others such as musicians who visit the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. In these, pupils are friendly, polite and helpful to visitors. Those, whose behaviour is occasionally complex and challenging, respond well to the positive, consistent, and caring approach used by staff. When inappropriate behaviour does occur, it is effectively dealt with according to the behaviour targets that are clearly written in pupil's individual educational plans. One pupil was excluded for a fixed term over the last year.
13. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. All members of staff are very good role models. They are courteous, welcoming and friendly. Their great respect for the pupils is evident, and is clearly reciprocated. Pupils routinely show consideration for others. For example, offers of help to clear away are numerous, and doors are held open for adults without asking. Many pupils become genuinely concerned at the distress of others and welcome them back to the group after periods of unsettled behaviour. Regard for property, both their own and that belonging to the school, is good. Items, for example artefacts on loan from a museum, are treated with care, as are other items such as computer equipment and the displays around the school.
14. The positive relationships between pupils and teachers enable pupils to fully develop their own character and personality. As they grow through the school they increasingly show initiative and most readily accept responsibility. They enjoy jobs such as collecting cups after a mid-session break, helping to clear tables after lunch, or, as in the case of Key Stage 3 pupils, taking the lead in music lessons. Pupils enjoy, and gain from, working co-operatively as did, for example, pupils at Key Stage 2 when sharing photographs in a geography lesson. For pupils at Key Stage 4 their visits off site, especially to the local college of agriculture, are very effective in helping further develop their social skills, confidence and independence.
15. The level of attendance is very good. Last term's attendance was 93%. This compares very favourably with equivalent schools. Authorised absence is most often related to pupils' medical conditions. Unauthorised absence is minimal.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. During the last inspection the quality of teaching was good or better in half of the lessons. Now, in half of the lessons it is very good or better, and good or better in nine lessons in ten. This represents a substantial improvement on the good quality

teaching seen at the last inspection.

17. Teaching is a strength of the school. There are a number of important contributors. It is very effectively monitored and evaluated by the senior management team and supported by the subject co-ordinators. They are very good at providing advice on lesson planning and on the availability of specific resources to support teaching in any lesson. The curricular documentation that links very well to targets for learning identified in pupils' individual educational plans is sufficiently detailed allow lesson planning to meet the needs of each pupil. Learning support workers are very effective. In most lessons they are well managed and well deployed. Each helps teachers, demonstrate quality teaching even when they have little specialist training in the subjects they teach. Assessment of pupils' progress is against the learning objectives for the subject identified in their individual educational plans. It is routinely made and results in teachers knowing what pupils know, understand and can do. They use this information very well in planning future lessons.
18. Most lessons begin with a whole class discussion, which identifies the major objectives for the lesson. Pupils benefit from this because it provides a context for their learning. Frequently, they are then grouped according to ability to work, for example from worksheets prepared as a combination of widge symbols and words, with a learning support worker or to rehearse known skills on a computer. Structuring lessons in this fashion allows teachers to provide different tasks for pupils, which match very well their learning needs. Typically, lessons finish as a whole class group. The work which pupils have completed is reviewed, to further rehearse their learning and good achievements are celebrated, which helps to motivate pupils as learners. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Rarely is lesson time used to remind pupils to keep on task.
19. Most classrooms are of adequate size and allow teachers to use whatever strategy best suits their lesson objectives. The small size of the classrooms for the younger pupils limits the choice of strategies. In these classrooms it is not possible to create more than two sub-groups of pupils, or to give pupils responsibility for their own learning, for example when practising investigative skills
20. As a direct consequence of the high quality of teaching, pupils are inspired as learners. Invariably they react very well to their learning. They try very hard. This includes the younger pupils whose learning difficulties are further complicated by medical conditions, which cause them to tire very easily. All are committed to succeed in their learning, to please their teachers and to enjoy their own success. This was the case, for example when Key Stage 1 pupils were learning about sound in a lesson in science. It is routinely obvious in the swimming pool when pupils are becoming water confident at Key Stage 1 or when refining their strokes at Key Stage 4. In four lessons in ten the quality of learning is very good or better, in nine lessons in ten it is good or better and is satisfactory in the small number of remaining lessons. Outside of lessons, the same high level of commitment for success can be seen, for example when younger pupils follow feeding programmes at lunchtime.
21. As they grow through the school pupils mature well as learners. They sustain concentration for increasing lengths of time. They gain confidence in their own skills as independent learners. By the beginning of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils have learned to use CD-ROMs, such as Encarta, to gain information. During Key Stage 4, they learn to use the Internet as a source of information. Key Stage 4

pupils enjoy and gain from the freedom of being independent in their learning, especially during their weekly visit to the local college of agriculture. They act well as students and mingle as equals with those who are following degree courses.

22. Teachers make best use of their links with the home to support their work. For example, in a lesson in science at Key Stage 1, pupils were requested to bring to school materials that would be attracted to a magnet. Most pupils remembered. But for some the link between the home and the school to support progress is not well established.

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

23. The curriculum is broad. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught including a modern foreign language (French) to pupils at Key Stage 3. It is balanced and relevant. It meets the additional special needs of pupils through the very good work of the speech and physiotherapists, the school's nurse, and others including the specialist teachers for pupils with vision impairment and hearing impairment. The curriculum places emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and health related skills. To achieve this, the time allocated to learning science is less than that recommended for a core subject.
24. Pupils, at the end of Key Stage 4, are well prepared for life after school. They complete many units of the accreditation for Life and Living and the National Skills Profile of the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations Board. These include those in communication, numeracy, information technology skills, personal skills and others, for example floristry, horticulture and motor vehicles. They provide for colleges of further education and potential employers an accurate profile of the experiences pupils have gained and the levels at which they attain.
25. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in communicating, including those of literacy. The procedures of the literacy hour are well established. The co-ordinator has gained appropriate training. Staff are well informed of the purpose of the hour, the structure and the procedures to follow. Specific training in literacy skills is well supported in English lessons. In the lessons in other subjects, teachers and learning support workers are very good at reinforcing skills in communicating, be they through sign, symbol or speech. They take every opportunity to extend the pupils' vocabulary and stress the accurate use of the specialist terms for the subject. Procedures for the specific development of numeracy are not as well advanced but are beginning to be implemented. A teacher has been appropriately trained and is leading the development of the programme.
26. The curriculum is meaningfully extended through the provision of very good extra-curricular opportunities, which helps further work in the subjects but also realises considerable gains in pupils' self-confidence and social skills. For example, Year 11 pupils participate in a residential trip to Devon to follow a course in outdoor pursuits. They gain from the experience of living as a group and take part in a variety of activities, many of which are not available to them in school. Also, pupils visit youth hostels on the south coast. They are required to take some responsibility for the work of the day and in planning visits to local attractions. They also gain from being involved in non-residential extra-curricular activities. They take part in drama

productions such as JC2000, compete against other special schools in the local authority in team sports, swimming and athletics and in the Special Olympics. Within school, pupils are enthusiastic members of the swimming club, which practices at lunchtimes and the Internet club, which has recently formed. The curriculum is extended through links with a similar school in France and a school in Holland. Art and geography are the two subjects that have benefited most, so far.

27. The very good individual educational plans and their very close link with lesson planning, enable all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum.
28. The provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. The programme is very well planned with an excellent scheme of work. Precisely written targets for learning in pupils' individual educational plans help teachers focus on pupils' needs. For younger pupils, this may involve learning self-help skills such as dressing and undressing. The very good feeding programmes encourage the least able to develop the skills to eat independently. Through using symbols and signs, they learn to identify the choice of food and drink. Older pupils learn about relationships, including those to do with families. They learn about personal hygiene, how to purchase food and drink in, for example a cafeteria, and how to use equipment safely as steps leading to full independence. The work related link course which pupils follow at the local college of further education and the weekly visit made to the local college of agriculture are excellent opportunities to practice their developing social and personal skills.
29. Support for developing personal, social and health skills is planned into the schemes of work of subjects. For example, in food technology pupils learn to prepare meals independently with due regard to safety and to nutritious eating. In science they learn about sex education and drugs awareness.
30. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. Through religious education and the regular, very good assemblies, pupils learn about a variety of beliefs. They are taught to respect and value others. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder. For example, in a shared drama lesson, the caring attitude of upper school pupils, and the response of the children in the sensory group to their helpers was very moving. The visiting African drummer created a very spiritual atmosphere by a combination of his music and the excellent relationship he developed with pupils. They were entranced by his colourful African clothes and by the rhythm of his music.
31. Staff provide very good role models. The very well thought out Code of Behaviour is known and understood by most pupils. Both contribute to helping pupils realise the difference between right and wrong.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The relationship between staff and pupils is exceptional. Pupils respond very well to the respect they receive. In lessons, they listen to each other, take turns well, work collaboratively very well and enjoy celebrating the success of others as much as they enjoy their own successes. When a pupil became ill in school, others were very concerned until they were reassured by the teacher that all would be well. Lunchtimes are good social occasions.
33. Pupils behave very well in a pleasant family atmosphere. Progressively, they show increasing initiative and responsibility as they move through school. By the time

they reach Key Stage 4, they take an increased responsibility for their own learning. They enjoy, and gain from seeing the purpose of taking part in charity work, such as the boxes of love for children in distress. The school makes excellent provision for the cultural development of pupils through a number of subjects. This is especially so for religious education, where the very good range of artefacts helps in developing an awareness of multicultural issues. In music, pupils experience many styles from many countries. In French, an awareness of the culture forms part of the scheme of work. In art, pupils study the work of famous artists from other countries.

34. The curriculum is effectively extended by the very good use made of the local community. Places that are regularly visited include, museums, churches, the arboretum, libraries, the YMCA, Cheltenham Town Football Club and the Severn River to support lessons in geography. Visits to the local supermarket enable pupils to develop life skills and further their understanding of money and the purchasing of food. Good use is made of visitors into the school, for example clergy from the local church, fire officers, musicians and drama groups, and recently the pilot of a hot air balloon.
35. Links with the local college of further education are very good. Year 11 pupils benefit from their weekly visits of one day as preparation for transition to the college as full-time students who will follow foundation courses leading to a National Vocational Qualification. The well established link with the local college of agriculture extends the curriculum very well by providing opportunities for pupils to follow courses in rural studies, including the care of animals. Younger pupils have a programme of visits to local playgroups. They are well supported by staff and make considerable gains in personal and social skills by being in the company of others in different situations.
36. The school aims to integrate pupils into mainstream schools whenever this is possible. The links with the schools in the immediate area are very well established. A small number of pupils benefit from spending part of their week in these schools. Also, Key Stage 4 pupils from the local secondary school visit to take joint lessons, for example in food technology. Pupils from both schools benefit from the opportunity to mix with each other.
37. The school and Parent Teachers Association have very good links with businesses. In the last year they donated £52,000.00 to develop the new play area and purchase equipment. Previous donations have been used to furnish the excellent soft-play room and the laser room. Both facilities extend the opportunities available to pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Pupils are safe and secure at school. Parents also feel that this is so. Regular safety audits ensure that pupils and staff work in a safe environment.
39. The procedures for child protection are well understood by all staff. Arrangements agreed locally are complied with and the procedures that operate in school are very good. The named member of staff for child protection is the headteacher. All staff have received good in-service training in child protection.

40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good, but are rarely invoked because of the very small amount of unauthorised absence. The school has a variety of very effective measures to promote good behaviour. Only a very few incidents of bullying have been recorded.
41. The progress co-ordinator very effectively monitors and evaluates the progress of pupils. In this work she is well supported by the very good knowledge the teaching and support staff have of the needs of pupils. The progress pupils make is accurately recognised through assessing performance against the learning targets in pupils' individual educational plans. The attainment of pupils in lessons is routinely recorded and work annotated and stored. The assessment of the small steps in learning that pupils with the severest of learning difficulties make is very good. Appropriately, it is against the emerging 'P' levels. The results are well used in planning future lessons and in decisions about placement within the school.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are excellent throughout the school. They are especially effective at Key Stage 4, where staff strive hard to prepare pupils for life after school, in further education or the world of work.
43. The school is aware of the attainment of pupils and, therefore, the progress they make, through the very good procedures for assessment. However, these procedures do not provide a judgement on the extent of pupils' progress against any benchmark or other external criterion. As such the school cannot make an informed judgement on how effective is its work. This is a challenging task because of the lack of appropriate normative information, for example levels of the Standard Assessment Tasks against which the progress of pupils with learning difficulties can be compared.
44. Annual reports of pupils' progress are jargon free and well written in language easily accessible to parents. They provide appropriate information on what pupils know and understand and the progress they have made. Annual reviews are well conducted and are, invariably, opportunities to celebrate the good progress of pupils. These joint meetings between professionals in health and education typically result in sensible and appropriate decisions to the benefit of the pupil.
45. Pupils with additional problems to do with sight are very well served by the valuable contribution of a specialist teacher, who spends two days a week in the school, a mobility officer, and a keyboard support teacher. Pupils with hearing impairment receive similar support. A speech therapist and an assistant work with those with communication problems. Pupils also benefit from the work of the physiotherapists. The very good work of the music therapist provides additional help in developing communication skills, particularly for pupils with the most complex needs. These specialists, and a range of others from outside agencies consulted when necessary, for example the community learning disabilities team, the community paediatrician and social worker for children with disabilities help the school to fully meet the needs of all pupils.
46. The school places a high priority on the raising the self-esteem and confidence of pupils and is very successful in this aim. Achievements, however small, are celebrated, work is well displayed around the school, and records of achievement document in considerable detail the work of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents have a very positive view of the school. They feel comfortable telephoning the school or visiting for advice and support. According to the needs of parents, individual departments within the school arrange activities such as coffee mornings and discussion groups. These are very much appreciated. The parent-governors are effective in bringing to the attention of the governing body issues that concern parents.
48. The information parents receive on the work of the school and on the progress of their child is very good. The prospectus is clear. The annual report of the governing body now contains all the required information. The report on pupils' achievements over the year is detailed and indicates what they understand, can do and the progress they have made. The newsletter provides good information on forthcoming events and the successes of pupils. Home school diaries, which are sent home each day, are well used to exchange information and to maintain contact with the home. Parents particularly appreciate the videotapes and photographs taken with digital cameras that are regularly used to record the work of their children and the activities in which they participate.
49. The annual reviews of pupils' Statements of Educational Need are very well attended by parents. Most feel that these are meaningful meetings and that their views help influence the decisions which are made. The progress their child has made over the year is recognised and sensible new targets and decisions on placement agreed. The school makes every effort and is successful in ensuring that the educational provision identified in pupils statements and in the annual reviews is met in full.
50. Many parents are active members of the parent-teachers association (PTA), which gives very effective support for the work of the school. Last year the PTA donated £52,000.00 for the development of a new play area and sensory garden and the purchase of play equipment. The PTA manages the play scheme that runs over the summer holidays. This extends the school year to the benefit of pupils and also benefits those parents who find it difficult coping by themselves with the needs of their child over the long summer holiday. Parents also organise the very successful Spring and Christmas Fairs. They also give support to the school as individuals. Occasionally, a parent will visit the school to take part in lessons. Most recently, a parent talked about Islam in a lesson in religious education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the work of the school. In this she is very well supported by the governing body and the senior management team. The deputy headteacher, curriculum co-ordinator and the progress co-ordinator ensure, through their very thorough programmes of monitoring and evaluating, that the effectiveness of all the work of the school is known to the headteacher and the governing body. For example, on a three-year cycle, each subject is reviewed in detail and the resultant report presented to the governing body. The progress co-ordinator regularly reviews the effectiveness of individual educational plans to inform curriculum planning and the choice of teaching strategies, as well as their effectiveness in judging the progress pupils make. The deputy headteacher gains,

through a programme of formal meetings, the professional development needs of all staff, and also helps new teachers and learning support workers to fit easily into the routines and the requirements of the school through the excellent induction scheme. Aspects of teaching are regularly monitored by subject co-ordinators, for example the effectiveness of the strategies teachers' use as part of their role. The headteacher formally monitors and evaluates teaching.

52. Information on the effectiveness of the school is available for discussion at the innovative school development day. On this day all staff and members of the governing body debate the requirements for further advancing the work of the school. These are then detailed and agreed by the governing body in the very good school development plan. Empowering all staff in discussing and in helping to develop the work of the school contributes, to the shared commitment for excellence, which is evident in all aspects of the school's provision.
53. The governing body meets the required statutory responsibilities in full. Through the good work of the sub-committees, the reports they formally receive on the work of the school, their involvement in the school development day, and their frequent visits to school, governors' make a significant contribution to shaping the direction for the school. They have a very good knowledge of the effectiveness of all aspects of the work of the school. They fully meet their role as 'critical friend'.
54. The process of statutory appraisal formally operates for about half of the teachers. The others do not take part because of a national decision by their union. However, all teachers and learning support workers take part in the very good programme for professional development. Teachers have annual interviews to discuss training needs and the learning support workers also have the opportunity to discuss their roles with a member of the senior management team. They are, as a matter of course, included in the frequent in-service training that takes place in the school. For example, in the last year they took part in courses on behaviour management, literacy, numeracy, information technology (hardware and software), and the spiritual development of pupils. In the near future, the learning support workers will also be able to take the National Vocational Qualification for support workers in the school as a result of a senior teacher being recently trained as an assessor. Additionally, the progress co-ordinator provides good ongoing in-service training on individual educational plans, especially in the writing of learning objectives.
55. Since the last inspection the role of the subject co-ordinators has been better established. Now, they make a significant contribution to further developing all aspects of their subject and to informing the senior management team and the governing body of the quality of the work in the subjects. The progress co-ordinator oversees very good procedures for judging pupils' achievements and their progress toward meeting the targets set for them in their individual educational plans. However, procedures for recognising the achievement of pupils in benchmark terms or against other external criteria, are not sufficiently established for the school to recognise the full effect of its work.
56. There is an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and the additional needs of pupils. All staff have clearly defined roles and specific responsibilities. These are known and understood by all.
57. The school has a number of excellent and very good specialist facilities. The

swimming pool is excellent, as is the soft play area and the laser room. The school's grounds are very good. However some parts of the accommodation restrict the effective teaching of the curriculum. For example, the library is very small and not sufficiently central in location to best support teaching and learning. Some of the toileting facilities provide only minimum dignity. Some of the classrooms are too small for teachers to create more than two sub-groups of pupils or have pupils take responsibility for their own learning to develop investigative skills. There are no specialist areas for teaching science, art or design and technology, other than food technology. The curriculum for these subjects is limited and, particularly for pupils at Key Stage 3, does not fully reflect the relevant Programmes of Study. Storage of resources is inadequate in some areas, particularly for art, which limits accessibility and the independent use of materials by pupils.

58. Governors are very aware of the accommodation needs of the school and plans have been made to remedy these inadequacies. Also, the school has made strenuous efforts to minimise their effects, for example by selecting from the Programmes of Study for science elements that can be taught effectively in this accommodation. Nevertheless, in important areas of the curriculum, these inadequacies limit pupils' learning.
59. Learning resources are very good or good in most subjects. The provision for information technology has improved considerably since the previous inspection, through a good investment in hardware and software. The purchase of a symbol program has had a significant impact on the teaching of communication and literacy skills, throughout the school. It has also had a beneficial effect on teaching and learning in the subjects, through the use of worksheets that are a mix of symbols and words. The audit of resources for each subject is well used to identify future purchases. Newly purchased resources are linked well to priorities identified in the school development plan.
60. The financial management of the school is very good. Since the last inspection the governing body has developed good procedures for evaluating the cost effectiveness of spending linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The headteacher, works closely with the finance sub-committee of the governing body, which is very aware of the need for a link between expenditure and the learning outcomes of pupils. Decisions made by the governing body are aimed at ensuring best value for money in all the work of the school, most particularly as they relate to the standards achieved by pupils. Currently, there is a small surplus of money that will be allocated to improving resources in the subjects.
61. Day-to-day financial administration is very good. The audit report of November 1999 from the LEA noted that the school's financial systems were operating satisfactorily. The small number of recommendations has been fully implemented.
62. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvement in the way in which it uses its resources and facilities. Teaching staff teach mostly the subjects in which they are specially trained. Learning support workers are invariably well deployed. Others in the school also are very effective in their work, for example the physiotherapists, speech therapists, school nurse, music therapist and the swimming instructors. Each contributes to the good and very good progress pupils make in the subjects. In the last year, the policy of letting the school's swimming pool and soft play area gained an income of £12,763. These monies, and the substantial monies donated to the school by the PTA, have been very well used to extend and enrich the school's curriculum, including the establishment of the

summer holiday play scheme.

63. The very good and good progress pupils make and the good levels at which they achieve over a relevant curriculum, the very good quality of teaching and the very good leadership and management of the school helps realise very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. The leadership and management of the school have formed and operate very effective procedures for further developing all areas of the school according to sensibly agreed priorities.
65. There are no key issues for the school to address, but in the context of its many strengths the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan.
- The school should continue to improve the accommodation to best match the demands of the curriculum.
 - Procedures should be developed to enable governors to make a judgement of the effectiveness of the school's provision against external criteria.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	79

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11.11	36.11	45.83	6.95	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	85
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.77	School data	.13

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	83
Any other minority ethnic group	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	7.0

Education support staff: YN – Y11

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	543.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	777,111
Total expenditure	777,999
Expenditure per pupil	8976
Balance brought forward from previous year	5112
Balance carried forward to next year	11240

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	16	3	3	
My child is making good progress in school.	61	30		6	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	48		3	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	5	57	10	10	19
The teaching is good.	67	37		3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	79	15	3	3	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	12		3	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	24		3	3
The school works closely with parents.	69	25	3	3	
The school is well led and managed.	64	30		3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	30		3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	27	3	7	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed their concern over the adequacy of some of the toilets, which provide only minimum levels of privacy.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. Pre-school children are admitted to the school following a recommendation from the health authority district assessment team to the placement panel of the local education authority. Currently, 14 pupils are provided for, either as part-time or full time pupils. A main objective of the foundation provision is to prepare pupils, whenever possible, for placement in their local mainstream school by five years of age. In the last academic year four pupils have moved from the school to their local schools. Those who will continue at Bettridge are formally assessed for a statement of special educational needs in preparation for entry to Key Stage 1. In this, the school is well served by the allocated educational psychologist. Foundation provision is multi-disciplinary. It is very well supported by specialists from health, for example the paediatrician and speech and physiotherapists and from social services by the social worker for pupils with disabilities.
67. The curriculum, which is divided into the six main areas of the Early Learning Goals, emphasises assessing and developing pupils' learning skills. As such, the percentage of time assigned to each area, and the time given to the input of the additional specialists, varies according to pupils' individual needs.
68. Pupils make good progress over each of the six areas of the curriculum. For example, progress in personal and social skills is helped by the very good relationship that exists between the pupils and teachers and learning support workers. Growth in communication skills is enhanced by the very good use of symbols and signing. The school's swimming pool, laser room and soft play area are well used to promote physical development and improve co-ordination.
69. Pupils work well as individuals and quickly learn to co-operate with a partner when taking turns or when sharing equipment. Most often, they work hard, for example during swimming lessons. They sustain their concentration, especially well when they play games or when they listen to the teacher or learning support worker tell a story. The good feeding programmes at lunchtime and the constructive use of playtime also contribute to the development of their personal skills.
70. The quality of teaching is very good. The progress pupils make is assisted by good planning, the very good knowledge that teachers have of pupils learning difficulties, the good individual educational programmes, the good level of resource support and the very good work of the learning support workers.
71. The foundation stage is very well led by a teacher with considerable knowledge of assessment, child development and of the procedures that result in the writing of a Statement of Special Educational Need. Each contributes to the effectiveness of the provision, which has improved since the last inspection. Now, pupils make better progress and are better at their learning. The quality of teaching has also improved.
72. The accommodation remains attractive and acts to stimulate learning, but the toileting area continues to afford insufficient privacy.

ENGLISH

73. Pupils achieve very well in English. They make very good progress in speaking and listening and in reading, and good progress in writing and spelling.
74. During Key Stage 1, pupils are learning to be increasingly attentive for longer periods while listening to stories. They are extending their knowledge of Makaton signs and symbols, which leads to improved communication and provides very good support for the development of pre-reading skills. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils have learned to recognise letters and match and recognise some words. Pre-writing activities show satisfactory progress. Pupils develop their skills in handling pencils and other writing implements through copying, for example lines and shapes on paper.
75. During Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress in their phonic skills through the use of the commercial reading scheme, which is imaginatively and very effectively used by teachers. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils are reading a sentence with symbol prompts; they are participating in shared reading and they are reading most of the highest frequency words from the Literacy Strategy. Recognition of letters is reinforced through the good use of time spent working on computers. Over the key stage, writing skill improves well through opportunities to overwrite letters and words on well designed worksheets. The lowest attaining pupils make good gains in signing and in the recognition of symbols. By the end of the key stage, they can easily communicate their needs and what they are thinking. Joining Key Stage 3 pupils, for a weekly lesson in drama provides a good opportunity to practice language skills with different people.
76. Pupils continue to make very good progress in speaking and listening skills during Key Stage 3. Teachers are good at taking opportunities in all their lessons to help promote pupils' communication skills. For example, in a lesson in information technology, a number of adjectives were listed to describe an object, hidden from the rest of the group, who then had to guess what the object was. Pupils were completely absorbed by the task and as a result showed great concentration while developing signing skills and increasing their vocabulary. At this key stage, they learn to use the library to choose books, discuss with others what they will find in them, and answer questions written as a mix of words and symbols. By the end of the key stage, they are good at using books, television guides, timetables and the Internet to find information. Good planning, so that pupils are grouped by their level of need and attainment for the literacy hour, enables them to enjoy stories and related activities at an appropriate level. Written work is carefully annotated to produce a record of achievement. Over all the key stages pupils make good progress in spelling.
77. At all key stages, pupils behave very well in lessons. When episodes of inappropriate behaviour do occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively so that learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils know what is expected of them and most work very hard during lessons. Occasionally, pupils whose needs require the use of medication, become fatigued and they make slower progress. Outside the classroom pupils, including those with communication difficulties, have the self-esteem and confidence to take part in conversations with adults.
78. The consistent progress made by pupils is due to the very good teaching in most of

the lessons. Teachers know their pupils very well, have high expectations of them and consistently challenge them to do better. The very good curriculum documentation supports the detailed planning of lessons, which is guided by the learning objectives of pupils written in their individual educational plans. Learning support workers make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make, by assisting small groups of pupils or individual pupils to play a full part in the lesson. For example, in the literacy hour for Key Stage 1 pupils, the learning support worker helped a pupil, with severe visual impairment, to find and feel, objects linked to the story. This enabled him gain as much from the lesson as did his sighted peers. Teachers confidently use a number of innovative and skilled teaching methods. They create excitement through anticipation; encourage observation by the use of the deliberate mistake and sustain interest through the use of gentle humour. They use gloves to emphasise signing, symbol and tactile timetables. The very good relationship between teachers, learning support workers and the pupils enables pupils to quickly become confident in their role as learners. Suitable homework is regularly given. For example, pupils are often asked to bring to school an object beginning with the letter currently being learned. This link with the school lets parents know what is being studied and the progress their child has made. At Key Stage 4, teachers have created an ethos in which pupils are encouraged to develop their English skills, so that they can be applied to real world use, for example, of completing letters of application. Many pupils gain success on the literacy unit of the National Skills Profile, an appropriate qualification to demonstrate their achievements in English. By the end Key Stage 4, most pupils are socially and functionally literate.

79. Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils are very good. They are set against the targets that are very well presented in pupils' individual educational plans. The information is well used for planning future teaching. Through the annual report, parents know what their child can do and what progress has been made in English.
80. The subject is very well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator provides very good advice to teachers on lesson planning and the use of resources. The procedures for informing the headteacher and the governing body about standards and the quality of the work in English are very good. They provide very good base information for further developing the subject.
81. Pupils, make better progress in English than they did at the last inspection. Also, the quality of teaching has improved and is now very good in many more lessons.

MATHEMATICS

82. Over all the key stages pupils make good progress in mathematics.
83. Pupils know little mathematics at the beginning of Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage, all pupils achieve well. The highest attaining pupils learn to make sets to 5 and rote count to 10 in number. They can sort by colour, size and 2D shapes, create repeat patterns with beads and pegboards and can recognise and name parts of a 3D shape, for example, corner and bottom. They are beginning to learn about measurement and time. They can use balances and recognise time to the half-hour. Over key Stage 2, the highest attaining pupils can rote count to 20, match number symbols to written number and can place objects in number

sequence. They have started to learn about addition and subtraction. They know the primary and secondary colours and are learning about symmetry through pattern making with 2D shapes. Their understanding of time has progressed so that they can use it as a measurement, for example, in recognising how long it takes to walk to the school's swimming pool and back to their classroom. They are learning about other forms of measurement and can judge length, height and weight using appropriate words, for example, longer and shorter, taller and smaller and heavier and lighter. They learn about volume through filling and emptying containers that are different in capacity.

84. By the end of Key Stage 3, they are aware of tessellation and are learning how to collect and handle simple data through use of bar graphs and pie charts. Their knowledge of symmetry is extending so that they can draw shapes with line symmetry and recognise objects with rotational symmetry. They are good at using money and enjoy testing their skills by going to the supermarket and purchasing goods to a set amount and working out the change they should have. They can use standard measures, including those of distance, time, weight and volume in calculations such as addition and subtraction. By the end of the key stage, they have learned to apply their mathematical knowledge to the use of co-ordinates and can programme an electronic vehicle to stop at a point after travelling a complex route.
85. The curriculum in mathematics at Key Stage 4 is formed around the syllabus for the numeracy module of the accredited course in Life and Living. This is an appropriate qualification to show the progress pupils make in mathematics over their time in school. The achievements and the good progress pupils make over the duration of the four key stages results in most, when they leave school, being functionally and socially numerate.
86. Pupils learn well in mathematics lessons. They apply themselves to their tasks. They especially enjoy practical work, for example, grouping small objects by colour or size, or measuring distances. Also, they enjoy getting the correct answer and explaining to a visitor the procedures they followed to get the result. They behave very well in lessons and only rarely, and mostly because of the effect of medical related difficulties, do pupils not produce their best work.
87. The quality of teaching is very good in four lessons in ten and good in the others. It is characterised by the very good use of lesson time and the very good match of lesson tasks to pupils' needs and abilities. This helps to ensure that all pupils make good progress, including those whose attainment is lowest. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and a very good knowledge of the learning difficulties of their pupils. Their expectations for pupils' learning are very high. They use an appropriate variety of teaching methods that make learning mathematics a practical activity wherever possible. The planning documentation, including the schemes of work, the targets in pupils' individual educational plans and the lesson plans are detailed and provide considerable support for teaching. Learning support workers are well deployed and they work very well with their teachers. Computers are well used to practise known skills, for example counting and classifying. Assessment is against the targets in the pupils' individual educational plans. This works well for planning and preparation of future teaching and learning.
88. Subject co-ordination is good. The focus for learning mathematics within the work of the school is very clearly defined. The school's recently developed targets are

appropriate. The role of the subject co-ordinator is helping to recognise the effectiveness of teaching and learning. She also provides good support and advice for teachers who have little specialist training in the subject. Resources to support teaching and learning are good in their range and quality.

89. The progress pupils make in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, as has the curriculum in the subject. The small size of some classrooms limits the opportunities to provide practical activities to support pupils learning.

SCIENCE

90. As a consequence of the decision to provide extended curriculum time for pupils' personal, social and health education, the time allocated to learning science is reduced to that normally seen for a foundation subject. Over those parts of the subject that are taught, pupils make good progress over all key stages.

91. During Key Stage 1, pupils are learning about ourselves, sound, plants, sorting materials and light. All achieve well. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils can tell why animals are different from humans and they have learned to match young animals to their adult forms. They are making good progress in learning about the life cycle of plants through taking digital photographs of the beans, peas and bulbs that they plant. They are learning to understand the concept of sorting. They apply this knowledge well when they sort by characteristics like hard and soft, by strong and weak and by colour. In sound, they are learning to recognise loud and soft, high and low and ringing and rattling. They especially enjoy learning to make sounds through banging and shaking and blowing. During Key Stage 2, they continue to make good progress when learning about ourselves and about forces like pushing and pulling. They begin learning about electricity, magnetism and light and how materials may change. In all aspects of this work pupils achieve well. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils can use their new vocabulary accurately and confidently when they describe their new learning. Also, they are beginning to recognise that finding out in science involves testing and recording their results. Over Key Stage 3, they make good increases in their knowledge of plants and materials, and of magnets and animals. New topics include the skeleton and muscles and the earth and beyond. All pupils achieve well during the key stage. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils have learned, for example, names of the large human bones; that muscles are attached to bones; that the contraction of a muscle will make a joint move and that muscles get tired with repeated contractions. The science vocabulary of the highest attaining pupils is good. They can tell when an experiment is a fair test or not. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is based on units in Life and Living and the National Skills Profile of the OCR examination group. The units that focus on elements of science include, animal care, horticulture, floristry and motor vehicles. Pupils gain success at high levels and are well prepared to study at foundation level in preparation for following GNVQ courses in these subjects in colleges of further education.

92. Pupils are interested in learning science. They show good skills in learning in all lessons. They concentrate and behave well. They try to do their best at all times. This occurs even when the cause of their learning difficulties imposes extra demands on them, such as tiredness, as it did in a lesson for pupils at the beginning

of Key Stage 1.

93. The quality of teaching in science is always good and mostly very good. Very good curricular documents provide substantial support for lesson planning and allow an easy link to the learning objectives for the subject that are written in pupils' individual educational plans. These provide a very effective base for lesson planning, which takes account of the needs of all pupils. The co-ordinator offers good advice and suggestions for teaching and the resources that can be used to match the content of lessons to the needs of pupils. As a consequence, teachers who have no specialist training in the subject are confident, know what to teach and how they might best approach a topic. This helps them to inspire pupils to provide their best work and to be excited when learning the subject; as pupils at Key Stage 1 were when they were learning about sound. Lesson time is very well used and the very competent learning support workers are well deployed. This ensures that the learning needs of all pupils are met in the lessons. Assessment is against the targets for science in pupils' individual educational plans. This works well in recording their attainments and helps to inform their individual teaching needs, but does not enable a judgement to be made on the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning for the year or key stage.
94. The co-ordination of science is very good. Work in the subject is comprehensively and routinely monitored and evaluated. This includes visiting lessons to see colleagues teach, as well as providing a comprehensive and detailed account of all the work achieved in the subject for the governing body. Over the last two years the school has, as a priority in the school development plan, purchased a considerable amount of resources to support teaching and learning in science. These have been 'target purchases' identified against the content of the curriculum. As such, the resource base is good, both in quality and relevance. For example, a number of CD-ROMs have been purchased, including one that brings animation to the movement of bones. It clearly explains the working of muscle groups.
95. The lack of a specialist area for teaching science limits what can be taught, particularly to pupils at Key Stage 3. However, the decision to restrict timetable time for science has resulted in a selection of content from the Programmes of Study for each key stage that can be presented without the requirement of specialist facilities.
96. Pupils' progress is good, the quality of teaching is good or very good in all lessons and the quality and quantity resources to support teaching and learning are good. Each has improved since the last inspection.

ART

97. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. Judgements are made following an analysis of work on display, teachers' planning documents and discussion with staff and pupils. Over each key stage, the achievement of pupils and the progress they make is good.
98. During Key Stage 1, pupils gain experience in a variety of media, including paint, paste and collage. They learn to match and name colours, to apply paint with a large brush and are beginning to be aware of patterns. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have learned to become aware of detail, and their developing drawing skills are evident in their self-portraits, in which facial details are, generally, correctly placed. Over Key Stage 3, pupils broaden their artistic skills and extend their

knowledge of famous artists. They are using colour and form well in watercolour to create evocative paintings of, for example Gloucester Cathedral. By the end of Key Stage 4, they know of the styles and techniques of a number of great artists, including Matisse, Cezanne and Picasso. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties gain valuable sensory experience, through exploring paint and texture with different parts of their bodies.

99. The absence of appropriate specialist accommodation limits pupils learning in three dimensions, for example in pottery, ceramics and in textiles such as silk screen-printing. It is not possible to lay out work to dry or to set. This also restricts pupils opportunities to study the subject in full.
100. At each key stage, pupils enjoy lessons in art and participate enthusiastically in practical work. They listen attentively to teachers' guidance, are keen to do their best and are proud of their finished work. They handle resources carefully and share space sensibly.
101. The quality of teaching in the three key stages, where lessons were observed, is good. All teachers have good general teaching skills and very good relationships with pupils. They expect pupils to do their best in art, and in most lessons this takes place. A wide range of materials, methods and the work of famous artists are on display in classrooms. In clearly explained and demonstrated lessons, where the criteria for success are made explicit, pupils concentrate for very well and achieve good quality work. Very occasionally, there is insufficient emphasis on artistic style and form and this limits what pupils achieve. Tasks usually are well selected to enable all pupils to be fully involved. Learning support workers are very effective in helping pupils to complete their work.
102. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. The recently introduced modules for Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 place a strong emphasis on continuity and progression. Time has already been allocated for evaluating the curriculum, as the first step for further development. Teaching is monitored within the subject evaluation cycle. Resources are satisfactory and future priorities linked to the schemes of work have been identified. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits to local galleries and museums, and the subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
103. There has been a significant improvement in the planning and management of art since the previous inspection. Concerns over the lack of a scheme of work and inadequate coverage of the National Curriculum have been satisfactorily addressed, within the limits imposed by the lack of specialist accommodation and equipment.
104. The standard of display throughout the school is very high. Particularly eye-catching is a large mural, produced through JC 2000, a cross-curricular millennium project. Pupils and staff are justifiably proud of these displays.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. The achievement of pupils, and the progress they make, are good over all key stages.
106. Over Key Stage 1, pupils are making good progress in learning skills such as

cutting paper using scissors, spreading glue, applying paint and in moulding and shaping materials. They use these skills well when designing and producing, for example hand puppets, for which they were required to choose their own materials and formulate their own design. They show great pride in their very good results. During Key Stage 2, they build progressively on the skills they learn at Key Stage 1. They work increasingly independently of teachers and learning support workers and successfully design and build boxes for various purposes. They made good progress in learning construction skills and are beginning to use the vocabulary of the subject appropriately and confidently. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can work through a simple designing and making process and can identify materials, tools and equipment for different purposes and tasks. Completed items are finished to at least satisfactory standards and the best work is very good. In Key Stage 3, they start learning to prepare simple items of food and drink for themselves, so that by the end of Key Stage 4, they have developed sufficient skills to be able to cook simple meals, with due regard to safety and nutritional value. They are taught some of the curriculum at the local college of further education where they make good progress in planning and in evaluating their ideas as part of the design and making process. Pupils are very proud of the nesting box for birds that they completed in college last term. They can describe it in detail, using appropriate vocabulary for design and measurement, and can explain the procedures they followed in its construction.

107. The quality of teaching is good. Lesson planning is thorough and based on very good curricular documentation. Teachers aim to provide pupils with purposeful practical activities when pupils are designing or making. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and learning needs of pupils, are good. The relationship between teachers and learning support workers and the pupils is very good and this contributes to a very good learning ethos, both in the school and in college, where they feel confident and secure. Assessment is informal and made primarily through regular and sensitive questioning.
108. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Educational direction is clear. Topics are planned around learning objectives that pay due regard to the appropriate Programmes of Study. There is a lack of specialist accommodation for work with clay, wood and plastics and the food technology room is small for the number of pupils and staff using it. However, pupils at Key Stage 4 attend the local college of further education and take advantage of the very good facilities for work with resistant materials. Schemes of work are of good quality and comprehensively outline the content of the curriculum for Key Stages 1 to 3. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the syllabus of the Accreditation for Life and Living course of the OCR which provides good preparation for using design and technology skills in courses in colleges of further education after they have left school.
109. Pupils achieve better in design and technology than they did at the time of the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

110. A modular approach is used to teach geography, which alternates with the teaching of history, and so only three lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. No lessons were observed in Key Stages 1 and 4. The judgements made are based on an analysis of work on display around the school, teachers' planning documents and discussion with staff and pupils.

111. The achievements of pupils, and the progress they make, are good at Key Stage 1, very good in Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Over Key Stage 1, pupils learn to move around the school with increasing confidence. They understand simple weather terms such as 'rainy' and 'sunny', and the spatial concepts 'over' and 'under', when they are included in a story such as 'Rosie's Walk'. The lowest attaining pupils are beginning to recognise and respond to changes in their immediate environment. Through visits in the locality of the school, they gain an awareness of new sensory stimuli. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have made sufficient progress so that they can identify teachers' roles with places in the school. They are increasing their knowledge of the locality for example, by knowing where they live in relation to the school. Over Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils can find Britain on a world map and the highest attaining pupils have learned the names of, and can identify, the four countries of the United Kingdom. They are increasing their understanding of maps and can make their own maps of the journey from home to school. They are beginning to learn of other countries. For example, they know that France is part of Europe and that Paris is the capital city of France. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have learned to make use of information gained from contact with a similar school in France. They can compare rainfall and hours of sunshine as part of the comparison of the two different locations. During the key stage, their understanding of the environment and of environmental issues is growing well. For example, they understand the water cycle process and the effects of acid rain. Through discussion they are beginning to realise the delicate balance of nature in the environment.
112. Pupils have good attitudes to learning geography. They are interested, enthusiastic and are eager to join in discussion and activities. Older pupils are increasingly encouraged to work independently and to use their initiative, which they do well.
113. In the few lessons seen, teaching is very good at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 3. The objectives for learning for individual pupils are clear. Planning is good. Teaching methods and resources are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Occasionally, resources are not readily to hand, and this limits pupils' learning and the progress they make. The very good relationships between adults and pupils, helps to make lessons friendly and supportive occasions. Learning support workers are effectively deployed. They are good at enabling pupils with additional special needs to be involved in all the activities of lessons. Teachers make good use of the Internet to learn mapping skills and to take part in links with a similar school in France.
114. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and the special needs of pupils. The recently introduced modules of work for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 provide clear guidance for teachers and help to ensure continuity and progression within and between key stages. Resources are good up to Key Stage 3 and have improved since the last inspection. Future priorities have been identified, with attention given to the development of the subject and the special needs of pupils. The good programme of local visits helps pupils make good progress in geography. They learn about rivers by visiting the River Severn and by a three-day residential visit to the south coast. Visits are well planned and effectively extend pupils experiences. The subject contributes well to

pupils' social and cultural development.

HISTORY

115. History alternates with the teaching of geography on the timetable for Key Stages 1 to 3. As a result, only three lessons were seen during the inspection. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 3. The judgements made are based on an analysis of the work of pupils, work displayed throughout the school, teachers' planning documents and discussion with staff and pupils.
116. Pupils' levels of achievement and progress are good at Key Stages 1 and 3 and very good at Key Stage 2 and 4. Over Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to realise that there is a past and a present. For example, they know that they have changed since they were babies. By looking at toys, they learn about 'old' and 'new'. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have progressed well and as a result most pupils understand the concepts of 'before' and 'after'. Most know the days of the week and can follow the cycle of birthdays in their class. The lowest attaining pupils are learning about chronology through developing an awareness of the sequence of the regular routines of the school day also, through listening to stories with a very clear sequence of events.
117. Visits to local museums and historical sites provide very good support for pupils at Key Stage 3 when they are learning about changing ways of life through the ages. Often these visits are recorded using photographs taken with a digital camera. For example, pupils made a visit to the Shambles Museum. On return to school, these are well used to reinforce learning and promote good recall. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils know about life in Britain at different periods, including Roman Britain and World War 2. As they progress through the key stage, the highest attaining pupils can describe events very well using appropriate language and terms. They know the names of people who were important at those times.
118. Pupils enjoy history lessons. They can listen carefully and most join eagerly in discussion and the lesson activities. They enjoy being active in their learning, for example when handling artefacts and when they visit a local site of historical interest. They show moments of empathy with people of former times, as when Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils dived under the table on hearing a siren during a lesson about air raid shelters and bombing during the second world war.
119. Teaching is always good and excellent at Key Stages 2 and 4. The best teaching is very carefully planned, learning objectives are detailed and pupils understand what they are doing. Schemes of work are very good. They are based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and provide very good support for lesson planning. Teachers use the learning targets set out in individual educational plans to ensure that tasks in lessons are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Resources are good. Teachers use them very effectively to extend pupils' thinking as well as their knowledge. Routinely pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

120. The co-ordinator effectively supports others who teach the subject, through offering advice and by making appropriate resources available. Since the last inspection the scope of the history curriculum has considerably improved. Resources have improved in quality and quantity. The co-ordinator operates a planned programme for monitoring and evaluating work in the subject. Each of these developments has helped pupils to learn effectively and make good or very good progress. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through the study of Roman times, of Victorian culture and of World War II.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

121. There has been improvement in information technology since the previous inspection. Teachers have adapted well to the provision of new computers. They have increased their knowledge and skills of information technology as a subject and how information technology can support teaching and learning in other subjects. They use a software program to produce very effective worksheets, labels, signs and timetables in symbol form. This helps pupils to learn communication skills. Over all key stages, planning for the use of information technology in lessons is good. However, the individual education plans of younger pupils do not include learning targets in information technology. Targets for groups of pupils are set but tracking the progress of individuals is not easily achieved.
122. Pupils at Key Stage 1 and 2 do not have separate lessons in information technology, but they learn to use it effectively in other subjects. For example, in English, pupils' use of computers helps them practise phonic skills that complements the work they follow on the commercial scheme. Over the key stages, they make good progress in keyboard skills and in the use of the mouse. The lowest attaining pupils make good progress when using the touch screen or the 'big keys' keyboard. Pupils develop a good understanding of technology through using a variety of switches in the laser room. However, opportunities for pupils' independent use of technology, for example in helping to present finished work or to collect information, are too limited.
123. During Key Stage 3, pupils become very good at gathering information, including learning how to display information as graphs. In addition to lessons in information technology, pupils frequently use computers in lessons in other subjects, especially when learning the skills of numeracy and literacy. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can confidently use computers without support. But the lowest attaining pupils continue to need verbal support and sometimes physical prompts from the teacher or learning support worker.
124. Over Key Stage 4, pupils follow the syllabus of the accredited course in Life and Living of the OCR. This is an appropriate qualification for the achievements of pupils. By the end of their time at Key Stage 4, pupils have a good awareness of the potential of information technology as a day to day tool. They are confident when using a number of software programs, including word processing, spread sheets and art packages. They have learned to find information from the Internet and to download material for use in their files.
125. At Key Stages 1 and 2, when skills in information technology are developed through use in other subjects, the teaching of information technology is satisfactory. When

it is taught as a separate subject at Key Stages 3 and 4, the teaching is good. At Key Stages 1 and 2, assessment is not sufficiently structured to secure consistent recognition and recording of the gains made by pupils. Because of the separate nature of lessons at Key Stage 3, this is less of a problem. At Key Stage 4 assessment is against the units of the accredited scheme. Assessment and record keeping are good.

126. Resources are good and are readily accessible in all classrooms. The provision of appropriate software is satisfactory. The audit of resources against the demands of the curriculum provides very good information for the purchase of appropriate software. Digital cameras are a very good asset and are used well to record events and provide evidence of progress.
127. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She provides very good advice and support to staff. The further development of the procedures for assessing and recording the gains of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1 and 2 will help to secure continuity of progression in the acquisition of computer skills and increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

128. French is taught to pupils at Key Stage 3. The focus is on the use of the language, with little attention being given to writing or spelling. Standards achieved in oral work are very good, as is the progress that pupils make.
129. Over the key stage, pupils progress from using single words to short phrases when greeting friends. The highest attaining pupils can speak in short sentences. They can listen attentively to the teacher when asked simple questions in French and reply with confidence to greetings and requests for information, with appropriate regard to accent. Pupils take part enthusiastically in lessons and make very good progress over all aspects of their work, particularly when their interest and enthusiasm is aroused. Lessons are made up of a number of quite different tasks and pupils gain from this. For example, in one lesson they played a game, in which they had to recognise famous people by asking for the card to be turned over. Then they had to introduce the person in French to the rest of the group. Pupils were excited about the activity and their oral work was very good.
130. Pupils' attitudes to learning French are very good, as is their behaviour in lessons. They particularly enjoy practical activities and completing tasks, which interest them. They show evident excitement when using the language with a visitor.
131. The quality of the teaching is very good. Lesson planning is good. Sound use is made of the good scheme of work, which is based on the National Curriculum Programme of Study. The very good teaching helps to ensure that pupils acquire new language skills and appropriate vocabulary. The teachers speak the language to a high level. They teach most of each lesson in French. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to answer with confidence. Good use is made of role-play, photographs and games. Pupils regard French lessons as fun and this contributes to the very good progress they make.
132. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the work effectively. Links with schools in

France and Holland help pupils make very good progress in French. Recent use of the Internet has strengthened these links. Since the last inspection the progress pupils make has improved, as has the quality of teaching.

MUSIC

133. Progress in music is good. In a small number of lessons it is very good.
134. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 learn to sing or sign a range of suitable songs. Even though the lowest attaining pupils have difficulty in remembering the words, they enjoy joining in the actions. Pupils can listen carefully and learn that instruments such as a drum and shakers make different sounds. They are beginning to stop and start playing and singing on time and to play percussion instruments loudly or softly. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can recognise and clap or stamp the rhythms of familiar tunes and phrases.
135. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils have learned the words, tunes and actions to a much wider range of songs. They have a good understanding of how to sing part songs. They make good attempts at maintaining the tunes in these when singing as a member of a group. They can sing and sign songs from different countries, including Africa. Pupils particularly enjoy moving in time to a variety of rhythms.
136. They have a very positive attitude to listening to and making music and join in confidently and enthusiastically in all activities. Pupils are curious about the sounds they hear and learn with delight that they can repeat and sometimes vary these. This was evident as they experimented with African instruments, brought into school by a visiting musician from Zimbabwe. Music lessons and music therapy are of considerable benefit to pupils with profound and multiple difficulties, who respond very positively by smiling, making eye contact and turning their heads towards pleasurable sounds.
137. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. In a small number of lessons at Key Stage 1, it is excellent. Pupils are helped to enjoy and understand music from the school's arrangements for the involvement of outside musicians such as choirs and calypso and brass bands. Class management is good. Objectives for learning are clear. Teachers' expectations of participation and performance are high for pupils of all abilities. Resources, including music from other cultures, reinforce and extend pupils' learning. The learning support workers are very good role models for playing and singing. At Key Stages 1 and 2, by using alphabet and number songs, teachers use music effectively to promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
138. Co-ordination of music is very good. The recently introduced schemes of work cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. They help to ensure that there is continuity and progression in musical skills, appreciation and knowledge of music. Resources have been improved since the previous inspection and future priorities have been well identified against curricular requirements and the special

educational needs of pupils. The music room provides a satisfactory base for teaching. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in performances in school and gain from attending local concerts. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. Over all key stages, pupils make very good progress and achieve well in swimming. In the other parts of the subject they make good progress and achieve accordingly.
140. All pupils swim weekly. Early in Key Stage 1, when floating with the support of appropriate flotation aids, most pupils have learned to blow bubbles in the water, can splash water over their faces and can immerse their head underwater for short periods. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils are water confident and the highest attaining pupils have learned to swim on their front and back. A small number can do this without the support of flotation aids. This good progress continues over Key Stage 2, so that by the end of the key stage most pupils are water safe without the aid of flotation devices, can swim on their front and back and make good attempts at swimming underwater. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils swim quickly and with good style on their front and back. They can enter the water by diving and can swim under water to retrieve an object such as a weighted ring. The highest attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 swim to age expectancy.
141. At all key stages, pupils make good progress, and achieve well, in gymnastics. Progressively, as they move through the school, they gain better control of their bodies, through increasing their strength and developing their co-ordination. At Key Stage 1, their movement patterns are simple, for example a jump and a turn. By the end of Key Stage 4, they have learned to sequence a number of complicated movements, for example, star jumps and cartwheels with flow and accuracy to a balanced and controlled finish. Over the duration of the key stages, they learn to climb, fall, jump and roll with increasing precision and safety. In games, at Key Stage 1, they learn to throw and catch balls and bean bags and to strike a bean bag and stationary and moving balls. The progress they make thorough the key stages is good, so that by the end of Key Stage 4, they achieve well when they play hockey or football in the autumn and spring terms and tennis, cricket or rounders in the summer term. The gains they make in gymnastics help in learning dance. At the beginning of Key Stage 1, they make good progress in learning to link their body movements to the sounds of music. For example, they can rock backwards, sideways or forwards to time. They can also wake up quickly to lively music and slowly to slower music. By the end of Key Stage 4, they have learned to perform simple dances from different traditions, for example, Scottish dancing and line dancing. The highest attaining pupils can make up their own dance sequence and move confidently and smoothly to different forms of music.
142. From Key Stage 2 onwards pupils learn athletics. At the beginning of the key stage, they learn to run a short distance from a controlled start. They learn about the throwing events by throwing balls underhand, then overhand, and measuring the distances thrown. They learn the techniques of the jumps by, for example jumping over ropes, then bars of increasing height. Over the key stages, they learn about competition and performance by comparing their performance with that of others and with their previous best. By the end of Key Stage 4, their increased strength, better co-ordination and better technique allows the highest attaining pupils to reach age approximate performance in the throws. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 gain

skills and knowledge in outdoor activities, which they practice on residential visits, for example to Devon.

143. For pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum in physical education is very meaningfully extended by participation in the Riding for the Disabled (RDA) programme. The excellent facilities at the Cheltenham Racecourse, and the very well organised programme lead to very good gains in knowledge about horses and in the co-ordination and balance required to ride successfully. Pupils regularly gain the RDA certificates.
144. Over all the key stages, the quality of pupils learning is very good or better in six lessons in ten, and good or better in nine lessons in ten. Pupils enjoy physical education. They consistently work hard in their lessons and take pride in their achievements. They make a considerable physical effort to improve their performance or refine newly learned skills. This was the case in a lesson in swimming when the highest attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 were required to pick up a weighted ring from the bottom of the pool and surface within a floating hoop. They were enjoying their new challenge so much that they did not want the lesson to end.
145. The quality of teaching is very good or better in six lessons in ten and good or better in eight lessons in ten. In the other lessons it is satisfactory. The excellent scheme of work realises very good short-term planning and very good lesson plans. These pay due regard to the targets written in pupils' individual educational plans. The very good deployment of the learning support workers, the excellence of the swimming pool and the good resources elsewhere in the subject all contribute to linking high quality teaching to the good achievements and good progress made by the pupils. The specialist tutors for swimming, cricket and tennis, each a national coach in their activity, complement very well the work of the teachers.
146. The subject is well co-ordinated. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the progress of pupils are good and, as a result, pupils benefit. Through the need to undress and dress and co-operate with partners for activities and games, physical education makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.
147. The comprehensive curriculum documentation highlights the risks in the subject. These guidelines are rigorously observed during lessons, particularly those that take place in the swimming pool. The soft playroom provides an excellent physical challenge for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 and for those who are following the sensory curriculum. The changing and showering facilities for the swimming pool, and those for the hall/gymnasium are unsatisfactory.
148. At the last inspection, physical education was identified as a strong subject in the curriculum. It continues to be so.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. The levels achieved by pupils in religious education are good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress.
150. During Key Stage 1, pupils are increasing their knowledge of different celebrations.

For example, they can identify with family celebrations, especially their own birthdays. They know that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus and that he is a special person. They understand that there are special persons in their lives, for example mother and father. They can identify them and explain why. Photographs of parents, grandparents and brothers and sisters are well used to stimulate discussions.

151. Over Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in furthering their knowledge of festivals. They know that Christmas is a special Christian festival. Through visiting the local church for the services, they know that harvest and Easter are also special occasions. They are beginning to know more about local religious buildings. They understand that these are special places where people go to worship. They become aware that there are religions other than Christianity. For example, they are learning about the Jewish festival of Shabbat. The highest attaining pupils can recall the main events of Shabbat and how Jewish families celebrate the festival.
152. At Key Stage 3, pupils learn about other religions, including Islam. They know that Muslims worship in a mosque and are beginning to realise why the festivals are different from those of the Christian faith. They gain good practical knowledge about Islam from a Muslim parent who visits school to talk about his religion.
153. During Key Stage 4, pupils' knowledge of churches, abbeys, mosques and synagogues grows considerably. They visit Tewkesbury Abbey and, on return to school, have completed good work that replicates the coloured glass windows they studied during the visit. They extend their knowledge of other religions by learning about Hinduism. They continue to learn of symbolism as part of faith. Through an awareness of the symbolism associated with a candle, they are beginning to understand the meaning of religious services.
154. Pupils enjoy their learning about religious education. They show good interest in the lessons. They respond well to the range of activities and are eager to participate fully in all lessons. Behaviour is good. In a small number of lessons, it is excellent.
155. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Lesson planning is very good. As a result, in most lessons, tasks are well matched to pupils' special needs. This helps pupils' progress particularly when the focus of teaching is on an abstract concept such as faith or symbolism. Planning also realises very good links with other subjects, for example on the understanding of moral issues presented in personal and social education. Good resources, effective activities, good use of artefacts, and good use of pupils' own experiences, makes lessons in religious education interesting and lively.
156. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The Gloucester Agreed Syllabus forms the basis for the school's scheme of work. Arrangements for assessment in religious education are good. Account is taken of the progress pupils' make over time. It is based on objectives in the scheme of work. Simple self-assessment sheets have been prepared for pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. They very successfully indicate the level of pupils' understanding. Since the last inspection, resources for religious education have improved considerably. Pupils' progress, knowledge and understanding also has improved.

