

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGFIELD HOUSE SCHOOL

Solihull

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103623

Headteacher: Mrs. P. Jacques

Reporting inspector: Mrs. K. Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th March 2000

Inspection number: 189440

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Special |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Kenilworth Road Knowle Solihull |
| Postcode: | B93 0AJ |
| Telephone number: | 01564 772772 |
| Fax number: | 01564 771767 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr. J. Davies |
| Date of previous inspection: | 23 rd – 27 th September 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Katherine Halifax | Registered inspector | Information technology | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school |
| | | Art | The school's results and pupils' achievements |
| | | Design and technology | Teaching and learning |
| | | Information technology | Leadership and management |
| | | Music | Key Issues for action |
| Tom Heavey | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| | | | Pupils' welfare, health and safety |
| | | | Partnership with parents and carers |
| Sue Flockton | Team inspector | English | Quality and range of opportunities for learning |
| | | Religious education | |
| | | Equality of opportunity | |
| | | Special educational needs | |
| Alison Hopwood | Team inspector | Science | |
| | | Geography | |
| | | History | |
| John Morris | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
| | | Physical education | |

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International

“Bradley”
15 Upper Avenue
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 3XR

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springfield House is a residential primary special school which serves the city of Birmingham with a very small number of pupils coming from Sandwell and Warwickshire. The school is maintained by Birmingham Local Education Authority. Pupils of various ages join the school at different times throughout the year. The school caters for pupils age four to eleven. The school population is heavily weighted towards older pupils. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils at Key Stage 1, both of whom were working on individual programmes in a class of less able Year 3 pupils. Almost one third of pupils are due to leave the school in July 2000. Pupils come from a range of social and educational backgrounds. The ability of each year group varies widely.

Currently there are 41 boys and 9 girls on roll, making a total of 50 pupils. Forty pupils are resident at the school. Of the school's population, 82 percent is white, 16 percent black Afro-Caribbean and 2 percent Pakistani. One pupil has English as an additional language. As a residential school, all pupils are in receipt of free school meals. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Thirty six pupils have identified emotional and behavioural difficulties, five pupils have moderate learning difficulties and two pupils have severe learning difficulties. Seven pupils are diagnosed as having autistic tendencies. The number of pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties is increasing.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a high standard of care for its pupils. The quality of teaching is good, this is reflected in good quality learning. Relationships are very good and the school is committed to improvement. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Financial management is good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The aims and values of the school are reflected in all aspects of school life. The shared vision by all working in the school significantly improves pupils' self-esteem and makes a positive impact on the quality of their learning.
- The twenty four hour curriculum makes a very good contribution to the pupils' education and personal development
- Good behaviour management by all staff results in great improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- All staff use a good range of strategies to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The provision and rate of progress for previously disaffected Afro-Caribbean boys is particularly good.
- Standards in art, physical education and design and technology are above those expected of pupils of this age and ability.
- The school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- Provision for pupils who are diagnosed as having Asperger's syndrome and those diagnosed other autistic tendencies.
- The role of management in assessing the impact of spending on standards.
- Opportunities for parents to be more involved in their child's learning
- Consistency in the use of assessment and recording procedures
- Targets in individual education plans need to be more specific and easily measurable.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement against issues identified by the last inspection. There is now a clear rationale for admissions. Clear structures and systems have been developed which have resulted in good improvement in the behaviour of all pupils, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All staff now make a good contribution to the management of the school. There has been good improvement in the use of information technology in other subjects. However, because of financial constraints the school does not have sufficient resources to develop the programme as quickly as had been hoped. This has been identified in the development plan. Good progress has been made in combining pupils' individual education, care and behaviour plans. Sound progress has been made in identifying targets, however, not all targets are easily measurable.

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 11 | Key | |
|--|------------------|----------------|---|
| speaking and listening | A | very good | A |
| reading | B | good | B |
| writing | B | satisfactory | C |
| mathematics | C | unsatisfactory | D |
| personal, social and health education | A | poor | E |
| other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs* | B | | |

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

By the age of eleven, pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics. They make good progress in reading and writing. Very good progress is made in using speaking and listening skills and in personal and social development. Pupils make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. Progress in art, design and technology and in physical activities is very good. Since taking delivery of new computers, progress in information technology is rapid.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are eager to learn. They persevere at their task and many concentrate well. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Pupils make very good progress in improving and managing their behaviour. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and make a significant contribution to improvements in the attitudes of pupils. Relationships between pupils are good. |
| Attendance | Attendance is good. Lessons begin on time. This makes a good start to the day. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Teaching of pupils: | aged 5-11 |
| Lessons seen overall | Good |

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

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. It is good or better in almost two thirds of lessons and very good or excellent in one quarter of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the course of the inspection. All staff are confident in teaching the numeracy and literacy strategies and all develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Whilst all teachers are confident when teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, their experience of teaching pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies is limited. This reduces the effectiveness of learning for these pupils. The teaching of personal, social and health education is very good across both education and residential settings.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Pupils are provided with a very good range of relevant learning opportunities in both the educational and residential settings. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for pupils' moral social and cultural development is very good. Provision for their spiritual development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides a secure, caring environment. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory. However, assessment procedures are not always used consistently across the school and the link between assessment and planning is not always clear. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The leadership and management of the school is good. The shared vision by all working at the school significantly improves pupils' self-esteem and makes a positive impact on the quality of their learning. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities | The governing body is very supportive and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Financial management is good. However, there are no systems in place to measure the impact of spending on standards. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. The quality of teaching has improved as a result of classroom observations. The setting of targets is developing well and having an impact on standards. Management are aware of the principles of best value and are constantly seeking similar schools against which to measure their performance. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caring, secure environment. • The improvements in their child's behaviour and achievements. • The size of the teaching groups. • Oral communication with the school. • The attitudes and values the school promotes. • Their child enjoys school, often for the first time during their school career. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils are given to do at home. • Parents indicate they would like more involvement in their child's learning. • Parents would appreciate more opportunities to meet with other parents. |

The inspection team agree with the strengths identified by the parents. Pupils have a suitable amount of homework during the week although this is not always a consolidation or extension of work undertaken in lessons. The inspection team agrees with the parents that there could be more written communication and opportunities for them to meet with other parents and be more involved in their child's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The characteristics of pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what the pupils know, can do and understand. Judgements about their progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is low. In addition to having emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is a marked increase in the number of pupils with more severe and complex learning difficulties. The education of some pupils has been disrupted by long periods of absence prior to attending this school. By the time they leave school, pupils are achieving standards commensurate with their age or ability. This is good improvement since the last inspection.
3. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils at Key Stage 1, both of whom were making good progress working on individual programmes in a class of less able Year 3 pupils. Overall pupils make good progress in their academic studies throughout the school. They make very good progress in their behaviour and in their attitude to school. Afro-Caribbean boys who have previously been disaffected make particularly good progress as a result of the good role models of staff and the targeted support they receive. Whilst pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies make some good progress, their rate of progress in communication skills is limited because of the curriculum they receive and a limited staff knowledge. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils of all ages and abilities make at least good and often very good progress in art, physical education and design and technology and achieve standards above those expected of pupils of this age and ability.
4. Pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills by being encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to one another and through good opportunities to use their skills. On entry to the school most have very limited speaking and listening skills and many experience difficulties in communicating. Most speak with increased confidence to wider audiences as when explaining what they have learned at the end of each lesson. By the time they leave school most are sufficiently confident to take part in whole school productions or read a prayer in collective worship.
5. Overall pupils read with increasing fluency. Younger pupils, and those with complex learning difficulties, develop their pre-reading skills well. They demonstrate an interest in books, looking at picture books and suggesting possible stories. Most enjoy stories and often identify rhyming words. They begin to recognise initial letter sounds, so that they can match words by these sounds. More able pupils develop a variety of word attack skills. For example, they use pictures, the story line and phonic skills to decode new words. By Year 6, many pupils are confident, fluent readers, using improved skills, including predicting, to recognise new words. A good number of pupils use their reading skills well in other subjects such as history and geography to read worksheets and find new information.

6. Pupils make good progress in their writing. Younger pupils and those with complex learning difficulties, develop pre-writing skills, such as tracking objects and following patterns. Many are able to copy over or underneath writing. Older pupils with complex learning difficulties make progress appropriate to their ability, with some being able to dictate sentences and copy under these, while others begin to write a few sentences independently, using full stops and capital letters. More able pupils have a basic knowledge of grammar and write increasingly complex sentences. By the age of eleven, pupils write for a range of purposes for example, diaries, newspaper articles and accounts. Whilst pupils make good progress in writing, progress in spelling is less well developed.

7. In mathematics, pupils' number skills are better developed than other aspects of the subject. By the age of eleven, more able pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value and some are familiar with the four rules of number. They apply their skills well for example when weighing ingredients in food technology and when producing a graph showing pupils' preference of biscuits. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties sort colours and shapes and some recognise a few numbers. All abilities are well motivated when using information technology to increase their numeracy skills.

8. By the age of eleven, in science, pupils have a suitable understanding of how to set up an investigation and more able pupils make predictions as to the outcome. A good number explain the need for a test to be fair. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of living and non-living things. Most pupils sort materials according to their properties.

9. Pupils throughout the school are making very good progress in using information technology. In the short time the machines have been in school, pupils have acquired many skills. All are confident when using a mouse and most use a keyboard with increasing dexterity. More able pupils use CD-ROM and the worldwide web to undertake personal research, for example when compiling a biography about Lord Byron. Older pupils use the technology well to word process and draft and refine their work. Many use paint packages and graphics to illustrate their work and produce work of a good quality. Progress in other aspects of information technology is less good because of a lack of resources. There are few resources to enable pupils to model, sense and control the environment.

10. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. They have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and are developing a suitable awareness of other major world faiths. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in personal, social and health education. Most are successfully establishing effective relationships with others. Most have learned how to behave appropriately in and around the school, at mealtimes and in public places. All are making good progress in their personal care, keeping their bedrooms and houses in good order.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. There has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection. Parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection report significant improvement in their child's attitude and behaviour.

12. The good attitudes to school reflect the hard work of the staff in establishing an orderly and calm regime within which pupils feel valued and respected. Parents and carers

report that for the first time in their school career their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils become quickly involved in all aspects of school life and have a great enthusiasm for their evening activities. Most show interest in their lessons and respond well to imaginative teaching, firm control and clear direction. Pupils respond particularly well in practical activities, where they persevere and concentrate for surprising lengths of time. They listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to express their opinion. In the best lessons they raise their hand and wait for their turn to answer the question, and they speak with confidence when they do so. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties find concentration difficult and need a lot of adult support to maintain their interest. All pupils are proud of their school and their work. They show visitors around their classrooms and sleeping accommodation describing their work in detail and praising the work of other pupils. Most pupils undertake their homework conscientiously and give of their best.

13. Behaviour is generally good in and around the school and has improved since the last inspection. The majority of pupils make very good progress against behavioural targets set in their individual education plans. Parents attending the meeting and responding to the questionnaire report *miraculous* improvement in their child's behaviour. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. This has a positive impact on pupils' rate of progress. Where incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur, the majority of pupils ignore the outburst and continue with their work. Pupils with a history of aggressive behaviour manage their anger well as a result of good procedures. For example, older pupils have anger management targets written by their work stations. One pupil who was clearly struggling to control his temper was observed using his strategy and withdrawing to the hall for a few minutes. This enabled other pupils in the room to continue with their work unaffected. On return he quietly settled to his work and continued to make progress.

14. Pupils behave very well in their houses. They respond well to the friendly yet purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are polite and courteous to one another, to adults and to visitors. They quickly develop routines in their homes and wait patiently for their turn to use the bathroom or join in a game. Mealtimes are pleasant social occasions and all pupils engage in conversations with staff, reviewing their day and making suggestions for evening activities. Pupils show great respect for property and for each other. In the homes they respect each other's privacy, knocking on doors and waiting to be invited into their friend's room. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Pupils quickly learn to recognise the consequences of their actions on other people and most strive to improve their relationships. The number of exclusions has remained static despite the increase in number of pupils with aggressive behaviour. During the inspection there was no evidence of aggressive behaviour, racism or bullying, and pupils do not consider this to be a problem.

15. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, those between pupils are good. All adults provide good role models and play a defining role in school life, creating a climate of warmth and mutual trust that provides a firm foundation for learning. Parents confirm that relationships between staff and pupils are a major influence on pupils' learning. Pupils readily applaud the success of their peers and admire their achievements. For example, when pupils perform well in physical education or show good work in assembly, others display genuine pleasure at their success. They willingly share in the joy of those who are awarded certificates for effort, progress or good behaviour.

16. Pupils respond very well to the numerous opportunities for personal development. Most make sensible choices of activities during lessons, in the evening and out in the community. Pupils who are members of the School Council undertake their duties conscientiously and endeavour to represent the concerns of their peers at their meetings. For example, council members discuss the problems arising from the need to upgrade the locks on the bathroom doors in the girls' lodge. Pupils act responsibly when given tasks to do in the classroom, and undertake chores such as serving at table and tidying up with good humour. When taking part in activities away from the school, such as swimming or horse riding, pupils act as good ambassadors of the school and behave impeccably. Such examples of responsible behaviour and good citizenship make a major contribution to pupils' personal development.

17. The levels of attendance remain good and slightly improved on those at the time of the previous inspection. The rate of 93.96 percent is close to the national average for all schools and well above the average for schools of this type. Pupils arrive punctually and little time is lost between activities, ensuring a prompt start to the day. This has a direct impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in this inspection. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. It is good or better in almost two thirds of lessons and very good or excellent in one quarter of lessons. The quality of teaching is reflected in the quality of learning which is good across the school. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils at Key Stage 1, both of whom were being taught in a class of less able Year 3 pupils. As such judgements regarding teaching and learning refer solely to Key Stage 2. Teaching in English, science, geography, religious education and design technology is good. Teaching in art is very good.

19. All staff are confident in teaching the numeracy and literacy strategies and all develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Whilst all teachers are confident when teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, their confidence and experience of teaching pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies is limited. This reduces the effectiveness of learning for these pupils. The teaching of personal, social and health education is very good across both education and residential settings. Where teachers have a limited knowledge of a specialist subject, for example, in information technology and music, they receive good support from the subject manager which enables them to improve their effectiveness. However, on occasions a lack of confidence is still evident, for example, in information technology not all teachers use subject specific vocabulary such as *drag* and *icon* and this limits pupils' progress in extending their technical vocabulary.

20. Teachers make good use of pupils' basic skills in other lessons and in the residential houses. For example, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed effectively in lessons when pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to increasingly complex instructions and all are expected to recount what they have learned at the end of each lesson. At mealtimes and in the evening, all staff engage pupils in conversation discussing issues which are important to the pupils such as the soft play area being out of commission. Reading and writing skills are extended effectively in most subjects. Teachers provide sound opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills well as when measuring accurately in food technology and

in science. Pupils' information technology skills are used well in mathematics and English. However, because of a lack of resources pupils have too few opportunities to develop their information technology skills in science and in the residential setting.

21. Teachers and support staff work extremely well together and provide very good support for pupils. All staff manage pupils well. Pupils respond well to being treated with respect and dignity. High levels of trust result in improved self-esteem and give pupils the confidence to persevere and try harder. Teachers and support staff use a good range of strategies to control behaviour and maintain interest. For example, teachers emphasise *listening time* when they expect pupils to listen quietly without interrupting. All staff are aware that most of their pupils have been isolated in previous education and provide very good opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or in groups thus improving social skills and self-confidence. Care is taken by all staff to ensure that the small number of girls have equality of opportunity in questions, activities and discussions. Pupils' behaviour is managed consistently across the education and residential settings. As a result pupils know what is expected of them, behave appropriately and make good gains in their personal and social development. Pupils who have previously been disaffected, for example a number of Afro-Caribbean boys, grow in confidence and maturity as a result of the good role models and sensitivity to their particular needs. The management of pupils with Asperger's syndrome and autistic tendencies is variable.

22. Teachers provide a good structure to their lessons. Lessons begin with a useful introduction as to what pupils will learn and teachers use a good range of activities to maintain interest for example videos, activity sheets and group work. In lessons where teaching is very good and excellent, imaginative practical activities fill the pupils with enthusiasm and enable them to recall their learning accurately. For example, older pupils taking part in a wartime broadcast and pupils with more complex learning difficulties launder clothes as the Victorians would have done and describe in detail the activities they have undertaken.

23. High expectations of pupils' behaviour produces a calm working atmosphere and the expectation of pupils to complete work and to meet targets ensures good progress. Where teaching is particularly effective pupils are continuously challenged to extend their knowledge. For example, in art when a pupil described a face as looking *sad* the teacher challenged pupils to come up with other *adjectives* resulting in descriptions such as *depressed, unhappy* and *miserable* thus extending the pupils' vocabulary and increasing their literacy skills. Whilst many teachers produce a range of worksheets which are carefully matched to pupils' abilities, some teachers provide the same worksheet for pupils of all abilities. Some pupils find the work too difficult, others too easy and occasionally become bored and lose concentration. This reduces their rate of progress

24. Teachers and support staff assess pupils' work continuously alongside them and give good indications as to how work might be improved. However, day to day recording is not used consistently across the school and individual targets are not always taken into account when planning further work. Where teaching is more effective problems encountered by pupils are used as a basis for planning further work. For example, pupils experiencing difficulties with unit and non-unit fractions are given additional exercises next day. To ensure they have full understanding the teacher encourages them to explain how they work their

answers out. Most lessons end with a useful review to enable pupils to reflect on what they have learned and how they can improve.

25. Some parents and carers expressed a concern regarding the amount of work their child receives to do at home. Most pupils receive regular homework and this is well supervised in residential setting. However, homework does not always support work undertaken in class. Pupils make greater progress where homework consolidates and extends activities undertaken in class.

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

26. Pupils are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities, within both the taught and twenty four hour curricula, which clearly reflect the aims of the school. The curriculum offered is particularly relevant to the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The taught curriculum provided meets statutory requirements other than in a small element of information technology, and gives pupils a broad experience of all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is an appropriate emphasis on personal, social and health education, which gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress in this area. At the time of the last inspection, the taught curriculum was described as a strength of the school, and the recent developments linking individual education plans and individual care plans have enhanced the effectiveness of the twenty four hour curriculum. The size of the school necessitates the mixing of year groups in nearly all classes, but this is generally well managed. The majority of pupils in the school are of Key Stage 2 age, two pupils are in Key Stage 1. At the time of the inspection they were suitably working on individual programmes in a class with less able Year 3 pupils. No pupil is disapplied from any aspect of the National Curriculum.

27. Policies have been written for all subjects and teachers base their termly planning on the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. English and mathematics are carefully matched to the requirements of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, and there is additional time allocated to give pupils opportunities to extend their writing. Religious education is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus and meets statutory requirements. Teachers target the curriculum levels to meet the needs of the pupils in each class, providing curriculum opportunities in which pupils can succeed and progress. Discussions between staff, some joint planning across year groups and monitoring of plans by subject managers, help to ensure that pupils' previous learning can be built on in a satisfactory manner.

28. The school has made good progress in the implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies which are being adapted to meet the needs of pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on these within the overall curriculum, in order to give pupils access to other curriculum areas. Pupils enjoy an equality of opportunity and the needs of the small number of girls and of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well met by the curriculum offered. All pupils in the school have statements of special educational need, mainly for emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the information from these is used to set individual targets for learning. Overall, the curricular provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. Older pupils with complex learning difficulties have a well

planned curriculum at appropriate levels of the National Curriculum. The curriculum offered for pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies, while based on the National Curriculum, does not always fully meet pupils' needs. The school recognises this is an area for further development.

29. The school provides many good opportunities to enrich the curriculum, both within the school day and within the twenty four hour curriculum, and provision for extra curricular activities is very good. A wide range of visits has given support to pupils' learning in different areas of the curriculum. For example, during this school year, pupils have visited a Victorian school and museum, a Victorian coal mine and a mining museum, a nature centre and a garden centre. They have been to the theatre to see *The Witches* and to a production of *The Nutcracker*. In addition all pupils have the opportunity to undertake residential visits which enhance both learning and social skills. At the time of the inspection, one group had just returned from a field trip to Gradbach.

30. Pupils who are in residence at the school during the week are offered a good variety of extra curricular activities. These include outdoor activities such as mountain biking, rock climbing, trampoline and swimming. In addition to extending personal development, these activities suitably enrich the physical education curriculum. There are recreational visits such as bowling and to the cinema. A few pupils attend local groups such as guides and brownies. Within the residences pupils have suitable opportunities to do homework, to read or to play alone or with others. Many opportunities offered for group activities enhance pupils' social skills and their self-esteem. Residential care workers, make a significant contribution to the twenty four hour curriculum, organising activities such as cooking and art work, and displays demonstrate the effort which pupils put into these. Group discussions form an important part of their experiences, and the positive impact of these is shown in such items as a display made by some of the pupils on the theme of *keeping safe*. Staff ensure that the few day pupils in the school have similar opportunities for extra curricular activities where appropriate. Some pupils have an extended day so that they participate in activities after school, and eat with pupils who are resident. Many of the outdoor activities, such as horse riding and swimming, are also offered during the day so that all pupils can be involved. Day pupils participate in all residential visits and other trips, and special arrangements are made when classes are going to theatres and return late to the school.

31. The school has good links with the community which contribute well to pupils' learning. Many of the visits which pupils undertake, for example, in history and geography, are within the local area. Individuals from the community offer support in classes on a regular basis. The local ranger guides perform an annual pantomime for the pupils. Pupils attending local groups such as scouts and guides make good progress in their social development. Some of the extra curricular activities such as mountain biking and caving are organised by the community police. Local groups, such as the Balsall Common Lions and the Knowle British Legion make a good contribution to the school by offering financial support. Local businesses contribute to the school fete, and the Lapworth Round Table provides Father Christmas on an annual basis. The Territorial Army built the outdoor play equipment for the school.

32. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and has improved since the last inspection. The daily act of worship now includes prayers and meets requirements. The content of worship is thought provoking, and pupils are encouraged

to develop an awareness of the role of God in their lives. Many pupils write their own prayers and are proud to read them in worship time. Assemblies give pupils good opportunities to develop their skills. For example, pupils use their speaking skills well when taking part in a drama illustrating *being helpful*. Through work in religious education, pupils are given the opportunity to discuss the spiritual message of parables and to understand and respect the beliefs of other major world faiths.

33. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils are encouraged to understand the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour codes are agreed between staff and pupils and are prominently displayed in all rooms. Displays around the school make pupils aware of behaviour which the school values such as staying in class, respecting other people and their possessions, and those they reject such as stealing, swearing and insults. Pupils are reminded of the school's mission of *mutual respect* and encouraged to establish the belief that more can be achieved when working with others than when working alone. All adults present good role models and use opportunities such as mealtimes, *circle time*, and time in the residential units to emphasise the attitudes and values the school promotes. Good behaviour is reinforced by good use of praise and reward. For extremes of behaviour, sanctions, guidance and anger management enable pupils to take control of their behaviour. When pupils behave inappropriately they are encouraged to consider the effect of their actions, and most make genuine apologies

34. Very good provision is made for the pupils' social development. Personal and social education underpins the work of the school and is firmly embedded in the twenty four hour curriculum. The quality of relationships within the school is very good. All pupils are valued for their own qualities and all are treated with respect. The school recognises that many pupils have been isolated prior to attending the school and all staff provide very good opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons and when undertaking whole school projects such as the magnificent *Wonderful World friendship quilt*. Mealtimes are pleasant social experiences and ensure pupils improve their social skills by being polite, co-operative, considerate and patient. There are many good opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities, many of which are physically challenging. Games undertaken in physical education and in the evening encourage pupils to appreciate the need for rules and fair play. Pupils are encouraged to help others by the *buddy system* and by sending shoe boxes filled with gifts to needy people in Albania. Pupils gain a good insight into citizenship through communal living and through the workings of the School Council. Pupils extend their social skills in the wider community through opportunities to join groups in the locality for activities such as swimming, sailing, orienteering, athletics and cubs.

35. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils have good opportunities to develop an awareness of their own cultural heritage through visits to museums and to a Victorian schoolroom and an old coal mine. Work undertaken as part of the Literacy Strategy introduces pupils to the works of authors such as Kenneth Graham. An appreciation of the work of a good range of European artists such as Monet and Seurat is encouraged through art and pupils have numerous opportunities to produce work such as African and Aboriginal wall hangings. Musical appreciation is fostered through the music curriculum and through the good use of a wide range of musical styles at the beginning and end of collective worship. Links with the Birmingham ballet have further supported musical appreciation and enabled pupils to become aware of dance forms, culminating in their production of *The Nutcracker*. The school makes very good use of *artists in residence*.

Attractive mosaic wall plaques depicting the life of the school and intricate colourful masks evidence the good development of pupils' creative talents. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate the rich multi-cultural population of the school. Festivals such as Diwali and Eid are recognised and Muslim prayers are above the door of a pupil's bedroom. Pupils visit ethnic shops to buy exotic produce and prepare food for events such as a Caribbean evening.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides good, clear and detailed procedures for the care of its pupils, resulting in an atmosphere of security and homeliness which is greatly appreciated by parents. Such good provision enables pupils to learn effectively from a secure and happy base. Pupils confirm that they feel happy and well cared for both at school and in the residential setting. This is reflected in the way pupils conduct themselves around the school and in their houses and in the very good relationships which exist between staff and pupils.

37. Procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety and child protection are very good. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and well implemented by all staff. All the issues identified by the previous inspection have been addressed. Communication links between the education and residential settings have been greatly improved and staff from both settings are involved in reviewing and setting new targets in individual education plans. The school now has a very good range of policies and procedures relating to child protection, health and safety, first aid and behaviour, all of which meet requirements. The consistent application of such policies makes a significant contribution to pupils' sense of wellbeing and personal safety. Management have responded well to the recommendations of a recent review of care arrangements resulting in an overlap between staff shifts to ensure full exchange of information. Regular contact by the home-school liaison officer does much to reassure parents and carers that their child is being looked after well.

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good and effective use is made of the education welfare service. The marking of registers meets requirements for morning registration, though not all registers are marked in an afternoon. The practice of registers remaining with teachers is unsatisfactory. Few teachers take their registers to other teaching areas such as the hall and if an emergency were to occur the registers would not be readily available for checking. Residential care staff ensure pupils arrive promptly for the start of lessons, this makes a good start to the school day and has a positive impact on the pupils' attitude to learning.

39. The very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour reflect the shared values of staff in both the residential and the school setting. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The impact of these procedures is clearly evident in the effective and firm way in which all staff manages pupils' behaviour. The effective development of anger management has enabled pupils with violent behaviour to develop strategies to enable them to cope and take a full part in all the activities the school offers. The system of rewards and sanctions is fair and is understood by all pupils. Good use is made of the *bleep system* to support pupils who need time out of lessons either to calm down or to talk about their problems.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development are good. The twenty four hour curriculum is used effectively to promote this aspect. Whilst overall the school monitors personal development well, occasionally the lack of appropriate targets for pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies limits the development of these pupils. Pupils develop a good awareness of citizenship and self-awareness through living as part of a residential community and through the opportunity to serve as a member of the School Council. Arrangements for personal, social and health education are very good and underpin the work of the school. Sensitive issues such as sex education and drugs misuse awareness are comprehensively addressed. Pupils who have suffered traumatic experiences or bereavement are given good support and begin to come to terms with their situation.

41. The residential provision is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' educational and personal development. Residential care staff ensure their practice reflects that of education though in a less structured setting. Pupils are expected to undertake *chores* and only when they have completed their tasks are they allowed out to play. Pupils are enabled to make choices, for example, on the occasions they cook their own meals and decide on evening activities. Pupils of all ages are expected to take responsibility for their personal

hygiene and parents report their child makes good progress in this area. Staff readily support pupils with their homework tasks and a number provide additional literacy and numeracy work to improve the rate of pupils' progress. Suitable arrangements for other aspects of residential care are in place, including compliance with requirements relating to storage and administration of invasive drugs, though the school must ensure that procedures are not threatened by the planned departure of the school nurse. All pupils have access to a telephone to make private calls, and all are allocated a key worker. Sufficient staff are deployed to care for the pupils and appropriate records are maintained in addition to the systems and procedures shared with the school. Food is substantial, varied and tasty, and alternative menus are available at every meal. Sleeping arrangements are well supervised, and though waking night care is not thought to be appropriate for this cohort of residents, proper arrangements are in place for pupils' security and for the segregation of boys and girls.

42. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are sound. When pupils enter the school, the information provided in their statements is used well to set initial targets. This information is supplemented by baseline assessment which is being developed well. Teachers acquire a good understanding of the progress and needs of their pupils and use these well when setting targets in individual education plans. Useful summary sheets are used to record pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy against National Curriculum targets and against targets in their individual education plans. However, there is a lack of consistency in recording of progress in lessons which means that teachers do not always have sufficient recorded information to complete the summary sheets, or to inform the planning of future lessons. The planning sheets for foundation subjects contain a useful evaluation, and sometimes these are used well. However, there is tendency for these to be used to record behaviour rather than learning.

43. The procedure for annual reviews is very good. Reports are made available to parents and carers prior to the meeting in order for them to consider the implications. The annual review sets objectives for the following year, and the targets on individual education plans are suitably based on these objectives. Individual plans are reviewed each term but, at present, parents and carers are not involved in review.

44. Much good work has been done, since the last inspection, on the development of individual plans. The previous practice of separate plans for behaviour, care and education has been improved with the development into one plan covering all aspects. This makes for a more co-ordinated approach to pupils' development and ensures consistency across the settings. Progress against numeracy, literacy, behaviour and social targets is suitably recorded by the class teacher each term. While much consideration has been given to the improvement of targets, some are not sufficiently specific in order for progress to be measured easily. Targets for pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies do not always reflect the communication needs of the pupils. Pupils are suitably made aware of their targets by discussion and by having them written up on cards in the classroom or in the fronts of their exercise books. In some classes pupils are consistently reminded of their targets and of the strategies to meet them. This practice enables pupils to make particularly good progress towards their targets.

45. The school maintains contacts with a range of professionals, who provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. All additional needs in statements are met, other than provision for occupational therapy. Monthly visits from an educational

psychologist, and weekly visit from a consultant psychiatrist, a speech and language therapist and a music therapist provide good support for pupils with more complex learning difficulties and contribute well to their rate of progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents and carers have a positive view of the school. Those responding to the questionnaire and attending the meeting report that their children like to attend school, that the teaching is good and that their children make good progress not only academically, but also in social skills, personal development and hygiene. Parents appreciate how every child is made to feel important and is respected by all adults in the school. Both teaching and care staff are always ready to listen to parents, and to deal effectively with any complaints. Most parents have signed and returned the home school agreement.

47. Information for parents is satisfactory. While most parents and carers agree they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on, and that the school maintains regular links telephone links, a good number would like to be more written information and to be more involved in their child's education. The wide geographical spread of the school's catchment area and the anxiety of separation during their child's stay at school is very stressful for a number of parents. Many say they feel isolated. The absence of some form of parents association or support group reduces opportunities for them to come together. However, parents and carers appreciate the opportunity to attend harvest celebrations and high quality whole school productions, for example *The Nutcracker*.

48. Although telephone links between the school and parents are very good, written information is limited. A detailed home to school diary is successful for a number of parents, but this is not used consistently across the school. There are no newsletters informing parents of the activities of the school and few parents and carers know the topics their child is studying. As a result of the last inspection the school now meets requirements in its publication of the governor's annual report to parents. The school prospectus gives good detail as to what will be expected of pupils in their time at the school. Parents and carers are pleased with arrangements for Annual Reviews, agreeing that they are properly informed and fully involved. However, they would appreciate more written information regarding their child's progress. While already making a satisfactory contribution to their child's education, many parents and carers would like to become more involved. However, parents are not informed of targets set in individual education plans and as a result many feel they could be more involved in their child's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the school is good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and clear educational direction for the work of the school. The mission to *enable children to live and learn together in mutual respect* is reflected in every aspect of the school's life. The shared vision by all working at the school significantly improves pupils' self esteem and makes a positive impact on the quality of their learning.

50. The headteacher is well supported by her hard working deputy who does much to manage pupils' behaviour and maintain a calm, stable environment.

51. The senior management team comprising of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of care is effective. Links between education and residential settings have been greatly improved since the last inspection. Daily communication and regular meetings ensure consistency in the management of staff and pupils. The recent review of residential staff proved useful in improving the provision and in developing staff at all levels. There has been very good improvement in the management of the school since the last inspection. There is now a clear rationale for admissions. All levels of management now carry responsibilities and have systems in place to help the school move forward. All have a firm commitment to improve.

52. The governing body is very supportive of the school and visit at every opportunity. There is a useful link between the governors and the residential homes to ensure all element of the provision are effective. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher weekly. This results in effective communication and enables him to have a clear overview of the day to day running of the school and any issues that may arise. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements, has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and is successfully developing its role as *critical friend*. The school development plan continues to be of a good quality and reflects the needs of the school. Targets are prioritised and monitored by governors at their regular meetings. Suitable performance management targets have been agreed with the headteacher and her deputy to help the school improve.

53. The school is taking part in a local authority target setting project and this is developing well. Individual and class targets are being considered to enable the school to measure its effectiveness against similar schools. The results of national and formal tests are carefully analysed by gender and by race to ensure that all pupils make good progress. In addition performance indicators such as the reduction in the number of violent outbursts and the need to use restraint procedures are monitored and show good improvement in pupils' behaviour and the effectiveness of the school.

54. The management of the residential setting is good. The head of care has a clear overview of the school. Communications between residences and school are effective. The practice of teaching and care staff eating with the pupils at mealtimes provides useful time for exchanging information between the settings. The behaviour support system and *bleep system* ensure all staff are aware of pupils who are experiencing problems and that both settings manage pupils' behaviour consistently. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development and contributes to their rate of progress.

55. Subject managers have developed their role well. They undertake their work conscientiously and provide good support for colleagues. All have a clear overview of their subject and have suitable plans for further development and to raise standards. All subject managers have collated a detailed portfolio of work to reflect standards and track progress in their subject. The sampling of pupils' work and monitoring of teaching has improved the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

56. The headteacher as special educational needs co-ordinator maintains the register of pupils' special educational needs well, listing all pupils in the school and identifying additional special educational needs. All pupils at the school have statements of special educational needs. The school works hard to ensure the needs of pupils with additional needs are met. However, whilst the school informs the local authority of changes, a number of

statements have not been updated following annual reviews. There are also occasions on which there is a significant time lapse between the school admitting a pupil and receiving the statement from the local education authority, again this makes difficulties in organising effective provision for the pupils involved. A number of the statements do not name Springfield House as the identified school.

57. There is a good number of trained teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, not all staff have wide knowledge of teaching pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies. This limits the progress of these pupils. The practice of having a teacher and members of the care staff available in case of an outburst ensures lessons are conducted with minimum disruption thus enabling pupils to make good progress. There is a good number of well qualified support and care staff who are successful in encouraging pupils to have confidence in themselves and improve their self-esteem. The gender balance of care staff identified by the previous inspection has been addressed. All staff present good role models. The monitoring of teaching by senior managers has resulted in good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and is having a positive impact on learning. Appraisal takes the form of a professional interview for all staff. Opportunities for professional development are very good. There is suitable induction for new staff, and those who joined the school recently report they felt well supported. The headteacher's strong commitment to appraisal and professional development is having a positive impact on provision and standards, particularly in writing and information technology. Training in behaviour management and counselling has resulted in all staff enabling pupils to make good improvement in managing their behaviour. Under the leadership of the current headteacher useful reviews have taken place of care staff and the review of domestic staff is underway. All staff appreciate their professional interview, they feel valued and make good use of opportunities to develop their skills.

58. The quality of the spacious accommodation available to the school is very good. It enables effective delivery of a wide range of curricular experiences. There are sufficient teaching spaces and the residential facilities are extensive. Great care has been taken to differentiate between *school* and *home*. Good use has been made of small rooms within the main building, for example as counselling rooms and a medical room. The residential accommodation is pleasant, comfortable and well adapted to pupils' needs. Efforts have been made to create a homely environment where pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their own rooms. The buildings are well maintained and extremely well cared for in terms of day to day cleaning. Displays are attractive and interesting, celebrating pupils work and supporting learning. This encourages pupils to treat the school buildings with respect and helps them to recognise that their work is valued

59. Resources for teaching the curriculum are good in quality and quantity. A toy library has been provided since the last inspection. This enables pupils who have had a difficult childhood to learn how to play. The library has been improved, this enables pupils to develop their information retrieval skills. There has been an improvement in reading books, and all books are now colour coded according to level of difficulty to enable pupils to select their own books. There is a suitable range of books in the residences for pupils who enjoy reading. The provision of a specialist information technology suite is contributing well to standards in information technology. The number of computers has increased significantly very recently. However, there are no computers for pupils to use in the residences in the evening and the

range of software is limited. Resources to enable pupils to model, sense and control their environment are unsatisfactory.

60. The extensive grounds facilitate a good range of recreational activities during school time and leisure time. Pupils have access to a range of good adventure play equipment. The grounds are used effectively for environmental work and orienteering trails. The main house forms a rich resource for studies of local history. Unfortunately the stable block which houses the soft play area has been closed due to equipment needing repair. This facility provides a valuable resource for pupils, though is currently not accessible. The need for the development of a *calming down* room has been sensibly identified and work on this will commence in the next few weeks.

61. Financial management is good. Educational priorities are supported by careful financial planning and the governor's finance committee keep a keen eye on all spending. Day to day administration and communication is of a high standard. Good use is made of new technology. The school operates a tight budget. This is challenging for the school, nevertheless a satisfactory reserve is maintained. Management are aware of the principles of best value and network other schools with similar backgrounds in order to compare and evaluate their performance. Whilst management take account of good value when making purchases there are no systems in place to measure the impact of spending on standards. Specific grants for new technology and the Standards Fund are used appropriately. The recommendations of the latest audit report have been addressed. Whilst the inventory of equipment is dated, checking is not sufficiently rigorous. The school recognises this and has plans to maintain the transfer electronically.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to maintain present standards and further develop the strengths of the school, the headteacher staff and governing body should:

- (1) Improve provision for pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies by:
 - providing appropriate in-service training for staff
 - providing a structured communications programme
 - ensuring targets in individual education plans reflect communication needs.(3, 19, 21, 28, 44, 57, 64, 75)
- (2) Ensure assessment and recording procedures are used consistently across the school, and that targets in pupils' individual education plans are consistently taken into account when planning lessons.
(24, 42, 70, 75, 76, 78)
- (3) Enable parents and carers to become more involved in their child's learning by:
 - providing regular newsletters regarding the activities of the provision
 - providing more written information regarding their child's progress
 - providing more opportunities for parents to meet
 - encouraging parents to become involved in setting targets for their child.(43, 47, 48)
- (4) Further develop individual education plans to ensuring targets are sufficiently specific to be easily measurable. (44, 70, 75)
- (5) Establish systems to enable governors and senior managers to assess the impact of spending on training and resources on standards. (61)

The numbers in brackets after each key issue indicate the paragraphs in which the weaknesses are discussed.

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

- Improve resources in information technology to enable the full programmes of study to be taught. (9, 20, 96)
- Make suitable arrangements so that registers are easily accessible in case of emergency. (38)
- Ensure a check of equipment is undertaken systematically. (61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 52 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 45 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 4 | 21 | 39 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 50 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | N/A |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 7 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 0 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-------|
| School data | 93.96 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|------|
| School data | 0.63 |

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 | 8 |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | 1 |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | |
| White | 41 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 6 | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | 8 | |
| Other minority ethnic groups | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 5.6 |
| Average class size | 7 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 292 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1998/1999 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 1 014 678 |
| Total expenditure | 993 775 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 198 876 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 1 124 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 22 027 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 50 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 25 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 52 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 56 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 24 | 56 | 8 | 0 | 12 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 28.5 | 28.5 | 24 | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| The teaching is good. | 84 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 79 | 12.5 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 92 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 83.25 | 12.5 | 0 | 0 | 4.25 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 75 | 16.66 | 8.34 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 84 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 70.75 | 25 | 4.25 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 92 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

ENGLISH

63. Pupils' achievements in English are good. Most pupils enter the school with limited literacy skills and their special educational needs often mean that they have difficulties in their communication skills.

64. Pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills by being encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to one another and through good opportunities to use their skills. For example, at the end of most lessons pupils explain what they have learned to their peers and during mealtimes in the residential accommodation pupils are expected to engage in conversation recounting the activities of the day. Pupils in the lower part of the school generally listen attentively while teachers read stories or give instructions. Some stories and poems, which are well known, are greeted with enthusiasm, and pupils join in with parts which they know. They answer questions about the stories and about what they are doing in lessons. Although, for some pupils, this may be in single words or short phrases, they show that they have listened to, and understood, what they have been told. By the end of Key Stage 2 many of the pupils make use of a good range of vocabulary in talking about books they are reading as a class. They develop confidence in speaking both in class and to a wider audience, for example in assembly when talking about their achievements. Pupils show their competence in answering questions and in discussion in different subjects. Pupils with complex learning difficulties increase their vocabulary well through listening to poetry and describing their thoughts. For example, when thinking about trees, some are able to use words such as "squirrels scampering". Whilst pupils with autistic tendencies make sound progress, the lack of a structured communications programme limits their rate of progress.

65. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading. Younger pupils, and those with complex learning difficulties, develop their pre-reading skills well. They demonstrate an interest in books, looking at picture books and suggesting possible stories. Most know where to start reading a book, and some know about titles and authors. They enjoy stories and often identify rhyming words. Most understand that some stories contain a lot of repetition, and join in when these are being read. They begin to recognise initial letter sounds, so that they can match words by these sounds. More able pupils develop a variety of word attack skills, for example, they use pictures, the story line and phonic skills to decode new words. By Year 6, many pupils are confident, fluent readers, using improved skills, including predicting, to decode new words. They show good comprehension of what they read and are able to explain their choice of book and talk about the types of book they like to read. Many read for information about other subjects, and some pupils choose non-fiction books for general reading, as they have particular interests, such as sport, dinosaurs and space, which they wish to follow up. By this stage many lower attaining pupils read simple passages and show understanding of what they have read. However, some are still at an early stage of developing reading skills and could benefit from a more structured reading programme.

66. Progress in writing is good. Younger pupils and those with complex learning difficulties, develop pre-writing skills, such as tracking objects and following patterns. Many are able to copy over or underneath writing. Older pupils with complex learning difficulties make progress appropriate to their ability, with some being able to dictate sentences and copy

under these, while others begin to write a few sentences independently, using full stops and capital letters. Pupils in all classes take part in shared writing with the class or as part of a group. For example, after listening to the story of *the Gruffalo*, younger pupils suggest words that describe the animals. The words are written on the board and pupils choose the appropriate words to write under their illustrations. Pupils show good progress towards more independence in writing. For example when writing news, stories or poems, pupils in Years 3 and 4 write their own sentences, showing understanding of basic structure and punctuation. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils spell phonically regular words and high frequency irregular words correctly. They write a summary of a story independently, while less able pupils suggest sentences to tell a story, and then copy these from the board. Many draft and refine their work, for example, when they write letters of thanks for a visit to a museum. A number use information technology successfully to ensure the finished article is of a good standard. Throughout the school pupils use opportunities to write for different audiences and for different purposes well. This is a positive improvement from the previous inspection. Time, in addition to the literacy hour, is set aside for extended writing, and pupils are developing a positive attitude to this. They write poetry, letters, stories, instructions and recipes, advertisements, newspaper articles and biographies. For example, they write about stories they have read, such as *Myths and Legends* and *The Wind in the Willows*. More able pupils read a fantasy adventure, and then develop a similar story of their own. The content of pupils' writing develops well over time, and shows a wider range of vocabulary, and use of punctuation. Many pupils require support with spelling. Whilst many pupils know the alphabet and understand how to use dictionaries and word books, the development of this aspect is inconsistent.

67. Previously disaffected Afro-Caribbean boys make particularly good progress in all aspects of English as a result of specifically targeted work and the time and patience demonstrated by staff. The introduction and structure of the literacy strategy has been most successful for this group of pupils. The high quality of support pupils receive has enabled them to grow in confidence and experience success.

68. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which is being well developed to meet the needs of the pupils. Work in the literacy hour helps them to be clear about grammar and punctuation, and to develop the use of a wide vocabulary. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about tenses, and about verbs and adjectives. They look at opposites and words within words. In Years 5 and 6 they further extend vocabulary, and learn about writing in different forms such as dialogue. The development of oral and writing skills is well supported across the curriculum, and there are many examples of pupils using their skills, for example in science where they write about experiments, and in geography and history where they write accounts of visits. In different subject areas teachers introduce key words to pupils as they begin new topics, and these are sometimes displayed in classrooms. For example, in a religious education lesson for the older pupils with complex learning difficulties, the teacher writes key vocabulary as she tells a story. Pupils repeat the words and use them when to write their own words or sentences. In a Year 5 geography lesson on the weather and monsoons, the new vocabulary used in a video is carefully explained. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills, and these are particularly well supported in *Circle Time*, where pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions and to listen carefully to others.

69. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. The best lessons are well planned with clear objectives which are shared with the children, ensuring that they are aware of what they need to be learning. Key vocabulary is identified and explained and this extends pupils' speaking and writing skills. Interesting presentations and explanations engage pupils' interest and attention, as when a story is illustrated by the use of puppets. Good management of pupils' behaviour, linked to high expectations, means that pupils are enabled to concentrate on their work and to make good progress. Good relationships with pupils encourage them to make an effort with their work. There is consistent reinforcement of the learning, and a useful review of each lesson ensures pupils are reminded of what they have learnt. Pupils respond well to questions that are well targeted to ensure that all pupils are involved. Many concentrate for a good length of time, because they are interested in the work. Praise and encouragement are used appropriately, so that pupils know when they are deserved, and these also motivate pupils and help them to stay on task. Pupils try hard for much of the time, generally behave well and, in these lessons, make good progress. Less progress is made when teachers do not provide work which is appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils and, therefore, some pupils find the work too difficult and have to be given too much support to complete it.

70. The co-ordination of English is good. The subject manager has worked hard to introduce the National Literacy Strategy, and provides good support to teachers in advising on planning and in monitoring planning and teaching. He has also provided training for staff on various aspects of the English curriculum. Baseline assessment is being developed, to ensure clarity of teaching needs and to make progress clear. Teachers make termly assessments against the National Curriculum attainment targets and against the targets in individual education plans. However, but there is a lack of consistency across the school in recording on-going progress to provide a basis for the termly assessment. This lack of consistency also means that lesson plans do not always follow from previous learning. The literacy targets in individual education plans are not always sufficiently specific to be easily measurable. On occasions, targets are not identified in lesson plans, as a result opportunities for focusing on them are missed. A satisfactory range of resources for English has been developed, with the introduction of a reading scheme and the colour coding of library books to fit with this. Books have been acquired for the literacy hour, and some small sets of books for group reading. However, on occasions there is no large text to support a lesson and some pupils struggle to see the small print. The library provision has improved since the last inspection. The siting of the library near the dining classrooms enables pupils to gain access more easily to improve their information retrieval skills. There has been good improvement in the range of books in the residences, particularly books which reflect the rich ethnic mix of the school population.

71. The teaching of English makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development through the study of literature and poetry. Group discussions and shared writing make a good contribution to the pupils' social and moral development.

MATHEMATICS

72. Pupils achieve standards commensurate with their abilities in mathematics. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

73. Pupils' number skills are better developed than other aspects of the subject. Most pupils are making good progress in developing their mental agility skills through good oral

work at the start of each lesson. Pupils order numbers and many count backwards and forwards in twos, fives and tens successfully. Pupils begin to use and understand measurement and more able pupils measure accurately. They use their skills well as when accurately measuring materials to make photograph frames in design technology. Many recognise coins and carry out simple money problems. Pupils use their knowledge of fractions well when portioning food at mealtimes. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value and some are familiar with the four rules of number. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties sort colours and shapes and some recognise a few numbers. In the residential setting, pupils apply their skills well for example when weighing ingredients for cooking and when producing a graph showing pupils' preference of biscuits.

74. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in introducing the Numeracy Strategy and this is beginning to have an impact on standards. Pupils now have more opportunities to develop their practical skills and mental agility. Good attention is now paid to problem solving. The use of numeracy skills across the curriculum has developed well in science, geography, including residential and day visits, and to a lesser degree in physical education. Residential care staff support numeracy well in homework sessions and in small games.

75. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is satisfactory overall. Teaching was judged good or better in almost one third of lessons. Within these lessons there is a good pace to mental and oral work with clear explanations and a good understanding of the skills the pupils will acquire. Practical tasks are carefully matched to individual pupils and extension work is available for those who complete their work early. Where teaching is less effective, work is not always matched to individual needs and work examples are not always related to real life situations. All teachers plan their lessons well and planning follows the recommendations of the Numeracy Strategy. Most staff identify key vocabulary, though not all model the words in writing. This reduces pupils' progress in using their reading skills. Where teaching is good new work takes account of previous learning. For example, pupils experiencing difficulties with unit and non-unit fractions are given additional exercises the next day. To ensure full understanding, the teacher encourages them to explain how they have arrived at their answer. The plenary session provides a good opportunity for group members to reflect on what they have learned and to gain confidence by describing this to others. All teachers make good use of information technology to reinforce and extend numeracy. Where teaching is good, records of individual progress are maintained on a regular basis and are linked to the key mathematical objective sheet which takes account of targets in pupil's individual education plans. However, numeracy targets in individual education plans are not always sufficiently specific to be easily measurable. Good record keeping clearly supports learning and enables the teacher to set challenging tasks. Where teaching is less effective individual records are not maintained on a regular basis. Whilst satisfactory, the teaching of pupils with Asperger's syndrome and those with autistic tendencies does not always take account of their communication needs. Within all lessons seen the positive relationship between staff and pupils and good teamwork between teachers and support staff makes a positive contribution to pupils' confidence and to the quality of learning. Sympathetic management of pupils' behaviour results in minimum disruption and enables pupils to make progress.

76. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. The subject manager works hard and has provided good in-service training for her colleagues. This is beginning to have an impact on

standards. She has overseen the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy effectively. She has a clear overview of the subject and suitable plans to improve standards. Resources for numeracy are good and used well. Teachers make termly assessments against National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Whilst assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, no initial standardised diagnostic tests are undertaken in numeracy and there is an inconsistency in recording on-going progress to inform termly assessments.

SCIENCE

77. Pupils make good progress overall in science as a result of good and occasionally very good and excellent teaching. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties make good progress through carefully planned practical work and the support they receive. Younger pupils identify a range of materials and accurately predict those they think will be waterproof. They set up simple tests to try out their ideas and although their recording of the outcomes is limited, most explain confidently what they have done. Older pupils show a suitable knowledge and understanding of how the earth's surface is formed and how volcanoes come to exist. They use books and other reference materials to enhance their knowledge. Pupils test varying types of soil, very sensibly, and record their findings in an appropriate manner. Most pupils have a suitable understanding of how to set up an investigation and more able pupils make predictions as to the outcome. A good number explain the need for a test to be fair. Pupils of all abilities have a sound knowledge of living and non-living things.

78. The quality of teaching is consistently good, with some very good and excellent teaching in lessons with the older pupils. In these lessons, teachers' expectations are high and pupils are well challenged by skilful questioning. The methods adopted by teachers ensure that pupils are interested. As a result pupils concentrate well, give thoughtful responses and willingly contribute ideas. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and give good clear explanations. In these lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm motivates the pupils. All teachers develop the pupils speaking and listening skills well by giving clear instructions and emphasising specialist vocabulary such as *liquids*, *solids* and *gasses*. Pupils are expected to measure the results of investigations accurately, thus improving their numeracy skills. Because of a lack of suitable resources pupils have too few opportunities to use information technology to support their work in science. All teachers use resources, including books and video, effectively to help pupils understand the concepts being taught. Support staff offer valuable help to pupils, enabling them to maintain concentration and gain confidence. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Despite incidences of unsettled behaviour in some lessons, pupils' response is usually good or very good because they are interested and challenged well. Staff deal with inappropriate behaviour very effectively and efficiently. Pupils maintain good concentration because they are interested and tasks are presented to them in an engaging way. They thoroughly enjoy the practical work and whilst younger pupils have difficulty recording their findings, older pupils make a good attempt to record the outcome of their investigations. Pupils are constantly encouraged to make choices and take decisions and most show that they can do this sensibly. As a result they make good gains in their personal development. All are developing the skills of co-operation and sharing of equipment well. Much of this success is directly related to the extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils where there is a tangible degree of trust and mutual respect. Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure the delivery of a broad and balance curriculum but, on occasions, lesson plans show little evidence of targets within individual educational plans, nor of addressing the different needs of individual learners. A system of

recording the progress of individual pupils, in terms of skills and understanding is not yet fully developed and this could lead to a lack of continuity and progression for individual pupils. The newly acquired commercial scheme should assist with this process.

79. The co-ordinator for science is keen and enthusiastic and has begun the process of monitoring classroom practice. She has concentrated her efforts on improvements following the previous inspection and has conscientiously addressed areas of concern raised in discussions with colleagues. Resources have been re-organised and are now more accessible and her determined approach to improving standards is already having a positive

effect. The issue of continuity and progression, particularly in mixed aged classes remains but is currently being addressed.

ART

80. Art is a strength of the school. Pupils make good and often very good progress to achieve standards which are above those expected of pupils of this age and ability. There has been very good improvement in the skills the pupils acquire and in the range of artwork since the last inspection.

81. Younger pupils mix colours independently and know that light and dark shades may be obtained by adding black or white paint. They produce attractive marble effect work and blow through a straw using two colours of paint to produce interesting patterns. As they progress through the school, pupils make good progress using a range of media including paint, crayon and pastels. They investigate line and pattern in the school environment, and successfully recording a farmyard scene following a visit to Mary Arden's house. Observational drawings show a close attention to detail and good use is made of shading to produce a three dimensional effect. Pupils develop their collage work well in response to work by Cezanne and all ages work well together to produce an impressive mermaid collage which graces the main dining room. Techniques such as wax resist and printing are used effectively as backgrounds to topic work displays. Pupils in Year 6 linking with Warwick University undertake a course in black and white photography. Their work shows evidence of very good progress. Pupils take and process photographs that are of a good standard. Most pupils recall the developing process accurately and discuss how their photographs could be improved. For example, they recognise when photographs are underexposed and when they were not checked during processing.

82. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good and is very good overall. Teachers have improved their confidence in teaching the subject since the last inspection and now plan for the development of skills. Pupils are given clear instructions and a good understanding of the skills they will acquire in a lesson whilst still having good opportunities to be creative. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 print wallpaper and curtain fabric in the style of William Morris to support their Victorian display. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their art lessons and concentrate for surprisingly lengths of time. All staff make good use of sketch books to assess pupils' progress and an extensive portfolio of high quality pupils' work provides evidence of good progress in pupils' artistic skills across the school. Staff demonstrate how they value pupils' efforts in the way work is displayed and as when producing a frame for pupils' work to reflect the quality. In lessons where teaching is most effective adult support gives pupils the confidence to be more adventurous and pupils' English skills are developed well. For example, when discussing the expression on faces, the teacher requires pupils to think of other *adjectives* for *sad*; pupils suggest *miserable, unhappy and depressed*, thus extending their vocabulary and their understanding of *adjectives*. All lessons end with a very good review of the work that has been undertaken, and pupils make sensible comments about each other's work.

83. The co-ordination of art is very good. The enthusiasm of the subject manager and commitment to high standards motivates her colleagues. The teacher provides very good support for her colleagues and ensures the subject has a high profile in the school. In service training and whole school projects have done much to raise standards. The subject manager

has a very clear vision for the subject. She ensures that all elements of the subject are covered and recognises that whilst there is some use of information technology to produce computer generated art this is an area for development. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Whole school projects such as the magnificent *Wonderful World friendship quilt* and the intricate masks provide excellent opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and reflect the aim that *more can be achieved when working together than working as an individual*. An appreciation of the work of artists such as Monet and Seurat and an opportunity to produce batik wall hangings in the style of Aboriginal and African artists makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. The high quality art displays around the school do much to enhance the environment and enable pupils to appreciate how their work is valued.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Standards in design and technology are above those expected of pupils of this age and ability. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Their progress in the design process has improved since the last inspection.

85. Younger pupils visit the park to look at structures and shapes. On returning to the classroom they make structures using triangles and squares and discuss how to make their structure more rigid. Pupils use their knowledge of structures well to design and make and make animal homes and aircraft hangers. They design and make a money holder and discuss how effective their finished product will be. Older pupils use a range of mechanisms in their *pop up books* and use their information technology skills well to provide the text and illustrations. Pupils extend their numeracy skills well when discussing shapes and when measuring accurately, example when designing and making a photograph frame. By the age of eleven pupils design and make a pair of slippers successfully. All work out a plan, produce a pattern and evaluate their work They discuss the purpose of their product in detail considering which materials will be suitable and what they need to do to make the soles of their slippers rigid. Pupils use previous knowledge of joining and decorating to good effect to produce attractive functional slippers.

86. In food technology, pupils design and make sandwiches and Christmas cakes, producing attractive packaging to *gift wrap* their work. In the residences, pupils plan and produce simple meals and many have a good understanding of healthy eating. They evaluate their work and decide if the balance of the menu was suitable and if the food was well cooked.

87. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Lessons are planned well and clearly identify the knowledge and skills the pupils will acquire. Staff plan good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, thus improving their personal development. Where teaching is more effective, teachers take good account of pupils' numeracy targets in their planning and clarity of expectations results in an industrious working environment. Introductions to all lessons are good. All staff review the work which has been undertaken and the skills which have been involved and give clear instructions as to what is expected next. This extends pupils' listening skills and enables them to organise their work. Pupils of all abilities are expected to identify the resources they will need and all are given good opportunities for choice of materials. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their

work. They persevere even when tasks are tedious. All are proud to discuss their work and readily celebrate the work of others.

88. The co-ordination of design and technology is good. The subject manager supports staff well. He is fully conversant with the newly adopted scheme of work and has collated a useful portfolio of work which clearly evidences good progress. Resources are good and there is a good range of construction kits that enable pupils to make progress. The subject manager recognises the need to further develop computer assisted design and control technology.

GEOGRAPHY

89. Pupils make consistently good progress in geography. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have a growing awareness of physical and human geography of the locality and of more distant locations such as St. Lucia. They use their speaking skills well to describe differences in climate and in landscape. Younger pupils identify features in the landscape around the school such as *stream, bridge* and *woodland*. More able older pupils understand how the landscape of an area can be affected by human actions, for example the disused quarry at Stanton Moor. Younger pupils identify features in the landscape around the school such as *stream, bridge* and *woodland*. Older pupils use their mapping skills effectively when undertaking field work. They use their observational skills well to identify features on a map and give directions. Pupils recall previous knowledge when making suggestions how physical features can be displayed as symbols on a map.

90. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is good and on occasions very good. In lessons, teachers hold pupils' attention with interesting work and challenging questions. This in turn produces thoughtful responses from pupils who concentrate well and show an enthusiasm for the subject. In the lesson where the teacher works with the pupils to build up the design of a village as an introduction to map work and symbol keys, the pupils are extremely well focused and very enthusiastic when making their contributions. In another lesson a piece of video material on monsoons gives pupils a clear idea of the effects of weather on the everyday lives of people. Lessons are well planned and executed. Teachers provide a secure structure for pupils and support them well in their written tasks. The *brainstorming* process used to collect key words and information on quarries and their effect on the landscape, leaves pupils with a greater understanding of the issues they are debating. All staff provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking and writing skills; thus improving their confidence. Teachers encourage pupils to take care in the presentation of their work and in doing this pupils are taking pride in their finished pieces of work. Pupils' behaviour is good or very good in these lessons because they are interested and involved in their work. They are given good opportunities to work in pairs with a good degree of independence and they do this sensibly, thus improving their social skills. Teachers set clear expectations with regard to behaviour and working habits and the pupils respond very positively. They settle quickly to the tasks set and discuss their work with others. The strong and secure relationship between staff and pupils greatly enhances pupils' learning experiences.

91. Co-ordination of geography is very good. The subject manager has re-drafted the scheme of work in line with recommended guidelines and has done a substantial amount of work in preparing materials to support pupils and teachers. Much of the work is practical nature and several field study trips positively enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils'

knowledge and understanding. The school environment is used effectively to promote geographical studies and the local area is used well. The recreation of a *miniature rainforest* in the topic comparing the local area with St Lucia and the experiences provided to help pupils imagine what life in the rainforest is like is a good example of the creativity of teachers in their efforts to enhance pupils' understanding. The co-ordinator monitors work in geography across the school and regularly looks at pupils' work. However, targets from pupils' individual educational programmes do not feature in lesson plans. The great enthusiasm for work in geography is evident in the high standard of displays around the school and the extensive photographic evidence of the work undertaken on field trips. The teaching of geography makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal and cultural development.

HISTORY

92. Pupils' progress in history is never less than satisfactory and on occasions it is good or very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils are developing a sound understanding of the passage of time. Pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of the history of the locality and most realise they can glean information from a variety of sources such as books, photographs and papers. Pupils identify differences and similarities between the past and the present and more able pupils are aware how circumstances change over time. They recall previous learning well as when discussing their visit to a local village. Pupils with complex learning difficulties use artefacts well as when using Victorian household equipment and most confidently explain what they are doing. Older pupils demonstrate their knowledge well when they describe the workings of a Victorian coal mine in great detail. More able pupils use their reading skills effectively well when using worksheets and when finding new information from CD-ROM.

93. The quality of teaching has improved and is now at least satisfactory and is very good in lessons with older pupils. The structure of these lessons is very good, with teachers giving clear indications to pupils of their expectations and what they want pupils to achieve. Good opportunities are provided for pupils demonstrate their knowledge in an imaginative way. For example, the radio broadcast made by Year 6 pupils on a day in the life of a Victorian, gave pupils a useful opportunity to display this knowledge in a challenging way whilst at the same time, encouraging research and oracy skills. Teachers challenge pupils well through their questions and the tasks that they set for them. Because they are very clear about what they have to do, pupils set about their tasks with confidence and enthusiasm. Teachers manage their pupils well and because of the enthusiasm, which they inject, pupils become totally absorbed and, in turn, behaviour is very good. Lessons are lively and have a brisk pace. Questioning is used effectively to ensure pupils understand what is expected of them. Resources are used to great effect to re-create times gone by and to secure pupils' understanding. Visits to museums and educational centres help pupils to imagine what life was like long ago. Pupils behave well in lessons because they are interested and enthusiastic about the subject and because teachers engage them with their own enthusiasm. In their *radio broadcasts* they work hard to prepare what they will say and then perform with confidence to the rest of the class, who listen attentively. Older pupils are beginning to gain independence in their work and are able to work co-operatively in pairs as they prepare their tasks.

94. The co-ordinator leads this subject area well and has monitored lessons systematically. The scheme of work is now based on QCA guidelines, which ensures coverage of the

National Curriculum. However, the recording of individual progress is not consistent and targets from pupils' individual educational plans do not feature in teachers' lesson planning. There is an enthusiasm throughout the school for this area of study and visits and trips, alongside good use of the school buildings and the local community as a source for information and learning, ensure that history has a real meaning for the pupils. The teaching of history makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

95. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in using information technology. The school has made good improvement in using information technology in other subjects since the last inspection.

96. In the short time the computers have been in school, pupils have made rapid progress and acquired many skills. All are confident when using a mouse and most use a keyboard with increasing dexterity. More able pupils use CD-ROMs and the worldwide web to undertake personal research, for example when writing a biography of people such as Lord Byron. Older pupils use the technology well to word process and draft and refine their work. Many use paint packages and graphics to illustrate their work and produce work of a good quality. Progress in other aspects of information technology is less good because of a lack of suitable software. There are few resources to enable pupils to model, sense and control the environment. Whilst pupils progress at a good rate in the education setting they are unable to practice their skills in the residential setting because of a lack of resources.

97. Only a very small number of discrete information technology lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. Judgements have been made following a careful analysis of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning and from talking to staff and pupils. There has been an improvement in staff confidence in teaching information technology since the last inspection. All teachers now plan good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. Lesson plans identify progression in the skills pupils will acquire. However, not all teachers use the specialist vocabulary such as *icon*, *menu* and *drag*, and not all place sufficient emphasis on keyboard skills. Pupils enjoy working with computers. They treat the machines with respect and help each other with tasks. Pupils are proud of the standard of work they produce.

98. The co-ordination of information technology is good. Following an audit of staff skills, the subject manager has provided a good amount of professional development for staff. This is having a positive impact on standards. Resources for the teaching of information technology have improved dramatically very recently with the acquisition of machines through the National Grid for Learning and from the school's own funds. Whilst the number of computers is good, the school recognises the need to extend the range of software and has plans to do so when finances allow. The provision of lunchtime computer clubs has enabled pupils to improve their skills more quickly. Procedures for assessment and recording are sound, with many pupils' recording their success. However, day to day records are not always completed by staff. Useful portfolios of pupils' work provide good evidence of progress.

MUSIC

99. Pupils' progress and achievements in music continue to be sound. Pupils of all abilities sing a wide range of songs. A good number sing tunefully and with expression. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties sing with gusto and thoroughly enjoy action songs. All pupils are improving their sense of rhythm. When listening to music pupils identify instruments such as violins and trumpets and more able pupils say what the music means to them. For example when listening to *La Mer* one pupil describes a shark chasing a shoal of fish. Pupils show imagination when they compose their own music, for example reflecting a *space journey*, and say why they have chosen a particular instrument. More able pupils use

CD-ROM to aid their work. For example, they research the life of Debussy and try discover other works he composed.

100. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good, and is sound overall. Teachers are now more confident in their subject knowledge and make good use of a commercial scheme of work. This is reflected in the quality of learning. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject since the last inspection. Planning indicates that all aspects of the subject are taught. All staff ensure pupils enjoy their music lessons and provide a good range of activities to maintain pupils' interest. The success pupils' achieve makes a positive contribution to their self-esteem. Staff enable pupils of all abilities to develop their skills and gain confidence through outstanding whole school productions. In lessons where teaching is particularly effective, pupils' interest is engaged immediately. For example, singing of the *hello song* enables pupils to feel part of the lesson immediately. Where teaching is less effective, the pace is slower and there are missed opportunities for pupils to use percussion instruments.

101. Music is currently managed by the headteacher. The co-ordination of music is good. The headteacher provides good support for colleagues and has clear plans as to how to develop the subject. For example with the formation of a choir and in the use of CD as opposed to taped music. The resource base has been refined since the last inspections. Resources for the teaching of music are good, however, there are few instruments from beyond Europe. Assessment is linked to the scheme of work and achievement is reported to parents annually. Good use is made of a wide range of music in assemblies in order to create a suitable atmosphere and to extend the pupils knowledge of music. The therapeutic quality of music provides a positive experience for pupils, particularly those with more complex learning difficulties. The teaching of music makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Pupils' achievements in physical education are above those expected of pupils of this age and ability. Afro-Caribbean boys make particularly good progress and achieve high standards. Standards in all aspects have been improved since the last inspection. There has been very good improvement in pupils' attitudes and achievements in dance.

103. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in throwing, catching and passing a ball. When practising skills for *unihoc*, pupils make good progress in dribbling and controlling the puck. Pupils taking part in organised games use tactics well and use space effectively. Pupils are aware of the need for *warm up* and *cool down* and most are physically active for the whole of the lesson. In dance, pupils respond well to music and produce good routines using different heights and speed. Pupils working with the Birmingham Ballet made very good progress and used their skills well in the whole school production of *The Nutcracker*. Pupils make very good progress in swimming with a good number achieving the national requirement to swim twenty five metres. Most pupils are very confident in water. More able pupils swim on their backs, demonstrate a turn and roll and are determined to improve their performance. Pupils make good use of their mathematical and map reading skills when orienteering.

104. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is good overall. Teachers plan their lessons well and provide a good range of activities to improve pupils' stamina and to extend their skills. Good *warm up* activities ensure pupils are sufficiently supple to undertake strenuous exercise. Overall teachers pay good attention to health and safety, for

example, with regard to the height of sticks in *unihoc*. However, on one occasion the teacher did not provide sufficient guidance to pupils setting up the apparatus. Clear instructions enable pupils to understand what is expected of them and help pupils' improve their listening skills. Good use is made of demonstration to enable pupils to understand how they might improve. Appropriate challenges in swimming ensure pupils improve their skill and confidence. All staff use praise and encouragement effectively to improve pupils' confidence. Almost all lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of fair play, shared responsibility, mutual tolerance and the need for rules. Generally staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Education and residential staff are aware of pupils' personal targets. Previously disaffected Afro-Caribbean boys are managed sensitively, for example, staff have improved the self-esteem of a pupil who has been resistant to changing for physical activities with the result that he now takes an active part in all sports. Activities undertaken in Riding for the Disabled enable all pupils to develop self discipline and improve their social skills. High expectations by staff involved result in very good progress in personal development. Pupils are particularly well behaved when taking part in physical activities in public places. In lessons where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lessons is slow and on occasions pupils are presented with inappropriate challenges. Where teaching is particularly effective personal targets such as *coping with criticism* are taken into account in teachers' planning.

105. Physical education is an important area of the taught curriculum and the twenty four hour curriculum and makes a positive contribution to pupils' skills and personal development. Pupils of all ages and abilities are given good opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. All aspects of National Curriculum Programmes of Study are well addressed and enriched during school time through activities such as rock climbing, orienteering, ballet, sailing and Riding for the Disabled.

106. The co-ordination of taught physical education is satisfactory. The co-ordination of out of school activities and extra curricular activities is good. A very good range of additional activities such as skiing, mountain biking, caving, ice skating and bowling enable pupils to extend their skills in a range physical activities. Day pupils are suitably encouraged to participate in the additional activities and arrangements are made for an extended day or overnight accommodation to be available. Assessment in lessons is satisfactory and achievement is reported annually to parents. However, in order to develop the physical education programme detailed records of achievement linked to objectives would be beneficial. Resources for the teaching of physical education are good and very good use is made of the extensive grounds. However, the *soft play area* is currently out of commission. There is a need to ensure this area is refurbished as a priority to enable all pupils, but particularly those with aggressive tendencies and those with more complex learning difficulties, to use their surplus energy productively. The policy for physical education requires updating to include details of the current options available to pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. Pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory and in some lessons pupils make good progress. Most pupils start at the school with limited knowledge of the subject, both because of their special educational needs and their varied experiences of school attendance.

108. All pupils have been introduced to stories from, and information about, the world's main religions, with a particular focus on Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. Younger pupils

know some of the stories from the Jewish religion, such as the flight from Egypt. They have an awareness of festivals and other special events in different religions, for example, Succoth and Hanukkah in Judaism and Ramadan in Islam. They have discussed some of the beliefs and customs of religions such as the Five Pillars of faith in Islam. Pupils with complex learning difficulties have an awareness of some of the stories of Moses and Joseph, and are able to record these in ways appropriate to their ability levels. By the age of eleven, pupils have acquired some knowledge of stories from the life of Christ, and of the Jewish religion. They know something of the founding of the Sikh religion, and of the holy books in different religions. Many discuss how people show their faith, through worship and by signs and symbols. A positive development is that, in addition to writing the facts about the different religions, pupils have sound opportunities to learn from religion. They consider how belonging to a religion can affect the way in which people live. For example, during a lesson on the Ten Commandments pupils consider their own rules for living. Pupils write their own poignant prayers and poetry based on the events in the festivals about which they learn. Progress in religious education is well supported by assemblies, which reflect religious education lessons, particularly festivals. Pupils develop a good understanding of meals associated with other faiths in the residential setting with special meals linked to some of the festivals. Pupils' achievements could be further improved by focusing on one religion or theme at a time in order to allow pupils to consolidate their learning. At present, some pupils cover many aspects of religions in a short period of time, and their lack of previous learning means that they do not always have the basic knowledge to build upon.

109. In the small number of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was always at least satisfactory and, in half of lessons, it was good. Good lessons are well planned to give pupils opportunities to learn new information and to discuss the topics with which they are dealing. Clear explanations of words and lesson content are given, and teachers check that pupils have understood. Knowledge is reinforced through good questioning strategies. For example, in a lesson on the parable of the sower, the teacher checks by careful questioning, that the pupils have remembered the story and that they understand its meaning. Teachers put good emphasis on the need to respect the beliefs of others and pupils generally respond well to this. Where artefacts are used to demonstrate a topic to pupils, the learning is reinforced, as in a lesson in the complex learning difficulties class where the teacher demonstrates the anointing of Jesus' feet, involving the pupils in the actions. Although the school has a number of artefacts, few of these were seen in use. The quality of learning could be improved by giving more opportunities to see and handle objects from different religions. In addition, a wider range of differentiation strategies would mean that pupils could work more independently at levels appropriate to their abilities.

110. Religious education planning is based on the Local Agreed Syllabus and, as such, it meets statutory requirements. The manager took over the role in the last year, and has worked hard to develop the monitoring of the subject, both of planning and of teaching. Assessment in the subject has yet to be fully developed in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Some teachers record progress in lessons on their planning sheets, but these are not used consistently so that teachers do not always have the necessary evidence for report writing or for planning future lessons. The school recognises this is an area for development. Good lessons make a significant contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enhancing pupils' understanding of peoples' faiths, and giving opportunities to discuss moral issues. There are close links between the teaching of religious education and of personal, social and health education, in discussing topics such as care for others and for the

environment, but there are a few occasions in which there is minimal religious content. There is a satisfactory supply of religious education resources, and some are used in displays which reinforce learning. Further acquisition of posters and of library books would be a useful support to learning.