

INSPECTION REPORT

DELAMERE SCHOOL

Urmston, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106394

Headteacher: S. Huddart

Reporting inspector: Graham Pirt
No. 14563

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th July 2000

Inspection number: 189502

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community Special
Age range of pupils: 2 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Delamere School
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Urmston
Manchester
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Appropriate authority: Trafford LEA

Name of chair of governors: Alan Lord

Date of previous inspection: 30/09/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Graham Pirt	Registered inspector	Art, Music Special Educational Needs, Equal Opportunities,	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Eric Langford	Lay inspector	Integration,	How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Diane Pearson	Team inspector	English, Religious Education Under 5's	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mike Holohan	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information technology, Design technology, Personal, social and health education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, Staffing, accommodation and resources
Alan Tattersall		Science, Humanities, Physical Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Delamere School is a community special school situated in Urmston at the northern end of the borough of Trafford. The pupils, aged 2 to 11 years, have severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Approximately one third of pupils have profound and multiple difficulties. There is also a provision, resourced by the local education authority, for Key Stage 2 pupils who have severe learning difficulties with autistic spectrum disorders. It provides education for up to seventy pupils and at the time of the inspection there were 62 pupils on roll. This is slightly more than when previously inspected but it now only caters for pupils up to 11 years rather than 16 years. Pupils enter Delamere school with very low levels of attainment. Approximately 20% of pupils qualify for free school meals, which is half the number at the time of the previous inspection. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

There has been a major re-building programme, during the transition to a primary phase school, which has led to buildings and accommodation that are now very good.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features and relationships between all of the staff and pupils are excellent. The high standard of teaching means that pupils make good progress in their learning. Provision for children under 5, (Foundation Stage), and those in the autistic resource class is very good. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good. There is strong leadership from the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body. The school offers good value for money

What the school does well

- Relationships in the school both between pupils and pupils and staff are excellent.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body ensures that pupils achieve well.
- There is a very good pro-active approach to partnership with parents.
- There is very good social and educational integration that includes partner schools and the community.
- The nursery and autistic provision is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and personal developments, including moral, social and cultural developments are very good.
- The team work of all the staff and other agencies is very good.
- The school provides a very good standard of the accommodation that is well maintained.

What could be improved

- The lack of monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and what is being taught, prevents the school from further improving the balance of the curriculum and the rigour of what is being delivered in order to increase progress, particularly of the more able pupils.
- The development of management responsibility throughout the school.
- The improved use of assessment information to assist more detailed curriculum planning.

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 was last inspected in October 1996 when a number of issues were identified. Since then the characteristics of the school have altered due to its change to primary provision as part of the local education authority's re-organisation of provision. Some of the previous issues related to the secondary nature of the school and these are no longer appropriate. Improvements have been made in the planning and monitoring of the budget. School development planning is now costed and related to the budget. However, although monitored the costs are not fully judged in relation to the outcome. The curriculum has improved and there are budgets for curriculum areas although these are still not fully linked to a subject development plan. There have been significant improvements to accommodation and storage for large equipment is now good. The school has improved delivery of religious education and now meets statutory requirements for collective worship. The school has

therefore made good progress since the previous inspection and has the capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	A	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

Pupils are achieving well in most areas of the curriculum. Individual targets are well written and focused and provide good systems to promote pupils' personal development, where they help teachers to measure progress. Plans for pupils' feeding are particularly good and guide staff to help promote more independence at mealtimes. The school has improved the quality of academic targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy and these are now mostly good and form the basis for pupils individual education plans. This, along with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, is helping pupils to make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Effective use is made of programmes such as picture exchange systems to help pupils to make good progress in extending their communication skills. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. This is helped by the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils in the Foundation stage achieve very well in literacy and numeracy. Standards in Personal and Social Education are a strength of the school. Through science, food technology and personal and social education pupils are finding out about healthy living. They are achieving good levels of independence from the many opportunities to do things for themselves, learning to use and operate equipment in technology. In humanities pupils achievement is good. They learn about themselves in relation to where they live and start to understand the development of places and people over time. Pupils achieve well when exploring the creative opportunities in using art materials and exploring musical sounds and rhythms. The use of outside coaching staff helps pupils achievements to be good in physical education. Pupils achieve well in religious education helped by the wide range of artefacts used in teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is excellent. They have very good interest and involvement in the activities that they are presented with.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are well behaved in the classroom, around school and on visits. They get on well together and there is no evidence of bullying by pupils to others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They take the opportunities presented to develop initiative and responsibility. Relationships within the school are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils are punctual in attending lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall with over nine out of ten lessons being good or better. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and almost half of the teaching is very good or in some cases excellent. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was good in over a half of lessons and very good in one fifth of lessons. Planning is excellent in the Foundation Stage and teachers have very high expectations of pupils. The management of pupils in the school is very good and teachers are well supported by nursery nurses. Communication skills are well taught. Planning for more able pupils does not always challenge them sufficiently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good across the school and very good in the Foundation Stage
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, Provision for pupils' personal development and their moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils receive a very high standard of care in school. The provision of nursing, occupational therapy and physiotherapy staff is very good and enables pupils to receive a high level of support.

The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for Early Years children. The quality and range of learning opportunities for Key Stages 1 and 2 are good. The curriculum is broad and relevant and there has been significant review, planning and reorganisation since the last inspection. The curriculum is not yet fully balanced across all subjects as not all co-ordinators have an overview of their subject.. Personal and social education continues to make a significant contribution throughout the day and is well planned. The provision for health education is not as clear. There continues to be excellent work between all involved with the school in order to support parents and to ensure access to the curriculum for all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a precise and well informed vision for the school and provides a clear direction, both educationally and socially.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governors play a significant part in shaping the direction of the school and are extremely supportive of the headteacher and all other staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is satisfactory. However, there is no formalised evaluation of teaching and its effect on the progress of pupils.
The strategic use of	Very good. The use of books acquired for the literacy strategy and

resources	religious education is very good as is the use of the newly created library area. Very good use is made of the local community, including the nearby toy library and local schools.
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There is a good number of qualified staff, very good accommodation and very good resources. The school's aims, revised since its change of role, are extremely clear and are known, understood and applied by all staff. The headteacher has a precise and well informed vision for the school and provides a clear direction, both educationally and socially, for the school. Her leadership is excellent. Leadership and management has improved overall since the previous inspection. A good start has been made on applying the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school • Good teaching • The school is well managed • They find the school approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased homework • range of activities outside of lessons

Parents are very supportive of the work that the school does. Those features pleasing parents are confirmed by the inspection team. The team agrees that for some pupils it may be possible to increase the work done at home and that further extra-curricular activities could be provided at lunchtime.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' achievements are good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in the Foundation Stage. Targets in Individual education plans and annual reviews contribute to this. Teachers and nursery nurses have a detailed knowledge of pupils and their needs. They are supported well in this by therapists and other professionals so that lessons are well planned and the full range of special needs are addressed very well. As a result of this pupils are achieving well across all subjects but particularly in science and physical education and in their personal and social development.

2. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress towards the individual targets set for them, with very good achievements in personal and social education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. They make very good progress during their time in the nursery and reception class developing confidence in their relationships with staff and other pupils. This leads to a successful transfer to other schools or into Year 1 of Delamere school. Some children visit a local nursery where they relate well to other pupils. Mathematical concepts are well introduced and some children can count to five and recognise big and little. Most children are developing creative play and can match items to plates and sequence making a cup of tea in the play area. They demonstrate an increased understanding of shapes, colours, sizes and use of language. Some of the more able children handle money and wait for change when visiting the shops. Children are developing the use of switches to control devices and are developing good knowledge and understanding of the world exploring the properties of sand and water. Children are secure in the school and are beginning to explore the large play area with more able children beginning to notice specific locations such as areas in school and local environment. The soft play area and hydrotherapy encourages opportunities for physical development and body awareness. The occupational therapist and physiotherapist work alongside staff and children to promote independent movements. In creative work pupils respond well to suggestions to press and roll play dough and clay and to stick fish shapes onto paper.

3. In English pupils' achievement is good and this is an improvement on the previous report where it was considered satisfactory. The most able pupils recognise and name each other in photographs and hand them out to each other. They reply to the good morning song and sing "very well thank you how are you?". They are able to state a preference and ask politely for a drink. Other pupils can ask for a drink by pressing a 'Big Mac' switch. By the age of 7 most pupils can overwrite letter shapes with increased pencil control. The occupational therapist works alongside staff to successfully encourage and devise ways to help pupils hold a brush and a pencil. Pupils are beginning to colour pictures with more care and make a choice between colours. By the age of 11 pupils follow dotted lines with a felt tip pen and colour small areas with more precision. Three pupils are beginning to sequence their spiral books to express a story line and match a word to a picture. Pupils re-tell a story using the correct words during a plenary session. Pupils on the autistic continuum are able to move their daily task cards to the correct section and one boy is able to name the next task. These pupils make excellent progress working individually and alongside each other to sequence symbols, and select picture exchange cards.

4. In mathematics pupils' achievements are good. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when the progress of a proportion of the pupils was described as satisfactory. Pupils understanding of number, shape and measure is well developed. Pupils up to seven can count to 5 and place them in order of size. In practical activities

pupils can match objects of similar size, colour and shape. Those pupils with profound learning difficulties can select items of similar colour and shape and can join together mathematical shapes to make models. By the age of seven the majority of pupils have achieved an understanding of number and recognise numbers to 5. Higher attaining pupils are also developing the concept of shape and accurately identify and match triangles and circles. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils have developed a concept of money value, match colours and shapes and recognise numbers to 10.

5. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good throughout the school and this level of progress has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils aged seven listen well in order to take their turn to place their object, such as a pebble or crab in the rock pool and are beginning to understand the range of creatures and objects they may find together at the seaside. They are more able to use the appropriate sign, indicating that they recognise the cry of a seagull. Pupils aged eleven also work on the topic of the seaside, immersing their hands in water recognising that their hands have changed from dry to wet. They use the same signs in their study of the seaside to respond to the different texture of wet and dry sand. More able pupils sign that they prefer handling the dry sand, understanding that there is a difference.

6. Pupils' achievements in personal and social development are very good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Up to the age of seven pupils make very good progress in the acquisition of social skills. They develop self awareness and acquire the ability to form relationships, to be able to work in groups and to co-operate with each other. Pupils also make very good progress in social tasks and older pupils develop confidence and self reliance both through lessons and through tasks around the school. During outside visits pupils show themselves able to behave very well and to be polite and helpful.

7. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are good and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. By the age of seven pupils make good use of switches to operate a range of equipment and higher attaining pupils use switches to work independently on computers, using art programs where they can amend and adjust colours. Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils continue to make good progress in accessing programs to support and develop their work in literacy and communication skills. They can use the mouse and the cursor effectively and by the age of eleven can use the keyboard. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to achieve well in their use of equipment to access the curriculum. Their confident use of switches enables them to operate food blenders in food technology and speech amplifiers in the morning greetings sessions.

8. Whilst pupils' achievements in food technology are good, the lack of work with resistant materials restricts achievement in this area and therefore achievement overall is satisfactory. This appears to be similar to the findings of the previous report. By the age of seven pupils make good progress using basic kitchen tools. They manipulate materials when rolling and shaping pastry and playdough. Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils develop some skills in the use of simple tools and have produced model kites. Their achievements in food technology are often very good, with pupils being able to mix and prepare recipes.

9. Pupils' achievements are good in humanities. Younger pupils develop a greater awareness of their own locality, beginning to understand how roads link some familiar places. Older pupils make good progress, remembering entrances and the location of shops in the Trafford Centre. They make good progress understanding their own timetable, selecting symbols to represent lessons and beginning to understand the sequence of the

day. They have regular opportunities to look at photographs of themselves at earlier times in school, understanding that time has passed.

10. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good. Older pupils achieve particularly well in soccer through the excellent contribution of Manchester United coaching staff who lead a series of lessons. The therapists' very good contribution, working as part of the staff team, promotes pupils' development in physical education lessons. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, becoming accustomed to the different weather conditions and participating without fuss when it is not fine. Younger pupils remember some of the warm up activities at the start of the lesson. They make the best progress when they work towards their own targets.

11. Progress in art is good. Pupils develop a range of skills and increase their ability to use them. They learn to develop skills in handling a range of media from pencils and paints to printing and collage materials as well as some three-dimensional items. They are developing motor skills relating to both large and fine movements and demonstrating an increasing awareness of colour

12. Pupils' achievements in music are good. There are many opportunities for pupils to become involved in musical activities in the school and they show increasing awareness of its place in communication. Pupils develop a sense of rhythm being able to imitate phrases and clapping sounds. The youngest pupils are able to make vocalisations or gestures indicating turn taking in the activities. Pupils up to the age of 7 are starting using phrases in response to sung questions. Older pupils are demonstrating the ability to hold tunes and fit phrases to them as well as using rhythmical accompaniment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They demonstrate an enthusiasm for school that is excellent. This shows itself in an interest and involvement in activities that is very good. They are keen to participate in learning both in and out of the classroom, for instance on visits to the Trafford Centre or when participating in visits to neighbouring schools as part of the integration programme. They listen attentively, respond well to the teachers and other pupils and persevere with their work. They are keen to develop skills of independence and take on individual responsibilities.

14. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are excellent. Pupils are courteous, respectful to all people in the school and friendly. Some pupils have challenging behaviour as a part of their special need but this is well managed and behaviour in the school and outside on visits is very good.

15. Personal development is very good. There are good systems to promote pupils' personal development where they have good individual targets for teachers to measure progress. Pupils' plans for feeding are particularly good to guide staff and promote more independence at mealtimes. There are regular opportunities in lessons for pupils to increase their independence and responsibility.

16. Pupil attendance levels are good and have been maintained at this level since the last Ofsted inspection. The level of authorised absence is better than the national average and due in part to the good practice of pupils' medical appointments often being held in school. There have been very few instances of unauthorised pupil absence over the last year. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the effective pupil transport arrangements provide for a punctual start to the school day. Punctuality within the school is good and lessons were seen to start and finish on time during the inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is good overall. Over nine out of ten lessons were good or better. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and almost half of the teaching is very good or in some cases excellent. This represents an improvement on the teaching seen in the previous inspection when teaching was good in over a half of lessons and very good in one fifth of lessons.

18. Teaching is most successful in under 5's. In this area the effectiveness of teachers' planning and the expectations that teachers have of pupils are excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and of how to match this to the pupils' needs. They use very good teaching methods that are very appropriate to the pupils' levels of understanding, social development and physical needs. Assessment is well undertaken with the use of the "Portage" scheme to gain a thorough picture of pupils abilities in order to inform the planning that is then produced. The teaching of language and literacy is suitably emphasised throughout the majority of activities with groups of children joining in well with rhymes, circle time and stories.

19. There is very good teaching in most subjects but most notably in English, science, personal, social and health education and physical education.

20. Teaching in English is good overall and for pupils that are under 5, and with those pupils up to the age of 7, it is mainly very good. Lessons are well organised for pupils aged 5 to 7 who are encouraged to vocalise and use signs to greet each other. The more able pupils are encouraged to recognise and name each other in photographs and then distribute them appropriately. Clear signs to support learning are well used and the teacher emphasises the need for pupils to look and listen. Pupils need to state a preference for and ask politely for a drink with some pupils pressing a 'Big Mac' switch to indicate a preference.

21. Teachers use symbols matched to shopping items to encourage good reading skills linked well to the story line and sequence. A sensory approach successfully ensures pupils with more complex needs are fully involved. Pupils on the autistic continuum are encouraged well by staff to remain on task. Excellent progress is made in pupils working individually and alongside each other to sequence symbols, and select picture exchange cards. No teaching of English, for pupils between the age of 7 and 11, is less than satisfactory.

22. Teaching in mathematics is good overall. At foundation stage teaching of mathematics is excellent. The effective teaching means that pupils are beginning to understand counting and putting numbers into order when they enter the main school. Tasks given to pupils, in which number appears as part of the daily routine such as the counting of milk reinforce and develop their counting skills. Teaching of mathematics for pupils between 5 and 7 years is good. Teaching encourages and develops the ability to match objects of similar size, colour and shape. Pupils with profound learning difficulties are helped to select items of similar colour and size. Teaching of mathematics for pupils between 7 and 11 years is predominantly good with some that is very good. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of the value of money and compare values. The use of role play, such as when teachers have them "purchase" a meal is particularly effective. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties are encouraged to explore a range of textures and assemble simple objects. Pupils with autism are challenged to follow routines and to sit and respond during plenary sessions. No teaching at Key Stage 2 is less than satisfactory.

23. The teaching of science overall is very good. Teachers have a strong knowledge of

the appropriate delivery of the subject in relation to pupils' needs, particularly when linked to the sensory areas of the curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage are developing very good knowledge and understanding of the world when they explore the properties of sand and water. At Key Stage 1 teaching of science is good. Pupils aged seven are given the opportunities to examine the appearance and feel of seaside objects. Teachers reinforce learning particularly well with good signs demonstrating how squid move in the water. Teaching of science at Key Stage 2 is very good. Teachers prepare very effectively for lessons to ensure that pupils have good access to symbols and words to complement speech and the effective use of signs.

24. Personal, social and health education is a major feature of the school curriculum and teaching in nine out of ten lessons is good or very good. There is very good teaching in Foundation Stage and good and very good teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2. In one lesson pupils were visiting the toy library. The lesson had clear and effective learning objectives for each pupil's social development, for instance where pupils were expected to select and release toys. Pupils learn to develop social language skills, such as saying hello and goodbye, very well. They learn to work in groups and to co-operate with each.

25. Physical education teaching is good overall and is very good and excellent in the Foundation Stage. The very good contribution made by therapists, working as part of the staff team to promote pupils' development in physical education lessons, enhances this provision. Hydrotherapy encourages good progress in body awareness while gaining confidence in water. Older pupils are learning soccer skills through the excellent contribution of Manchester United coaching staff. All staff promote the use of language well. Teaching utilises the skills that pupils have previously learnt.

26. Teaching in design and technology is good. In one lesson of food technology teaching was very good when pupils were given high levels of independence and all pupils expected to participate fully in relation to their abilities. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to use previous learning to measure the contents effectively and also use cutting skills to shape the pastry for the preparation of dishes such as pizza.

27. In humanities (geography and history) teaching is good. Teachers plan well to extend pupils' geographical understanding. Younger pupils are given opportunities to develop a greater awareness of their own locality through planned visits to shops and facilities. Circle time and lessons in personal and social education are planned to provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn about personal history. They are given regular opportunities to look at photographs of themselves at earlier times in school, helping to learn that time has passed.

28. The teaching of ICT takes place within other subjects and is frequently on an individual basis. Teaching is good. Lessons are well structured with good quality individual learning targets. Pupils with profound learning difficulties are given opportunities to learn through sensory approaches and these are well developed, helping pupils to learn about cause and effect. Effective use is made of switches in other areas of the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy. However, the use of computers themselves is limited in some subjects, such as science and design technology, and requires further development.

29. Music features as part of many lessons. Overall the teaching of music is good. Teachers use music within many parts of the curriculum to extend communication and to involve pupils through the use of repetition and rhythm. Teachers often use taped music as part of the learning process and to develop social interaction. Pupils are encouraged to listen to music and learn to relate it to the world about them.

30. Art is included as an activity in many of the lessons and art activities feature widely across the school. The teaching of art is good helping pupils to learn skills with media and tools. Teachers use imaginative resources, particularly in one lesson where pupils were making three-dimensional representations of sunflowers based on the work of Van Gogh. Nursery nurses and other staff work well together as a team in these instances.

31. Religious education teaching is good across all key stages and the Foundation Stage. Teachers and nursery nurses play a significant part in making teaching successful. They will demonstrate the story text to promote interest and involvement and key words and signs are emphasised to follow the theme of the lesson.

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

32. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for children under 5 and good for pupils between 5 and 11. The subjects and areas delivered in the curriculum are broad and relevant to the pupils' needs. There has been significant review, planning and reorganisation since the last inspection. Although teaching is effective, the use of a topic based curriculum means that the balance of subjects and the use of time are not always clear in all classes. The curriculum meets the individual needs of the pupils very well to promote intellectual, physical and personal development, especially for those pupils with additional, complex and sensory needs and those with autistic spectrum disorders.

33. Good progress has been made to address the issues raised in the last inspection with Religious Education now being taught well. Personal and social education continues to make a significant contribution throughout the day and is well planned. However, the provision for health education is not clear, themes are taught within topic work but no specific sex education and awareness of the misuse of drugs is included. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education is to be developed under the new National Curriculum in the autumn term. The first period of the morning and afternoon when pupils arrive and have registration also involves literacy, numeracy and personal and social education elements that offer good opportunities for learning in most classes. In a few classes this session is not fully planned and results in missed opportunities for learning.

34. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are both very effective. They have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils within their individual education plans. The introduction of a greater structure to the lessons creates greater opportunities to cover a range of literacy and numeracy activities. Greater attention is being given to reading with the introduction of a new reading scheme. There are particularly good opportunities for speaking and listening with all staff using signing well throughout the day.

35. The provision for pupils with additional special needs is comprehensive, ensuring that they make very good progress towards individual targets. The excellent planning and assessment with the sensory team and therapists ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

36. Policies and schemes of work are good and are reviewed as part of the development planning cycle. The role of co-ordinators is developing and now requires all teachers to monitor their subjects. Computers and other devices are available in all classes, although not always used as fully in some subjects as possible. Planning is in place to upgrade all of the computer equipment. Good use is made of switches to ensure access for communication. Big Mac switches encourage pupils to make choices and join in with their group to increase their independence.

37. The provision for integration is very good with opportunities for pupils to take part in lessons in other schools and join their friends for lunch. Thirteen pupils are involved in visiting local schools. Within school all pupils are based in year groups and have full access to all areas of the curriculum.

38. The provision for spiritual development is good and for social, moral and cultural development is very good. The staff provides excellent role models for pupils with high expectations of good behaviour. Very careful support is given to pupils to help them to understand right from wrong. They have friends who they help for example giving another child a photograph or item from a story during a lesson and setting up a game of kicking the ball to each other at playtime. Using symbols during the early morning session pupils are very aware of their responsibilities and tasks for the day. During the week of the inspection the assembly celebrated the achievement of each pupil who went on an adventure week to the Lake District. Pupils were delighted with their certificates and were able to share in each others experiences of canoeing, hiking, and caving. Pupils are given special mentions for good work and achievement and are happy to share and applaud each other with great enthusiasm. Collective worship is celebrated well in each class with a theme of thinking of others and singing together. Prayers are said at lunch-time. Visiting musicians involve pupils in trying large brass instruments and the wide range of stories give pupils a wide cultural experience. Excellent photographs show pupils celebrating the Festivals of all Faiths, where they dress in traditional costumes. They enjoy sharing the Harvest festival and the Christmas story with their friends and relatives.

39. There are very good links established with mainstream schools and link schools which pupils will transfer to. A sensitive programme of visits is devised with staff from both schools giving very good support to parents and pupils. However, there are no additional activities at lunch times or after school where pupils can take part in sports, games or social activities. Links with the community are very good with football coaching and very good use of the local environment to support learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Pupils receive a very high standard of care in school. The provision of nursing, occupational therapy and physiotherapy staff is very good and enables pupils to receive a high level of support. The provision for child protection is very good. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and follow the locally agreed procedures. Therapists and nursing staff provide extra vigilance to protect pupils' interest.

41. Visiting specialists, such as the teachers for the sensory impaired, provide a very effective service. They form part of a very highly motivated team with teachers, support staff and therapists to promote a high standard of care and educational support.

42. Moving and handling arrangements of pupils are very good, where there is effective collaboration with school staff and therapists. Procedures are exemplary when staff take pupils off the school premises, both to ensure safe transport in school vehicles, to take care in public places and cross roads.

43. Accommodation incorporates many good safety features, such as the safety guards on all doors to prevent pupils jamming their fingers. Records are kept of all the required checks to ensure the effectiveness of safety equipment such as fire alarms and electrical items. The site manager keeps exemplary records of checks of water quality in the hydrotherapy pool. Risk assessment is generally good.

44. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The system for bus escorts to report to secretarial staff ensures that the school receives immediate information about absence. Teachers and administrative staff usually know why pupils are absent, determining reasons rapidly when there is doubt. This helps to ensure that attendance is good. Staff are vigilant in monitoring transport arrivals and taking appropriate action in cases of lateness.

45. The procedures for promoting and managing behaviour are very effective with a shared understanding of the code of conduct. Pupils receive consistently good guidance about how they should behave. Consequently, pupils respond very well when they visit shops in the neighbourhood, understanding that it is wrong to touch the merchandise. Where pupils have challenging behaviour there is effective monitoring and promotion of acceptable standards through individual plans. The school's success in managing behaviour is evident in the very high standards of behaviour in the school and the infrequent recording of incidents of bad behaviour over time.

46. There are good systems to promote pupils' personal development, where they have good individual targets for teachers to measure progress. Pupils' plans for feeding are particularly good to guide staff and promote more independence at mealtimes. Procedures for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' academic progress are good. The school has improved the quality of academic targets for pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy and most are good to form the basis for pupils' individual education plans. The provision is particularly good to review targets each term.

47. The school has implemented a number of strategies to provide information about pupils' progress. These include the Local Education Authority's materials for the assessment of children when they are of statutory school age and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities (QCA) 'P' level assessment criteria. Teachers maintain termly records for most subjects, with particularly detailed information for instance for science, to report on achievement in each aspect of the subject. Pupils' records of achievement provide good information of pupils' significant achievements as they progress through the school. The school has recently assessed pupils in English, mathematics and personal and social education using the QCA 'P' scales. The results cover only the current year and the school is planning appropriately to arrange tests on an annual basis to monitor pupils' progress more effectively. The school has also identified the need to improve the detail provided in the 'P' level scores to make them more effective in monitoring progress, particularly for less able pupils.

48. The way that teachers use assessment information to decide what they intend to teach varies. Teachers of pupils under 5 collect regular information using it well to plan further work. Teachers in the main school use the assessment information in some subjects, such as mathematics, to plan future learning. However, there is not a consistent approach to using assessment to plan for each subject, for instance, to set objectives consistently for more able pupils to build upon their previous learning and make further progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school's partnerships with parents are very good and show improvements since the last inspection. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a very good quality and standard of care and education during their time in school.

50. Parents are welcomed in school and actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Teachers and health professionals regularly communicate and work with parents in the education and development of their children. All staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards the pupils and parents acknowledge and value greatly the willingness and sensitivity with which the staff respond to any queries and concerns raised with them. Well established procedures ensure the full involvement of parents in the termly review of their child's individual education plans and targets and have a quality impact on the pupil's continued learning and development in the home environment.

51. The school benefits from a number of parents who are regularly involved as volunteer helpers in the school and appreciates greatly their valuable input and contribution. Of equal note are the large number of staff who give freely of their time in supporting and helping pupils on out-of-school visits. The very close working relationships that exist between parents and the school provide great benefits to the pupils.

52. The development of the parent support room is particularly noteworthy, sponsored by the "Friends of Delamere" association, as an information resource centre and meeting place. Regular fund raising social events are organised by the "friends" and plans are well advanced for regular coffee mornings to be held. Parents expressed high praise for the "Makaton signing" and the "Picture Exchange Communication System" workshops organised each term by the school. Meetings of these kind are valued greatly by parents as valuable information exchange opportunities as well as helping to improve their knowledge and skills in supporting the development of their child in the home.

53. The quality and regularity of information to parents is very good. It includes the use of a wide range of mediums from informal telephone conversations, the production of written formal reports and regular informal correspondence, to teacher and parent organised meetings each term to discuss progress and attainment of pupils. A range of relevant and up to date information is available in the parent support room and the comprehensive school prospectus serves as a very informative and valuable reference documents for parents. The developing use, within class 9, of video-tape recordings provides parents with an effective record of their child's progress and achievements in school. Parents receive good information about pupils' academic progress at termly meetings with teachers, where they can examine records of pupils' achievements. This, together with the detailed end of year reports, the effective annual review meetings and records of achievement files keep parents well informed.

54. The school operates a home-school diary system for each pupil which is well used by teachers and parents on a daily basis and proving to be a very effective medium for the regular exchange of timely information in support of the pupil's continued learning and personal development. These often refer to tasks that are to be undertaken at home, with parents or carers, usually related to augmentative communication strategies. Although certain tasks are identified, for some pupils, in their home-school diary there is not a consistent approach to homework across the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management of the headteacher and the key staff are very good. The school's aims, revised since its change of role, are extremely clear and are known, understood and applied by all staff. The headteacher has a clear, precise and well informed vision for the school and provides a clear educational direction for the school. Her leadership is excellent. Leadership and management have improved overall since the previous inspection.

56. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together and provide a positive example for all staff through their commitment to the school and its pupils. The deputy headteacher has been delegated a number of appropriate management tasks, including the very successful integration work. However, there is insufficient identification of a senior manager for oversight of the overall curriculum management. The contribution of other staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory. There are no other staff on the senior management team able to contribute towards the planning and prioritisation of school developments. Subject leaders, although generally managing their subjects well, do not provide development plans for their areas of responsibility linked to national, local or school based priorities. However, they now have budgets to manage for these areas, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, but these are insufficiently derived from a consideration of budget share in relation to identified priorities. The headteacher is aware of the need to develop these areas and some moves have already taken place to address them.

57. The school has worked hard to address the key issues from the previous inspection and as a result they have established very purposeful links with a number of neighbouring schools. The integration work with pupils is very well managed, leading to improvements in the quality and range of provision for pupils. The standards, which are very good at the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stages 1 and 2, show an improvement on those found in the previous inspection when they were satisfactory with progress being good in half of lessons.

58. The governors fulfil their statutory duties very well. They have effectively organised committees for curriculum, finance staffing and buildings and premises. The chair of governors has a thorough knowledge of the management of the school. Certain governors have specific responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The governors play a significant part in shaping the direction of the school and are extremely supportive of the headteacher and all other staff. Through very close liaison with the school, by way of regular visits, the governors maintain a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They play an active part in planning and monitoring spending. However, as yet they have not sufficiently developed an adequate system by which they can determine the success of the school when compared with the costs, and what pupils achieve.

59. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is satisfactory. The senior management team undertake a scrutiny of teachers' planning and undertake informal visits to classrooms. However there is no formalised evaluation of teaching and its effect on the progress of pupils. This leads to a situation where the balance of the curriculum is not evaluated, the content and quality of the teaching is not sufficiently examined and the outcomes of pupils learning are not measured against those findings. The headteacher is aware of this aspect and has plans to introduce a process in line with the onset of the national performance management initiative. The lack of monitoring of the curriculum time and teaching contributes to a small amount of teaching taking place that does not always challenge some of the more able pupils and insufficient rigour in relation to the use of time. Pupils' progress against targets in IEPs and Annual Reviews is monitored.

60. The good development planning process has improved since the last inspection and the school now has a costed and prioritised plan that runs for a year with a longer term overview for three years. This does not draw on development plans from subject leaders and, although it is now based on financial projections, there is still not a consistent link between the evaluation of present provision against a projected budget which then informs developments in the school. In turn, these are not identified in the light of national local and

school priorities, particularly over a time scale longer than one year.

61. Financial planning is good, based on the current development plan and on minutes of governors' committees, as is the monitoring of expenditure by both senior staff and the governors. The financial management of the school is good. Best value is obtained on larger items of expenditure by obtaining tenders and quotations. There is a clear view that the cheapest is not always the best and that the decision is based on a wider range of criteria. The day to day financial and administrative organisation is very good and provides the headteacher and governors with up to date financial information. Up to date technology is not employed as fully as might be in order to increase efficiency.

62. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff whose expertise is well matched to the needs of the pupils. All staff have received training in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as well as in other curriculum areas but the school recognises the need to provide further training in the use of computers. Informal procedures exist for the induction of new staff to the school. The senior management team have recognised the need to formalise these procedures to increase their effectiveness as well as revising the staff handbook to ensure that it reflects current school practice and policies.

63. The accommodation is very good. Attractive wall displays combined with a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance make it a pleasant and attractive environment for the pupils. Specialist facilities for a range of therapies, the development of the additional hall for physical education and the provision of the hydrotherapy pool are three of the improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. The school has spacious outside areas for creative play although there is a need to further develop outside play equipment. Storage space is generally good but there is a lack of space for the storage of large physical education equipment.

64. The school has a wide range of learning resources of good quality. The provision of books for English and artefacts for religious education is very good and the creation of a library area has heightened the profile of books around the school. Some of the current stock of computers is obsolete but are due to be replaced shortly when grant money is received. Very good use is made of the local community with visit to shopping Centre, a toy library and to nearby schools and nurseries both for work on curriculum areas and for the development of pupils' social skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Develop the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, in order to ensure a fully balanced curriculum and the time devoted to it. (paragraph 59)
- Develop a more broader management structure in the school in order to better inform and prioritise school planning, ensuring the school development plan is over a longer period. (paragraphs 56, 60)
- Develop the use of assessment information in order to assist in deciding what pupils should be taught next.(paragraph 48)

In addition the following minor issues should be addressed:

- develop the use of technology in both curriculum and management areas of the school (paragraphs 28, 36, 61)

- develop a health education programme to ensure that sex education and drug misuse education are appropriately addressed (paragraph 33)
- develop more extra-curricular activities at lunchtime (paragraph 39)
- ensure that the homework policy is clear and enable all parents to understand the school's provision (paragraph 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	32	53	8	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	62
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

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

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Nursery – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6
Average class size	6.9

Education support staff: Nursery – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	429

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	623364
Total expenditure	625240
Expenditure per pupil	10084
Balance brought forward from previous year	14190
Balance carried forward to next year	12314

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

62

Number of questionnaires returned

28

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	44	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	38	19	0	19
The teaching is good.	74	26	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	36	0	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	26	11	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	22	0	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	79	11	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	24	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	24	8	0	16

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The very large majority of parents expressed views that were extremely supportive at the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires. They spoke highly of the quality of the education and of the staff. They considered that their children were making progress and parents gave examples of how children had developed since coming to the school. The school homework policy does not sufficiently clarify what might be considered as homework and this might lead to misunderstandings by some parents. Parents raised the issue of inadequate provision for speech and language therapy.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65. The provision for early years is very good and is successfully organised to provide both assessment places and nursery provision for twenty children from the age of 2 to 5. Seven reception children have their own class teacher and nursery nurse. Children attend part time or full time with a sensitive introduction that closely involves parents. All children have full access to a professional sensory team, therapists and the school nurse. Some of these continue their work with the Home Intervention Team to ensure continuity and valuable support for parents. This professional team successfully contributes to statements of special educational need, individual targets, the review process and reports. Individual education plans are successfully cross referenced to baseline assessment and Portage. The very good planning for learning ensures clear objectives for each child. There has been good improvement in all areas since the last inspection.

66. Children make good progress towards their individual targets with some very good achievements in personal and social education. Children grow in confidence in playing and working with staff and other children. Children make very good progress during their time in the nursery and reception class to successfully transfer to other schools or into Year 1 of Delamere School. Three reception children successfully visit a local nursery where they enjoy playing with their friends.

67. The teaching of language and literacy is emphasised throughout activities with groups of children joining in well with rhymes, circle time and stories. The teachers and nursery nurses work well as a team to encourage good eye contact, vocalisation and signs to support understanding and expression. Children listen well, clap with delight when they have achieved a task and a few sign and say single words. One signed 'bell ring' when singing 'the people on the bus'. One girl can say 'bubbles' and sign 'rain'. With help children unzip a bag and show great excitement when they take out a musical object which they shake or rattle. They are making good progress to understand taking a turn and passing to each other. The use of exciting resources such as puppets, sounds, pictures, visiting story tellers and musicians further encourage and reinforce speaking, listening and understanding in a meaningful way. Sensory books ensure all children are involved in, and experience, story time. More able children enjoy turning pages of holiday brochures. Photographs and pictures are used effectively to compliment the topic. The speech and language therapist works closely with parents and teachers to advise on feeding programmes and language development.

68. Mathematical concepts are encouraged very well with counting rhymes and sequence songs. A few children count to five and recognise big and little. Pupils can sort red, green and blue into coloured sets. They give the same colour and are beginning to imitate and sequence while listening to bangs on a drum. Other pupils match balls to pegs from one to four with help. Children are developing creative play well to match items to plates, cups to saucers and sequence making a cup of tea and a sandwich in the play area. They match and post shapes with staff giving good guidance to promote understanding of shapes, colours, sizes and to use language of more, up and down. With the good sensory experiences provided children explore and reach for musical toys and track objects as they anticipate the next step. More able children hand over money and wait for change when visiting the shops. Children are developing good skills of cause and effect to use switches and touch screen to track, colour match and recognise a sequence on a screen.

69. Children are developing good knowledge and understanding of the world through the well planned lessons and topic of the seaside. They explore the properties of sand and water to pour and fill and enjoy filling buckets with sand showing surprise when staff make lots of sand pies with them. Children are secure in their familiar environment and are learning to be adventurous and explore the large play area. More able children are beginning to notice specific locations such as areas in school, the post office and local environment. Children are encouraged to touch and explore the textures of cereals and make choices between Rice Crispies and Weetabix. Teachers have pupils think about what the farmer grows and what are healthy foods. One child recognised the cereal box and giggled with delight.

70. The excellent resources such as the soft play area provide opportunities for physical development where children show excitement and sheer pleasure. They are supported well to be adventurous and to experience movements and exploratory play as they build the blocks to climb a bridge. Hydrotherapy encourages fun movements and good progress in body awareness while gaining confidence in water. Children are beginning to anticipate movements by responding to the sign 'more' or using body language, such as moving their legs. They respond well and rock to the warm up music session of movement. One child has made very good progress to raise his arms to anticipate holding on. Another, who has recently learned to walk, takes great delight in setting off across the room enjoying her new independence. Specialised equipment supports physical independence and development very well. The occupational therapist and physiotherapist work alongside staff and children to promote independent movements. While having fun outside children are learning to propel large plastic cars and bikes with increasing skill.

71. The well displayed lively models and colourful paintings of 'Incy Wincy Spider' and cobwebs illustrate children's enthusiasm for creative work. Staff encourage children to hold a brush and make marks with colourful paints on paper. They respond well to suggestions to press and roll play dough and clay. Children make good progress in sticking fish shapes onto paper following an exciting story about the rainbow fish and his friends with a theme of sharing and friendship. The gentle atmosphere encourages a time for reflection where children listen and are quiet. They sing a song holding hands together while looking at the candle. Bible stories such as Jonah and the Whale follow the topic theme well while experiencing shapes, sounds and objects to follow the text of the story.

72. The teaching and co-ordination of early years is very good with excellent team work. Planning is precise and assessment is very detailed in all areas of development. The very good use of time ensures all children are supported well throughout all activities. The exciting resources encourage children to interact with pleasure to make progress in all areas of development. Comprehensive recording and assessment provides very good information for parents and further placements.

ENGLISH

73. The provision for English is good with opportunities for pupils to learn and make good progress in speaking and listening. Reading and writing skills are good but require an overview and direction to ensure that pupils develop consistently throughout the school. The reading scheme is new and may be too difficult for many pupils, although a few pupils have commenced the first part of the scheme. There have been improvements since the last inspection to organise pupils into appropriate groups. The quality of teaching remains good with the very good support of the sensory and therapy teams. The quality and the use of the "Makaton" Vocabulary is very good with signs and symbols used appropriately. This is a strength of the school. Objects of reference are used very well throughout school with pupils who have more complex needs. Real objects, photographs and picture

exchange cards are used appropriately with all pupils and extremely well with pupils on the autistic spectrum. The separate library is very pleasant, well resourced with room for pupils to work and have story time. All classes have regular access with years five and six taking books home. The parent governors have colour coded the books and parents help in the library.

74. The well organised lessons for Key Stage 1 pupils encourage them to vocalise and use signs to say 'Hello'. The most able pupils recognise and name each other in photographs and hand them out to each other. The teacher emphasises looking and listening with clear signs to support learning. Two pupils reply to the good morning song to sing 'very well thank you how are you?'. They state a preference for and ask politely for a drink. Other pupils press a 'Big Mac' switch to indicate a preference and ask for a drink. One girl showed great excitement when pressing a touch screen to open a door as she loves to imitate the cackle of the witch. One girl smiled in recognition of herself in the photographs. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can overwrite letter shapes with increased pencil control. The occupational therapist works alongside staff to successfully encourage and devise ways in which pupils hold a brush and a pencil. Pupils are beginning to colour pictures with more care and make a choice between colours.

75. The very good use of resources and interactive story involves pupils in Year three to attend to, and understand, the text of the story. The lively pace and good intonation of the teacher's voice during an interactive story helps pupils well to use signs and show surprise and wonder when the sausages are burnt. The good use of symbols matched to shopping items encourage good reading skills linked well to the story line and sequence. One boy can sign a three words sentence to describe "Dad, burn, not nice" in the story. All pupils can name the main items in the story and sing ten fat sausages with enthusiasm. Three pupils can tell a simple picture story in sequence. They follow shapes and patterns with a pencil making good progress over time. A sensory approach successfully ensures pupils with more complex needs are fully involved.

76. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder move their daily task cards to the correct section with some pupils able to name the next task. All pupils are encouraged well by staff to remain on task. Excellent progress is made with pupils working individually and alongside each other to sequence symbols, and select picture exchange cards. One boy is beginning to understand from a choice of two cards that one will give him a reward of crisps. A girl is making a correct choice between eight small cards to gain her reward. The excellent teaching, very good team work and very good use of the "intensive interaction" successfully encourages pupils to express wants, likes and dislikes. Pupils have made good progress over time with two boys now working on tasks for up to 30 to 40 minutes at a time.

77. The class teachers and nursery nurses in Years 5 and 6 work very well together to stimulate speaking and listening while pupils' discuss their weekend news. Very good emphasis is placed on listening to each other, taking turns and expressing and signing a short phrase. The careful use of symbols ensures that pupils sequence and understand the events of the day. The big story book, in the National Literacy Strategy work, is used well by the teacher while the nursery nurse uses bright pictures of fish to engage the pupils' actively in the text. The moral of the story is linked well to giving. On going assessment is recorded well on the back of pupils' work. One girl can sequence the story in her picture book and other pupils are able to recognise a 'job' symbol for bicycles, drinks and books. By the age of 11 pupils can follow dotted lines, with a felt tip pen, and colour small areas with more precision. Three pupils are beginning to sequence their "spiral" books to express a story line and match a word to a picture. The good use of the plenary session encourages pupils to re-tell a story using the correct words.

78. The use of literacy across the curriculum is effective as pupils in year two listen well and understand the tasks in science. When on an outing all pupils communicate please and thank you. While visiting the toy library year 6 pupils greet the librarian and say goodbye they make good progress in talking to the librarian and most pupils understand how to take a book out. The most able pupils can put a tape in the recorder and sing into the microphone.

79. Overall, the teaching in English is good. The subject requires an overview by the co-ordinator to ensure balance and continuity, especially for reading and writing skills. Various forms of assessment are used well but the results need to be used to develop further planning. The use of "Performance Scales" support the subject well.

MATHEMATICS

80. Pupils' achievements are good. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when the progress of a proportion of the pupils was described as satisfactory. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorders also achieve well. The National Numeracy strategy has been introduced and teachers' have effectively developed their approaches to incorporate it into their lessons. Pupils understanding of number, shape and measure are well developed and opportunities to incorporate these skills into practical situations are generally used well by teachers.

81. The effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes means that pupils are beginning to understand counting and putting numbers into order when they enter the main school. These skills are reinforced well in a range of both formal and informal learning situations. Tasks given to pupils, such as the counting of milk and the singing of number songs reinforce and develop their counting skills.

82. Pupils up to seven count up to 5 and place them in order of size. In practical activities they show the ability to match objects of similar size, colour and shape such as when they combine pairs of socks or match piles of hats and scarves. Those pupils with profound learning difficulties can select items of similar colour and shape and can join together mathematical shapes to make models, such as a Christmas tree. By the age of seven the majority of pupils has achieved an understanding of number and can recognise numbers up to 5. Higher attaining pupils are also developing the concept of shape and can accurately identify and match triangles and circles.

83. Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils continue to develop their understanding and use of number skills. As well as being able to count up to five and to recognise numbers, pupils also develop an understanding of the value of money and can compare values, such as the difference between the price and the money offered, with some accuracy. The use of role-play, such as the "purchase" of a meal is particularly effective in the development of money handling skills. Those pupils with profound and multiple difficulties can explore a range of textures and can, by grasping objects of different shapes and colours, put them together into blocks. Pupils with autism have made good progress in their ability to follow routines and to sit and respond during plenary sessions. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils has developed a concept of money value, match colours and shapes and can recognise numbers up to 10 with higher attaining pupils able to count to 10.

84. Opportunities for numeracy across the curriculum are used well. Opportunities for practical use of number and money skills are used well in a range of situations, such as purchasing ice cream on a trip to the Trafford Centre, role playing a shop during a free

choice sessions or working on measuring and volume in food technology and science.

85. Teaching and learning are good overall with some examples of very good teaching. Teachers are successful in ensuring a wide range of stimulating activities which are well matched to the learning targets that have been set for pupils. Teachers are developing elements of the Numeracy Strategy well and have adopted the approach well to meet the needs of pupils with profound learning difficulties. The use of opportunities within “free choice” lessons to develop number skills through role play and sensory experience is a noteworthy element of the teaching which successfully addresses pupils’ needs. A good example of this was seen during a session with a year 5/6 group. The session was carefully planned to ensure a range of maths experiences for each pupil. To ensure the success of the lesson staff worked together very effectively as a team and the resources were good. Discussion was used well to ensure that pupils were aware of their tasks which were appropriate to their abilities. The teacher was confident in her knowledge of the pupils so that questions were used well to consolidate learning and to help pupils consider alternative answers. A feature of this lesson, and the other good lessons, was that pupils enjoyed themselves and the lessons were fun. Consequently, pupils made progress without realising it. All staff worked well with pupils. For example, one teacher worked well with pupils in a role play situation of serving a meal. During this session she asked questions such as “Is this full?” and “Which is the biggest?” thus giving the pupil the opportunity to develop concepts of volume and size.

86. The co-ordinator has been active in implementing the Numeracy Strategy. Opportunities to monitor teaching and to provide support and training for staff have been used well. Assessment procedures have been modified in the light of recent developments and provide an accurate picture of pupils’ achievement on entry and their progress as they move through the school.

SCIENCE

87. Pupils’ achievements and progress in science are good throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. Pupils aged seven examine the appearance and feel of seaside objects during the whole school topic of the seaside. They are very interested in the high quality of resources teachers provide, handling them with care and respect. Pupils listen well for their turn to place their object, such as a pebble or crab in the rock pool, beginning to understand the range of creatures and objects they may find together at the seaside. They broaden their knowledge, listening to taped sounds, where pupils that are more able use the appropriate sign, indicating that they recognise the cry of a seagull. Teachers reinforce learning particularly well when pupils sing a song, with signs that reinforce how squid move in the water.

88. Pupils aged eleven also follow the topic of the seaside, experimenting with water. Teachers prepare very effectively for lessons to ensure that pupils have good access to symbols and words to complement speech and the effective use of sign. Pupils immerse their hands in water, answering teachers’ carefully directed questions to say that their hands have changed from dry to wet. They use the same signs in their study of the seaside to respond to the different texture of wet and dry sand. Pupils that are more able sign that they prefer handling the dry sand, understanding that there is a difference. They build upon information well to learn more about life on the seashore, watching videos. Through effective staff signing, pupils respond to questions about creatures and where they live, developing an increased vocabulary, signing crab and fish.

89. Expectations are high for all pupils to have opportunities to make progress in

science. Teachers and support staff alter their approach and language effectively to ensure that pupils who have additional special educational needs have opportunities to respond in their own way. They provide additional resources such as more objects to feel and smell. Staff are vigilant to note responses such as eye movement or reaching out, giving effective praise for any observed reaction. They use signs and symbols effectively to provide added support for pupils who have additional special educational needs to enable them to take part in lessons.

90. Teachers plan lessons as part of a topic. This means that pupils have good opportunities to learn more about the subject in other lessons. For instance in food technology, they observe how materials change during food preparation. This ensures that they gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Literacy lessons provide further information about sea life when pupils read the 'Rainbow Fish' together. During art and design and technology lessons, pupils help to create pictures and collages of fish and creatures that further enhance their understanding. They begin to notice features, recognising the need to count more than five tentacles on an octopus.

91. The subject leader makes a good contribution to the planning of the subject in the school. However there are insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning within other classrooms to help to ensure more consistent planning for pupils to make further progress. The school makes very effective use of the environment to provide opportunities for pupils to study nature and wildlife. Pupils have good opportunities to gain further experiences through recorded sounds and watching videos. However, there is insufficient use of computers and switches to enhance pupils' learning.

ART

92. Achievement and progress in art is good. Pupils develop a range of skills through handling a range of media from pencils and paints to printing and collage materials as well as some three-dimensional items. They develop motor skills allowing them to make both large and fine movements with the tools and media. By the age of 11 they demonstrate an increasing awareness of colour.

93. Art is included as an activity in many of the lessons. Although only two lessons of art were seen in the inspection art activities feature widely across the school. The teaching of art is good. Teachers use imaginative resources, for instance in one lesson where Year 4 pupils were making three-dimensional representations of sunflowers based on the work of Van Gogh. Nursery nurses and other staff work well together as a team in these instances.

94. Pupils learn very well as a result of the activities and show great enthusiasm. For instance when a Year 5 pupil was creating a shape using papier maché over a balloon and was very animated in his conversation with the nursery nurse. Displays around the school are of a good quality and reflect the interest in the subject by the co-ordinator who manages this aspect.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Whilst pupils' achievements in food technology are good, work with resistant materials is restricted due to a lack of a scheme of work and of procedures to monitor pupils' progress in all areas of the subject. Consequently, pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory although pupils can make good progress in individual lessons.

96. By the age of seven pupils make good progress in their ability to use basic kitchen tools to prepare a range of sandwiches. Some work is undertaken using construction kits for the making of model houses and pupils are capable of manipulating materials through their ability to roll and shape pastry and playdough. Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils develop some skills in the use of simple tools and have produced model kites. Their achievements in food technology are better with pupils being able to mix and prepare recipes. Higher attaining pupils can measure the contents effectively and also use cutting skills to shape the pastry for the preparation of dishes such as pizza. Links have been established with work in health education lessons to ensure pupils' knowledge of a healthy diet.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in food technology is consistently good and, on occasions, very good. Teaching is well planned with a range of interesting activities. Where teaching is best, pupils are encouraged to achieve independent working, such as opening tins and spooning out contents, through the effective team work of the staff. Good use is made of the opportunities for communication through questioning pupils on the tasks. An example of this is where a teacher asked a pupil which tools were needed to spread a purée and then encouraging the pupil to sign the answer. The complex organisation of the lessons is made possible through the quality of the support staff who make a significant contribution to the success of the lessons. Whilst opportunities for the practice of other skills, such as mathematics for measuring, are well developed, the use of computers is still under-developed and there is a need for further staff training.

98. The recently appointed co-ordinator has carried out a thorough review of the school's provision for design technology and has produced a draft policy. However, there is a need to monitor teaching and to devise a scheme of work to ensure sufficient work is undertaken in resistant materials.

HUMANITIES (History and Geography)

99. Pupils' achievements are good. Both subjects are taught effectively as part of the whole school topic. Teachers plan particularly well to promote aspects of history through circle time and the celebration of special events in the calendar and pupils' lives.

100. It was only possible to observe two lessons in geography since most lessons involve visits off the school premises. However, evidence shows that teachers plan well for what pupils will learn and pupils show good gains in geographical understanding. Younger pupils develop a greater awareness of their own locality, beginning to understand that roads link schools and shops through the regular repetition of routes. This means that staff can ask pupils questions to find out if they remember or recognise features on their journeys. Older pupils, for instance, make good progress visiting the Trafford Centre, remembering entrances and the location of shops. Pupils apply their knowledge of the seaside learnt in the classroom, making the sign of pulling a cord when a replica boat blows its horn.

101. Circle time and lessons in personal and social education provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn history. They make good progress understanding their timetable, beginning to understand the sequence of lessons in the day. Teachers regularly discuss previous lessons so that pupils begin to develop an understanding of the past. Pupils know that birthdays are celebrated and higher attaining pupils understand that someone has already had a birthday. They have regular opportunities to look at photographs of themselves at earlier times in school, signing that the pictures are of themselves, understanding that time has passed. Teachers plan to promote learning in history and geography well in other subjects. Younger pupils gain a greater understanding

of the character of the seashore when they study science and the habitat of rock pools. Older pupils make particularly good progress during a complex lesson about the Titanic to promote learning in mathematics, English and other subjects including history. Pupils dressed in costume, role-playing being in a lifeboat.

102. The scheme ensures that staff shares a common approach to promote learning in geography and history. The range of activities provides a good basis for teachers to promote learning in areas of geography and history that are relevant to all pupils in school. However subject managers do not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school to ensure that planning enables pupils to gain in knowledge and skills consistently as they become older.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are good. By the age of seven pupils make good use of switches to operate a range of equipment which enables them to both access and to participate in the full curriculum. At the age of seven higher attaining pupils can use switches to work independently on computers in the use of art programs where they can amend and adjust colours. Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils continue to make good progress in their ability to access programs, such as Postman Pat, to support and develop their work in literacy and communication skills. Pupils can use the mouse and the cursor effectively and, by the age of eleven, can use the keyboard and mouse to listen to a story and to turn the pages. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to achieve well in their use of equipment to access the curriculum. Their confident use of switches enables them to operate food blenders in food technology and speech amplifiers in the morning greetings sessions.

104. The teaching of ICT takes place within other subjects and is frequently on an individual basis. Lessons are characterised by a clear structure and learning is supported through, good quality, individual learning targets. Opportunities for pupils with profound learning difficulties to learn through sensory approaches are well developed and pupils derive great pleasure from their use of switches to operate bubble tubes and flashing lights. The encouragement that is given to pupils to work independently is a significant contribution to their development of self confidence, such as when a pupils uses a touch screen successfully to access a story.

105. Effective use is made of switches in other areas of the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy. However, the use of computers themselves is limited in some subjects, such as science and design technology, and requires further development.

106. The subject is well managed and there is a scheme of work in place. However, the lack of monitoring of the teaching of information technology makes it difficult to ensure that all pupils receive the required amount of time. The school is still awaiting its connection to the Internet and the specific grants which will allow the replacement of the current obsolete stock of computers. The development plan makes suitable provision for their use and for further staff training.

MUSIC

107. Pupils' achievements in music are good. There are many opportunities for pupils to become involved in musical activities in the school and they show increasing awareness of its place in communication, for instance when they react to the sounds of the "Good Morning" song. Pupils develop a sense of rhythm being able to imitate phrases and

clapping sounds. The youngest pupils are able to make vocalisations or gestures indicating turn taking in the activities. Pupils up to the age of 7 are starting using phrases in response to sung questions. By the age of 11 pupils are demonstrating the ability to hold tunes and fit phrases to them as well as using rhythmical accompaniment.

108. Pupils learn and respond very well to the presence of musical activities. They extend their communication and enjoy the presence of musical sounds. One pupil with profound difficulties could be seen to smile and vocalise when the music was played. Another pupil in the resource class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders became very calm and began to relate to an adult.

109. Music features as part of many lessons. Only two lessons of music were observed but overall teaching of music is good. Teachers use music within many parts of the curriculum. It is used to extend communication and to involve pupils through repetition and rhythm. Teachers often use taped music as part of the learning process and to develop social interaction. Teachers encourage pupils to listen to music and relate it the world about them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

110. Pupils' achievements in personal, social and health education are very good. Up to the age of seven pupils make very good progress in the acquisition of social skills, developing self awareness and acquiring the ability to form relationships. The ability of pupils to be able to work in groups and to co-operate with each other, as when collecting and eating their meals, is a significant factor in developing the excellent relationships that exist between each other and with the staff. Pupils also make good progress in social tasks such as fastening buttons and dressing themselves. Older pupils develop confidence and self reliance both through lessons, where they can choose activities, and through tasks around the school, such as making their way to lunch and selecting their own meal. Pupils also develop an awareness of personal safety through practising the Green Cross Code and being aware of the need for personal hygiene.

111. The provision of opportunities for pupils to integrate with other children from the local primary and nursery schools together with the excellent role models provided by staff are important factors in the development of pupils' social skills. During outside visits pupils show themselves to be able to behave very well and they also show themselves to be polite and helpful, as when they offer to repair a guitar on a visit to the toy library or help to clear up after a visit to Sale Water Park.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and is sometimes very good. An example of this was seen in year 6 when pupils were visiting the toy library. The lesson had clear and effective learning objectives for each pupil's social development. Opportunities for pupils to develop social language skills, such as saying hello and goodbye, were used well. The session was carefully planned to ensure the participation of all pupils and the enthusiasm with which it was delivered was reflected in the confidence and enthusiasm of the pupils.

113. Whilst pupils do make good progress there is, currently, a lack of a scheme of work which means that the good quality work undertaken in sessions is not effectively co-ordinated across the school. Similarly, the current curriculum makes no provision for pupils to develop knowledge of drug awareness. Pupils' progress is assessed well and the targets set for each pupil are of good quality.

114. The current provision for pupils' PSHE is a significant factor in their very good social and personal development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good. Older pupils achieve particularly well in soccer through the excellent contribution of Manchester United coaching staff who lead a series of lessons. Therapists provide a very good contribution, working as part of the staff team to promote pupils' development in physical education lessons. Throughout all activities, there is a high standard of care, where careful planning ensures safe practice.

116. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. This is because there is effective planning for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities, using the school' own very good facilities and those in the locality. Staff have a commitment to promoting physical development, using the outdoor environment well to provide regular opportunities for pupils to walk in the community, for instance in lessons in geography and science. They become accustomed to the different weather conditions and this means that they participate without fuss when the weather is not fine. This was evident during the soccer coaching session where pupils did not notice light rain as they were so intent on learning.

117. Younger pupils understand the routine for lessons, remembering some of the warm up activities that they perform at the start of the lesson. They make the best progress when they work towards their own targets, for instance to move over soft- play apparatus. This means that staff can focus upon what each pupil needs to learn and this makes it easier to measure progress. Planning was less successful in one lesson where pupils demonstrated a wide range of physical ability, but pupils had to wait for each other to follow similar tasks. This meant that pupils who were more able had limited opportunities to build upon their success in hitting targets with bean bags and aiming balls at skittles. There is a good range of equipment but because there is limited storage space, much is left stacked on the hall floor. This means that teachers restrict activities in order to ensure safety.

118. Older pupils achieve very well during lessons to learn soccer skills. The football coaches provide excellent role models for pupils to follow. Pupils are determined to learn and several have acquired football strips and shin pads in response to their strong interest in improving their game. Attitudes to learning are exemplary as pupils follow increasingly challenging tasks to improve skills. Planning is very effective, particularly to create interest, where pupils watch an international football match before the lesson. All staff promote language well, encouraging pupils to emulate their football heroes by stretching up and shouting yes when they score a goal. Through pupils' very strong interest and highly effective instruction, they quickly build upon skills developed in previous weeks to take part in small team game. Pupils who have more difficulty in taking part in physical education lessons receive very good support from school staff and therapists. They benefit particularly well from opportunities to use the hydrotherapy pool and soft-play area. They make good progress during lessons when they receive individual support, moving limbs when requested and joining actions to accompany the "Row your boat' song", with staff support.

119. The school is very successful in arranging regular opportunities for pupils to attend a residential outdoor education and adventure centre. This makes a very significant contribution to promoting physical development and interest in activity beyond the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. The provision for religious education is good. Teaching is good and as a result pupils achieve well and standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The excellent range of resources and artefacts encourage interactive stories well with role play to ensure pupils are learning about and are beginning to understand the stories of the Bible.

121. Pupils enjoy stories to compliment topic work such as Jesus and the Fishermen, Jonah and the Whale and Noah's Ark. Teachers and nursery nurses play a significant part to demonstrate the story text to promote interest and involvement. Key words and signs are emphasised well to follow the theme of the text. The staff make a lot of imaginative resources with the pupils such as large cardboard boxes which they decorate with doors and windows to make an ark. Year 5 pupils showed delight in climbing into a large box to use as a boat from which they energetically catch fish. Pupils volunteer to take a lead part and with prompts recall the story naming the animals in the Ark and Jesus and his friends the fishermen. Pupils are encouraged well to use a whole sentence to follow the text.

122. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the subject. The scheme of work is under review as the Trafford Agreed Syllabus is new. The Governors have recently agreed the policy for religious education. The effective audit with teachers has highlighted the areas for development. Time for the subject is under review as classes differ in their approach. Colourful photographs record the celebration of Festivals throughout the year by the whole school with a very good cultural and multicultural emphasis. While looking at the celebration of Eid pupils visited Manchester to buy special sweets and cards and looked at the celebration clothes.

123. Good use is made of the local environment to visit a church and meet the minister and see the Nativity scene. When the candles were lit one little girl sang "Happy Birthday to Jesus". Young pupils look at their place in the family and celebrate birthdays. Effective staff development has highlighted sensory opportunities for celebration.