

INSPECTION REPORT

FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL

Maidstone, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119055

Headteacher: Jill Kratochvil

Reporting inspector: Jacque Cook
2351

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 June 2000

Inspection number: 189680

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Severe and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
Age range of pupils:	4 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Boughton Lane Maidstone Kent
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Miles
Date of previous inspection:	14 – 17 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jacque Cook	Registered inspector	Modern foreign language	What sort of school is it?
		Music	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Under fives	How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Liz Cooke	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Kate Burton	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Post-16 provision	
Pip Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
Charlie Henry	Team inspector	Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	
		Integration	
Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Science	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Information and communications technology	
		Personal and social education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Five Acre Wood School is a mixed, day school for 62 pupils aged 4 to 19 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are 62 pupils on roll; 38 are boys and 24 girls. Currently there are seven children of reception age (between four and five), of whom two are part time, attending two mornings a week. There are 13 students aged 16 to 19 in the Extended Education Unit. *Unless specifically referring to children aged under five or students aged over 16, the term pupil will be used.* All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Seven have additional autistic spectrum disorder. None of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. One has English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low at six. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has increased substantially in the primary part of the school (pupils up to the age of 11). The level of attainment on entry to the school is very low.

Pupils travel to the school from the Maidstone district. An unusual feature of the school is the accommodation, which is located on two floors linked by stairs and a lift. Building work has started to renovate adjacent ex-secondary school buildings and it is planned to have the new, wholly ground floor accommodation in use in the autumn term of this year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Five Acre Wood is a very effective school. The quality of the teaching is very high and in consequence pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to their work, achieve very well and make very good progress. The school is extremely well led and very well managed and gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides high quality teaching, which focuses on individuals and ensures pupils make very good progress.
- Promotes a positive, very caring atmosphere where pupils want to succeed and do well and behave very well.
- Has excellent leadership from the headteacher and senior management team that promotes a shared and effective commitment to raising standards by all staff and governors.
- Ensures the curriculum is very relevant and meets the needs of the pupils effectively.
- Provides a very good start to schooling for the under fives and the youngest pupils.
- Ensures that the education of the oldest pupils and the students in the Extended Education Unit is of high quality and includes a wide range of experiences to prepare them well for when they leave.

What could be improved

- There are too few opportunities for pupils in the primary part of the school to integrate with pupils from other schools.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made considerable improvements since the last inspection in October 1996. The curriculum is now well thought through to ensure pupils make progress from year to year and sufficient time is spent on each subject. The quality of signing has improved and is used consistently throughout the school to great effect. The sensory room is used well and resources to assist pupils who cannot talk have increased. A combination of in-service training, which has strengthened the subject knowledge of staff, and careful monitoring of teaching has lifted the quality of teaching throughout the school. The health and safety measures within the control of the school have been remedied as far as possible; for example, further hoists have been installed and procedures for fire evacuation reviewed and agreed with professionals. A new hall has been built, a very good library developed and a sensory garden is currently being completed. During this inspection, massive building work has started to modify further accommodation to bring all the classes to the ground floor and, amongst a range of improvements, to provide additional toilet and changing facilities. This is planned to be completed for September 2000.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
Speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	
Reading	A	A	A	A	
Writing	A	A	A	A	
Mathematics	A	B	A	A	
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school is on track to meet targets set by the local education authority in literacy and numeracy. Overall, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress, particularly the under fives, those at Key Stage 1 (aged five to seven), at Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16) and students in the Extended Education Unit (aged 16-19). Good levels of achievement and progress are made by pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 (aged 7 to 14). Very good progress is made in English, French, physical education and personal and social education. Progress in mathematics is good overall but very good progress is made by the children, the youngest and the oldest pupils and the students. Good progress is made in science, art, design and technology, history, music and religious education. Those aged four to seven and 14 to 19 make good progress in information and communications technology; other pupils make sound progress. Progress is sound overall in geography but good at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	As at the last inspection, this is a strength of the school. It is very good for all pupils and reflects the positive emphasis of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils quickly learn what is acceptable. Those with more complex behaviour difficulties make very good progress towards meeting targets for improvement on their individual plans.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are excellent. Pupils learn to make choices and become responsible.
Attendance	Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and as they move through the school they become more independent and sociable.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, teaching was very good and at times excellent in 53 per cent of lessons and good in 29 per cent. The remaining 18 per cent were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

The quality of teaching and learning is particularly good for children aged under five and pupils aged five to seven. They are also very good for those aged 14 to 19. The needs of all pupils are met very well through skilled teaching. Teaching and learning are very good in English and the basic skills of communication and literacy are taught very well. Numeracy is taught well. Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, French, physical education and personal and social education. They are good in science and most other subjects. In information and communications technology teaching and learning are good for the youngest pupils, the oldest pupils and students and sound for pupils aged 7 to 14.

Teachers are skilled managers and ensure support staff are effective in helping all pupils to make progress. The pace of lessons is brisk and learning is made an enjoyable experience with many practical activities. In consequence pupils work hard and successfully improve their knowledge and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good, providing pupils with well-planned, high quality and relevant learning opportunities. The curriculum for the students in the Extended Education Unit is exceptionally good, helping them to become mature, responsible members of society.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The general atmosphere of the school, the example of staff and planned teaching ensure that the provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. It is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of care is very high. Effective steps are taken to monitor all aspects of school life for pupils to ensure they continue to make progress.

The curriculum for the under fives is particularly good and ensures children have a very good start to their education. The whole curriculum is enriched through a range of activities including hydrotherapy, riding for the disabled, trips in this country and abroad and residential visits. Statutory requirements are met. Individual Education Plans are used very well to ensure pupils make progress consistently. The school works well with parents and provides good quality information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and her deputies provide excellent leadership to the school, which is managed very well. All staff work hard to improve standards.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The school is well supported by an active and enthusiastic governing body. Members are increasingly well informed about the day-to-day work of the school. It meets its statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Senior staff monitor the standards of pupils' work very well and, with the full staff team and governing body, provide effective plans for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Levels of staffing and resources are good, matching the needs of the curriculum. Weaknesses in accommodation are being addressed.

The school is exceptionally well led and very well managed. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in its work. The whole staff and the governing body accurately identify areas for further development. These form the basis of very effective school improvement planning. Best value principles are effectively applied to the provision and management of resources.

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 school. • The school has high expectations that the pupils will work hard and behave well. • The progress their children make. • The warm welcome they receive when contacting the school, especially from the headteacher. • The very good quality of the teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of speech therapy. • The play/recreation facilities for older pupils. • Exchange of information between home and school.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. They share the concerns expressed regarding the provision of speech and language therapy, as there are shortfalls. However, the school and the therapy service have taken steps to improve the situation. The outdoor facilities for older pupils are currently poor but are being improved as part of the building programme. Overall the exchange of information between home and school was found to be good. Home/school books examined showed they were regularly kept and many parents chose to write in them as well as staff. Occasional difficulties that arise are rectified as soon as the school is aware of them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom this school caters in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in their Statements, annual reviews and Individual Education Plans.
2. Overall, the achievement and progress of pupils at Five Acre Wood School are very good. This is a considerable raising of standards since the last inspection. Children under the age of five and pupils at Key Stage 1 do particularly well, which gives them a firm basis on which to begin their education. Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 4. They work hard towards gaining accreditation through the Transition Challenge part of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Students in the Extended Education Unit also make very good progress and achieve very well. These high rates of progress are due to the very high quality of teaching at these key stages. At Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils' achievements and progress are good, reflecting overall good quality teaching.
3. There is no measurable difference between the achievement and progress of boys and girls. Most pupils with additional special educational needs, for example those who have autistic spectrum disorders, make very good progress in learning to manage difficulties. Gradually they become more able to communicate and respond to the adults and other pupils around them. They build very good relationships with support staff, who work with them on a one-to-one basis, often calming, listening to requests and responding to them.
4. Children aged under five are taught with pupils aged five and six. They make very good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Their personal and social development is promoted very well. Children learn to work as part of a group, make choices and take their turn. They become more able to concentrate and do what their teacher asks. Communication skills are taught very well and children with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to make their needs known, for example through eye pointing or smiling at the appropriate choice. Children learn to sign and several develop good levels of speech. They enjoy listening to stories. Children develop mathematical ideas effectively and begin to understand appropriate vocabulary. They learn to use words associated with place when looking for objects. Higher attaining children can sort colours and shapes and are beginning to count. Through exploring a range of textures and different shapes and colours children's knowledge and understanding of the world improves. They respond well to bubbles and light in the sensory room and find objects in water. Physical development is very good. Children work well with physiotherapy programmes. They become more confident in the water through hydrotherapy and swimming sessions. Many use the large outdoor equipment very well, extending their climbing and sliding techniques. Creative development is very good. Higher attaining children use their imagination well in play activities. They pretend to park the car in the garage and go 'shopping' in the playground. Children draw, print, make patterns and paint using a range of media. They use instruments to make sounds and respond to music.
5. Standards of achievement in the Extended Education Unit are high. All students continue to make very good progress towards meeting their Individual Education Plan targets. In addition, they work hard at preparing for adult life; they gain ASDAN qualifications. All students gain units of the Towards Independence Award and when they leave they are presented with their Record of Achievement with due ceremony. Higher attaining students gain Bronze and elements of the Silver Award. These students are mature and responsible. They talk to visitors with ease. They reflect on their experiences in the unit and are justly proud of their achievements. They feel they have been well prepared for the next stage in their lives and are looking forward to attending college with confidence.

6. Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection where there was little evidence of creative writing and the use of signs, symbols and augmentative communication aids was inconsistent. The school has targeted the development of communication skills; staff have received training and pupils now make very good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills at all key stages. The use of signing, symbols and simple communication aids is now very good. As pupils make progress through the school the number of signs and symbols they use and recognise increases. They learn to listen to others and by the time they reach the Extended Education Unit, higher attaining students are able to talk about their experiences with confidence and pride. With the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, reading skills are being taught more systematically and in consequence pupils' progress is very good. A good number of older pupils and students now read competently and enjoy reading in their leisure time. The new library has added to the love of literature that the school now engenders. Pupils' enjoyment of stories and rhymes is evident in their own creative writing, for example, as they retell the story of 'Babe', 'The Whale Song' and 'The Fish Who Could Wish'. Symbols programs on the computer are assisting in developing writing skills.
7. In mathematics pupils' achievement and progress are good overall. Younger pupils achieve very well and make good progress. They learn that numbers are used to count and improve their ability to match and sort colours. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties improve their skills in discriminating between objects and materials. They explore size, shape and colour. By the time they are 11, some pupils can count to five and recognise shapes. They begin to name and count coins. By the time they are 14, most pupils can count to ten and some beyond. They are beginning to understand tens and units and tell the hour on the clock. They weigh and measure more confidently. During Key Stage 4, pupils' achievement and progress are very good. They work on decimals and develop their understanding of money and of budgeting. By the time they leave school, students have continued the very good levels of achievement and progress. Most have learnt to apply their mathematical skills. They shop with lists and costs and some estimate value.
8. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good. Science lessons in the primary classes give a very good grounding to all pupils in observation, measuring and testing in a scientific manner. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to classify animals and begin to record observations of their experiments. By the time they are 11, they know about the effect of moving air and what makes items float or sink. The higher attaining pupils are developing the idea of a 'fair test'. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know what is necessary for growth in plants and have explored change, for example of solids to liquids. They understand the need to measure accurately. At age 16, higher attaining pupils can carry out simple experiments independently. Pupils investigate how lenses work and electricity is made. They become more able to predict what will happen before undertaking an experiment.
9. Pupils achieve well and make very good progress in French, physical education and personal and social education. Their achievement and progress are good in art, design and technology, history, music and religious education. In information and communications technology, pupils' achievement is good and progress is good at Key Stages 1 and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3, reflecting the different quality of the teaching at different key stages. Pupils achieve good progress in geography at Key Stage 1 but satisfactory progress at other key stages. This subject is in the early stages of development.
10. The school is making very good progress towards its targets set by the local education authority in terms of 'P' levels. Internal targets on Individual Education Plans are very well met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. As at the last inspection, this is a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good at all key stages, which reflects the positive ethos of the school, the strong moral teaching and the good role models set by teaching and support staff and by older pupils. Parents support this judgement.
12. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and this makes a substantial contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. Pupils are attentive, especially to signing. They make a

very good effort in lessons and show interest. In some lessons, for example music at Key Stage 1, they are fascinated and listen intently. Behaviour is very good in almost all lessons and in many it is excellent. Both staff and pupils have high expectations. Pupils are involved in drawing up class rules and any breaking of these rules is frowned on by the rest of the class. For example, during a religious education lesson at Key Stage 4, pupils made comments pointing out the need for good behaviour and supporting the teacher when a member of the class did not join in appropriately. Where behaviour does not reach these high standards, it is either because very occasionally the pace of the lesson is too slow, or a pupil on medication for behaviour problems is having difficulties. Where behaviour in class is very good or excellent it reflects the high standard of planning, the pace of lessons and the teamwork between teachers and support staff.

13. Behaviour at lunchtimes is exemplary. Parents comment on the good table manners their children have learned. They behave considerately, communicate with each other and with the adults and co-operate to make lunchtime a pleasant experience. Pupils wait patiently to be served and older pupils cheerfully take their turn at washing up.
14. Relationships are excellent; there is obvious mutual respect between adults and pupils. Visitors are welcomed and pupils are eager to support any pupil who is distressed. Pupils of all ages greet each other, staff and visitors cheerfully and make a point of remembering names. As they move up the school, pupils work in pairs or groups, for example in science at Key Stage 4. They take turns, give and accept help, and no individual dominates. Equipment is used with great care. By this age, they are also able to contribute to whole-class discussions on serious topics such as death, showing sensitivity to other people's feelings and treating beautiful natural objects such as fan coral with gentleness.
15. Pupils can readily list the activities they enjoy in school. They speak well of the school and staff and have great respect for equipment, personal possessions and the building. Their honesty is praised by parents. There is very little bullying. When it happens, pupils say it is handled well and they are satisfied with the outcome. Parents report that pupils always feel that they have been treated fairly. In the past year one pupil has been temporarily excluded pending admission to a more suitable school.
16. As pupils move up the school they become more independent, confident and sociable. Teachers give pupils responsibilities within their capabilities from an early age and this develops their confidence. Younger pupils begin by taking the register to the office. At Key Stage 2, pupils go ahead of the class to open doors and fix them back for wheelchair users without prompting, because it is their responsibility. By the age of 16, some pupils are independent shoppers. Students in the Extended Education Unit use public transport to make escorted journeys to the adult education college and take part in work experience. A few are able to go shopping independently and some do shopping for elderly people in the local area.
17. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and attendance reflects this. Attendance at over 93 per cent is good. Pupils attend whenever they are able and there is little unauthorised absence. Almost all pupils arrive on time; there are a small number of late arrivals due to the distances travelled. There has been a significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. This is a notable improvement on the last inspection, which reflects the high quality and effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school in their determination to raise standards through monitoring teaching and improving what is taught. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and in 82 per cent of the lessons teaching was at least good, in 53 per cent the teaching was very good and at times excellent.
19. Teaching and learning are very good and at times excellent for children aged under five and pupils at Key Stage 1. No teaching or learning is less than good and almost all lessons are very good or excellent. This has a tremendous impact on the standards achieved and gives children and pupils a first-rate start to their education. The teacher of these children and pupils

is very clear about what individuals will learn in each lesson and ensures objectives are met. All children and pupils are fully involved in whole-class activities. They respond well to questions that check what they have learnt and extend their knowledge and understanding further.

20. Teaching and learning are very good overall for pupils in Year 9 (aged 14) and at Key Stage 4. They are very good, and at times excellent, for students in the Extended Education Unit. The teaching for these pupils and students is pitched at a more adult level. Pupils and students learn more effectively as they work towards gaining awards as part of the ASDAN scheme. Although overall, teaching and learning are good at Key Stages 2 and 3, in 33 per cent and 27 per cent respectively of lessons teaching and learning are very good.
21. Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics, French, physical education and personal and social education. They are very good in music at Key Stages 1 and 4. In all other subjects teaching and learning are good with the exception of information and communications technology, which is sound overall but good at Key Stages 1 and 4. No lessons were seen of geography but indications are that teaching and learning are at least good. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Pupils have improved their literacy skills because the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well. Similar improvements are forecast when the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is evaluated. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively by all staff at every available opportunity, in all lessons. Good opportunities are also taken to use information and communications technology to teach basic skills.
22. In almost all lessons, no time is wasted. This is because lessons are very well planned to ensure pupils have a variety of activities to keep their interest and reinforce their learning. Practical lessons work really well. In a music lesson, Key Stage 4 pupils became totally involved when they made horns from sections of hose pipe and funnels and played them enthusiastically. Mathematical skills were strengthened when pupils, at Key Stage 3, measured the amount of growth on their plants. Social skills are taught successfully during drink times, when pupils are expected to make choices, say please and thank you and sit sensibly.
23. Support staff are exceptionally effective. They know what to do and how to get the best out of pupils. For example, they coax and encourage younger pupils using the large play equipment in the playground to help them become more confident. They are also alert to those who need to be taught caution when jumping off. Teachers are skilled managers of cohesive teams. Sometimes there are five adults, regularly working in the classroom. Pupils respond well whether in individual, small group or whole-class activities when they have a member of staff prompting or encouraging them. It is evident that teachers and support staff have a very good knowledge of the needs of the pupils and teaching is appropriately modified to suit individuals. There is a high level of subject expertise and experience in meeting the needs of the pupils. The use of signing, for example, has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is now a consistent approach, which improves the communication for all pupils with their peers as well as with staff.
24. Relationships between the pupils and staff are very good indeed. Pupils' faces light up when they see staff each morning and many greet everyone they meet enthusiastically. They clearly feel comfortable in school and are keen to learn to please their teachers. Praise and encouragement are used exceptionally well by staff. By emphasising what pupils do well this gives them the confidence to take further steps in their learning. As parents and carers commented at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaires, teachers have high expectations of what the pupils will achieve. They expect, and get, a response from all pupils and wait patiently for a smile to indicate choice, a sign to show involvement or a verbal response showing understanding. Work is usually pitched at a suitably high level to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, very occasionally it is too difficult and lower attaining pupils temporarily lose interest.
25. In all classrooms there are well-established routines that give pupils confidence. For example, certain pieces of music are used to alert pupils to the next lesson and songs are sung at registration. Some pupils with additional special educational needs are given symbols showing the order of the lessons they will have. Very relevant resources are used and topics are chosen to capture pupils' interest.

26. Assessment procedures have recently been changed and are now closely linked with lesson plans based on the schemes of work. Teachers are very clear what they want the pupils to learn. They use questions very well to establish what pupils know understand and can do and to push learning further. For example, they ask “what do you think will happen next?” and “how many are left?”. In some subjects assessment is not as well developed as others, for example, in information and communications technology and geography. Homework is not set as such, but some targets on Individual Education Plans are worked on also at home. Home/school diaries provide good links to enable practice to take place at home. There are therapy programmes and books are taken home to read.

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

27. The curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now very well planned, providing pupils with high quality learning experiences. Statutory requirements are met and all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are included in the teaching programme.
28. Teachers have worked incredibly hard to respond to new initiatives and re-write curriculum documents. Long term plans and curriculum maps are in place for all subjects except for some aspects of design and technology and geography. As a result pupils’ learning can proceed smoothly as they progress through the school and the problems that were identified at the last inspection in relation to progression and continuity have been addressed. Schemes of work have been well written. They include aims and objectives and guidance on teaching methods and resources. Assessment opportunities are also identified so that teachers can check that learning has taken place and judge the effectiveness of their teaching. One or two subjects are less well developed but plans have been made to bring these up to the same high standards as the majority. Subject policies and development plans have been discussed and agreed. A consistent approach has been adopted across the curriculum. Teachers can already see the benefits of the new system and are enthusiastically putting it into operation.
29. A weakness identified at the last inspection regarding wasted time for long refreshment breaks has been rectified. Pupils work hard throughout the day and no time is wasted. When not in lessons valuable social learning takes place as pupils have a drink, eat their lunch and enjoy time to relax and play with others.
30. Relevance is a clear strength of the school’s curriculum. Teachers plan meticulously for every pupil in the class ensuring that learning activities are suitable. The school is very successful at including everyone and it is a joy to watch lessons where this works so well. Individual Education Plans are used effectively to plan small steps towards learning targets. As a result, pupils of all abilities are making good progress.
31. There is close attention paid to the important development of communication skills. Objects of reference, signing, symbols and communication aids are all used well and effectively to assist pupils to communicate their choices, wishes and ideas. For example, worksheets are printed using symbols and Big Mack communicators are frequently being re-programmed to enable appropriate responses to be made. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when the use of signing and technical aids was criticised. The use of the sensory room is now very well planned to broaden the opportunities for many pupils, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Well-informed teaching using the specialist equipment is very effective in meeting a range of needs. National strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced and are having a significant impact on standards of achievement. Activities such as hydrotherapy, horse riding, cycling proficiency and visits from artists and theatre groups enrich the curriculum. In addition the school has access to a rural studies farm unit of the adjacent community school. These activities interest the pupils and make learning fun.
32. As identified at the last inspection, the curriculum for students in the Extended Education Unit is exceptionally good. There is the same close attention to helping students to achieve individual learning targets through their Individual Education Plans. In addition there is a

wonderful range of highly relevant experiences that challenge students and help them develop mature, responsible and sensible attitudes. For example the Team Enterprise initiative requires students to set up their own company and go into production. Local businesses are extremely supportive and work alongside students teaching them relevant skills. This year students even took part in a trade fair in France and received an award for their efforts throughout the year. Work experience is also included for appropriate students. Their diaries illustrate how much they gain and employers are very complimentary. Residential trips to France broaden students' outlook and encourage them to take responsibility for themselves whilst away from home. All of the work students undertake in the unit is accredited through the ASDAN scheme. Use of two awards, Towards Independence and the Bronze award, ensures that all students are included. Some higher attaining students are also achieving units towards the Silver award. Work for these qualifications is exemplary. Good links are maintained with colleges of further education and training centres so that students are helped to proceed successfully onto the next stage.

33. Children under five also benefit from a very well designed curriculum. Good account has been taken of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under the age of five and the recently published foundation curriculum. Within this framework, individual programmes are designed for each child to ensure they learn as quickly as is possible. Very good use is made of the outdoor play area and of visits, for example to the farm.
34. The school includes an impressive range of extra-curricular and sporting activities in its learning programme. For example, there are residential trips to Great Yarmouth, Sevenoaks and France. There are excursions to places of interest such as Rochester Castle and Fort Luton. Pupils take part in inter-schools sports days, festivals of dance and Martial Arts days and use fitness equipment at the YMCA and in leisure centres. From Key Stage 3, some pupils participate in 'Discovery Days' at a leisure centre where they experience a good range of sporting activities. In addition, there is a regular weekly lunchtime disco club which is enjoyed by many pupils.
35. Links with the local community are particularly strong and varied. The school benefits from associations with many local businesses that assist with work experience and Team Enterprise activities as well as fund raising. There are also links with Maidstone prison and the Rotary Club. Some pupils and their families enjoyed a special treat organised by a local nightclub. Family members of staff get involved with projects such as painting the wall mural in the playground. Churches and religious groups support the school and there is close liaison with Local Learning Groups and other special schools. Whilst these links provide good opportunities for older members of the school to integrate with pupils from other schools, there are few opportunities in the lower part of the school. In consequence they are missing chances to broaden their experiences.
36. Careers education is highly effective. There are good links with the careers service and students and parents are well informed about their options and helped to make appropriate choices.
37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement, particularly in the opportunities provided for spiritual and cultural development. Personal and social education within planned lessons and during lunch and break times promotes this area very well. Appropriate attention is given to providing sex education and information about drug misuse. The school nurse contributes to this aspect of school life.
38. Pupils make very good progress in their spiritual development through prayer, moments of reflection, learning about the beliefs of others and the example set by staff, who value and respect every individual's contribution to the life of the school. There are daily acts of collective worship and weekly whole-school assemblies. These provide time for quietness when pupils learn to pray to God, thanking Him for their families, their friends and the wonders of the world around them. As they grow older, they show a developing sense of reverence, which was seen at the end of the day in Key Stage 4. There are also moments throughout the curriculum when pupils have a sense of awe and wonder, for example when watching the image of the spinning globe projected onto the wall and in a history lesson when a three-dimensional model of a Norman Castle was opened for them.

39. The quality of provision to promote pupils' moral development is very good. From an early age, pupils become aware of right and wrong and will sometimes choose to 'discipline themselves'. For example, one boy thought he had been cheeky to a member of staff and therefore sat himself on a chair in the corridor as an apology. In reality he had been too hard on himself! Staff are good role models and have high expectations for good behaviour, establishing an environment based on trust and justice. In one lesson, after a dispute on the choice of the group meal for the following day, the teacher worked hard to achieve a compromise at the end of which one pupil volunteered "OK, that's fair" although he himself was very disappointed. On another occasion, a member of staff took time to apologise to a pupil when a promise had been overlooked. Pupils are helped to value themselves and others by celebrating their achievements with certificates presented in assembly at the end of each week.
40. Provision for pupil's social development continues to be very good. They are generally polite to friends and strangers alike as was seen in the way they met and welcomed the Inspectors. In lessons they are encouraged to wait patiently for their turn, listen to others, share equipment and co-operate as required. Staff themselves set a good example by working well together as a team. During the inspection several examples were seen of pupils caring for each other, particularly those less able than themselves. One girl in Year 1 was very anxious that a friend with profound and multiple learning difficulties had all the same opportunities which were given to everyone else, for instance, feeling the water in a song about ducks. As they get older some are given opportunities to help the younger pupils, even occasionally going out on trips with them. In the Extended Education Unit, students have a variety of experiences to promote their social skills training. One group shops regularly for an elderly lady, one girl did her work experience in a charity shop. As a group they deliver and collect sacks for charity organisations and as a school there are frequent collections for charities further afield, such as Romania.
41. Provision for cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils learn about their own culture and that of other peoples throughout the curriculum and by an extensive range of visits both in this country and abroad. They extend their knowledge through literature, looking at the work of famous artists, listening to a wide variety of music old and new, classical, popular and sacred. In history and geography they study people from places as far away as India and the Gambia as well as our own past. They visit such places as the Jorvik Museum in York. They experience the different ways ceremonies and beliefs change in the main religious faiths, for example Christian, Jewish and Chinese wedding customs, and celebrate the major festivals at appropriate times, such as Christmas, Harvest, Diwali and Hanukkah. Opportunities are further extended by the annual residential visit to France. In alternate years they experience the bustle, city life and sights of Paris and the seaside environment of Hardelot.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS AND STUDENTS?

42. The school makes very good provision to ensure pupils' health, safety and general well-being, maintaining the very high standards reported at the previous inspection. The Health and Safety issues noted then are now being addressed through the extensive building works due for completion in September 2000. The toilet and personal care facilities are still, at present, unsatisfactory. The governors oversee a suitable range of measures and checks to ensure the school is a clean, safe and appropriate environment. There are regular checks on the safety of the buildings and grounds; fire practices and precautions are in order. The school has taken particular care to ensure that fire evacuation procedures are safe and that the present building works offer no risk to pupils and staff. There are now four hoists in use to aid lifting of pupils, which is a further improvement.
43. The school has effective child protection procedures in place and the headteacher is the named person responsible. These are based on the local authority's procedures and are well understood by all staff. These procedures are closely linked to the school's very effective and well documented procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development. This in turn feeds into the very effective Individual Education Plans that are addressed actively in each lesson.

44. Registers are properly kept and attendance is monitored effectively and regularly by the deputy headteachers. There are good links with the Education Welfare Officer if the school has concerns about individual pupils' attendance. There are clear reporting systems to enable information to be shared quickly if necessary. The very strong teamwork by all staff, including therapists, ensures a consistent approach throughout. The learning support assistants make an especially good contribution in carrying out individual programmes in classes. Parents are pleased with this aspect of the school's work; the previously noted good provision has been improved.
45. Strategies to manage and improve pupils' behaviour are very good and are underpinned by the comprehensive policy. Monitoring of behaviour is very effective and all staff have a consistently positive approach. A number of pupils show very challenging behaviour. They have very good individual programmes to control and change behaviour as is appropriate. All adults in school know the pupils well and their calm, consistent approach helps pupils to settle and learn. This very good provision continues that previously reported.
46. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and there is now a good whole-school approach to assessment, which has been implemented in the last academic year. The scheme is still in the early days but there are comprehensive plans to identify opportunities for assessment. The overview provided by the grids used is an effective system to ensure that assessment information informs lesson planning well. There is still some development needed in geography, information and communications technology and physical education. The school now undertakes baseline assessment for children joining the reception class using the local authority's scheme. The way in which individual pupils learn varies greatly and teachers constantly review their approaches so that each pupil can get the greatest benefit from lessons. This is clearly seen in individual planning noted in the very good daily plans. Statements of Special Educational Need are reviewed annually. The school also reviews the effective and clear Individual Education Plans at least termly and there is a rolling programme of therapy reviews in place. A good range of opportunities to have their work accredited is offered to pupils in their final years at the school. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are now also able to gain accreditation through the ASDAN Transitive Challenge programme. Students in the Extended Education Unit are assessed for bronze and silver awards in the scheme.
47. Lunch and playtimes are well managed with most pupils having the opportunity to go outside each day, although feeding for some can take up to an hour and this restricts playtime. Some pupils who are not independently mobile are not always offered sufficient opportunities to go outside. Older pupils currently do not have their own playground and are restricted to walking around the paths or staying indoors for activities at playtimes. This is due to change for September as part of the on-going building programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents and carers are very pleased with the work the school does, with the standards achieved and the high expectations staff have of their children. Parents feel confident that their youngsters are well cared for and happy and are learning suitable attitudes and values. They are especially pleased with the standard of teaching, the progress pupils make, the way the school is managed and the very good personal development of the pupils. They are generally satisfied with the school's response to their queries and concerns and with the quality of information they receive about how their children are getting on.

49. Some parents are concerned about the flow of information on a daily basis and insufficient use of the home/school diaries. The team found that home/school diaries were being completed at the time of the inspection and that many parents were using these as an excellent form of communication with teachers. The lack of suitable outdoor recreation space for older pupils is a valid criticism, which is scheduled to be remedied as part of the current building works. Parents' concerns over the provision of speech and language therapy are justified. The level of provision has not kept pace with increased levels of need. There are also, currently, shortfalls in the number of therapists working at the school. Steps have been taken by the service to change the way of working with the pupils with the introduction of speech and language therapy assistants. Communication with parents' is recognised as insufficient and has recently been improved through the annual 'therapy open days'. There are plans to hold an initial meeting with parents to explain how speech and language therapy will take place. Through this meeting it is hoped to make firm links with families and ensure they have accurate expectations of therapy provision for their children.
50. Communication with parents is good as was noted at the last inspection. There are two formal opportunities each year for parents to discuss pupils' progress. In addition there are annual therapy reviews and termly Individual Education Plan updates. The school is also in regular contact with carers through the home/school diary and through telephone calls and other communications concerning, for example, medical needs. Annual reports to parents are well presented and include information on targets, work done and areas for development. Routine information provided by the school is of good quality, including a prospectus for the main school and one for the Extended Education Unit, regular informative newsletters and a parents' notice board.
51. Parents and carers make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school. A parent/teacher group organises social and fundraising events but many find it very difficult to come into school because of the long distances they have to travel and the special needs of their youngsters. Parents are pleased to borrow and share books with their children and take an interest in any homework set; many keep regular contact on their children's daily progress through the home/school diaries. They are well involved in annual reviews and the recently implemented therapy reviews. The last report noted similar good levels of involvement.
52. The good relationships and communication between home and school and the sound involvement of families in the life of the school have a positive impact on attainment. Pupils arrive at school eager to learn and care offered is consistent with that given at home. Pupils are settled and keen to learn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher and her deputies provide excellent leadership to the school. They have a very clear vision for the future of the school and have communicated this very effectively to all staff. The involvement of all members of staff and the governing body in the formulation of the School's Improvement Plan provides a valuable opportunity for the vision of the school to be shared. As a result, all members of staff feel fully involved in the schools' development and in raising standards for its pupils. This shared commitment is an enormous strength of the school. The aims and values of the school are mostly met very well, although the aim to offer integration opportunities to all pupils at levels appropriate to their individual needs is underdeveloped. This is, however, included in future plans. The school is very well managed. The School Improvement Plan contains very realistic and appropriate targets, including remaining aspects of the action plan from the previous inspection, such as the increased use of signing by all staff. It also includes aspects that are considered to be important to the future of the school and in meeting its aims, for example, the development of inclusion opportunities within mainstream schools. This plan has proved to be a very valuable working document that has formed the basis of prioritising staff efforts. Responsibility for each task, time scales and criteria for success are very clearly defined. However, since it only runs for one year it restricts the formal forward planning for improvements that cannot be achieved in this time scale. Subject curriculum improvement plans, the school's inclusion plan and aspects of financial planning relating to the development of subject resources last longer, for two or three years. Delegation and management of responsibilities, within key stage and curriculum areas, together with arrangements for communication, through a series of regular, minuted meetings,

are very effective. Curriculum co-ordinators, whose role was judged ineffective at the last inspection, are now playing a vital part in raising standards. They are to be praised for implementing radical changes to the curriculum successfully and ensuring subjects are taught consistently.

54. Formal procedures for monitoring and supporting the work of all staff are very good. The monitoring of teaching is carried out on a regular basis by the senior management team. This provides good feedback to staff and is followed up, as necessary, by support and development work with individual teachers by the deputy headteachers. Co-ordinators are on course to begin to monitor other teachers teaching their subject during the latter part of the summer term.
55. Staff appraisal is effectively managed. In addition all teachers and learning support assistants have at least an annual meeting with the headteacher at which they can discuss their ambitions and any concerns. These procedures are very well supported by the open management style of senior staff. There are very good arrangements for the professional development of staff. Records show a wide range of training opportunities. These are very clearly linked to the improvement priorities of the school. Staff development resulting from finance received from the Standards Fund is clearly identified as such. Induction of new staff, which was previously identified as an area for improvement, has recently undergone development to meet the specific needs of a new member of staff. The content and procedure for this induction are good, effectively focusing on individual needs.
56. The school is well supported by an active and enthusiastic governing body. Governors are increasingly well informed about the day-to-day work of the school, especially through the development of direct links with key stage co-ordinators. These links are part of a well thought through programme by which governors understand the planning processes that ensure each child receives a curriculum that is appropriate to his or her individual needs. Governors' meetings are provided with appropriate information to allow effective monitoring of the work of the school and reach well founded decisions. They have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well. They are very involved in contributing to shaping the future of the school through the whole-school planning process.
57. The school budget is very well managed. It is linked very effectively to the School Improvement Plan. There are particularly good links between the purchase of new curriculum resources and the development of new schemes of work. The school's office manager produces very good quality financial information, including monthly monitoring reports. This provides an accurate basis for informing effective financial planning and enables the school to make very effective use of resources. Governors are aware of the importance of seeking best value for money from the school's expenditure. These considerations are supported by sharing knowledge and experience with other similar schools. The most recent external audit of the school's financial procedures found that they were satisfactory. Action has been taken to correct a minor matter relating to the authorisation of expenditure. School administration is very efficient and makes very good use of new technology in its procedures.
58. The number, qualifications and experience of both teaching and support staff are very well matched to the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum. Significant improvements have been achieved in the subject expertise of teachers in some subject areas since the last inspection, including art and in the use of the sensory room. A particularly successful area of whole-staff development has been in the knowledge and use of signing. The provision of speech and language therapy, however, is still insufficient to meet the needs of pupils for that service. Aspects of accommodation were identified as a serious weakness in the previous inspection report. Many of these concerns remain, although there is now a very good school hall and library. The unsuitable upstairs teaching rooms for the older pupils and the toileting facilities for the needs of many pupils are currently being addressed through a building programme, due to be completed by the start of the new term. This programme does not, however, address the dismal entrance to the school site, where vehicles have to pass a disused part of the adjoining secondary school. Staff work very hard to present a bright and engaging environment by displays of pupils' work. The site manager works hard to make the best of the facilities available. The school makes good use of accommodation in the community, including the sports field belonging to the adjoining secondary school and the local swimming pool, sports and leisure centre and horse riding stables. Overall, learning resources

well match the needs of the curriculum and pupils. There has been well-targeted investment in line with curriculum development since the last inspection. Resources for English and in the library are now very good, partly through a very substantial contribution from fund raising. Resources in all other subject areas are good except in science, history and geography where they are satisfactory. However, geography and history do make good use of the local environment

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to raise standards further the headteacher, senior management team, staff and governors should:
 - Improve the opportunities for pupils to integrate with pupils in other schools. (Paragraphs 35, 53)
60. The governors, in drawing up their action plan, may wish to consider the following points relating to minor weaknesses identified in the report:
 - Ensure the School Improvement Plan covers a longer period; (Paragraph 56)
 - Develop assessment procedures in geography, information and communications technology and physical education. (Paragraphs 46, 127)

POST-16 PROVISION

61. Provision in the Extended Education Unit is exceptionally good. The curriculum is highly relevant; work proceeds on students' Individual Education Plan targets and in addition there is an incredible range of experiences that assists students to grow up and prepare for the next stage. The ASDAN awards provide structure to the curriculum as well as a means of accrediting achievement. Students' files of work for this scheme are exemplary.
62. Students receive a good introduction to the world of work. All students participate in the Team Enterprise initiative and take turns at holding positions of responsibility in the company they set up. They all have a role to play on the production line and discuss the merits of their various enterprises with the industrialists who work with the school helping to make this project so successful. Work experience is provided for those who can benefit and students maintain a diary that reveals how much they learn. Employers who provide work experience placements are very willing to accept students from the school and praise their efforts.
63. A number of students attend classes at a local Adult Education centre. They learn to accept responsibility for travelling to the centre and when accompanied by a temporary learning support assistant they are able to give her precise details on what happens. They develop their social skills by mixing with others on the course and also realise that learning goes on throughout life. Residential trips to France help students to be more self reliant and confident as well as providing practice for their French language skills.
64. Community service is another good feature of the curriculum in the Extended Education Unit. Students get involved in raising money for other countries and deliver sacks for the Children's Society. They have visited old people's homes and some have had work experience in playgroups. Within the class, all students have jobs and responsibilities that they are expected to do well. They elect a student of the week based on how effective they have been. Everyone takes turns at preparing meals once a week and the focus for this term has been healthy eating. Students are encouraged to make choices and get involved in making decisions about outings and class activities. A mobility programme helps those who are able to develop road safety skills.

65. Students are helped to make good use of their leisure time during break times in school and by attending a local leisure centre. Personal and social education provides opportunities for students to discuss issues relating to sex education and drugs misuse. Lessons on keeping safe alert students to the dangers at work and at home. Opportunities are taken to develop skills in living independently. For example, students practise housekeeping skills in a local hotel room combining living skills with work experience. Very good careers advice and guidance assist students and their parents to make informed choices about future pathways. Students are helped to make the next step into college or training centres by link courses. As a result, the majority of students who will leave school this summer appear very confident and are looking forward to their future. Achievement is celebrated during a presentation evening at the end of the year when students receive their certificates and Record of Achievement.
66. Teaching in the unit is of a consistently high standard. Students are expected to aim high and receive all the support they need in order to do so. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students' views are respected and they are listened to. They respond so well to all that is provided and are excellent ambassadors for the school. They are remarkably mature and confident young people and it is no wonder that they were chosen for an award for the Young Enterprise Initiative.
67. The unit has good accommodation but it is currently sited on the first floor of the building that is not very suitable for students in wheelchairs. There are plans to relocate and improve facilities for students from next September.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	50	29	18	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	6

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.43	School data	1.00

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3

There are insufficient numbers of pupils to report National Curriculum tests results.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)

Transition Challenge

1 pupil gained 3 modules

2 pupils gained 2 modules

Attainment at the end of Post-16

Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)

Towards Independence

2 students gained 3 modules

2 students gained 4 modules and a Bronze Award

1 student gained 4 modules and a Bronze/Silver Award

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA)

11 pupils gained Ducklings Grade 1

2 pupils gained Ducklings Grade 2

6 pupils gained Puffin 5 metre certificates

2 pupils gained Puffin 10 metre certificates

4 pupils gained Waterskills Grade 1

2 pupils gained Waterskills Grade 2

3 pupils gained level 1 in hydrotherapy

Riding for the Disabled (RDA)

5 pupils gained stable management certificates

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	62
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	10.2

Education support staff: YR – Y14

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	688

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
	£
Total income	491656
Total expenditure	507852
Expenditure per pupil	8192
Balance brought forward from previous year	34508
Balance carried forward to next year	18312

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	23	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	47	0	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	33	7	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	23	23	3	13
The teaching is good.	60	33	0	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	20	13	7	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	17	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	47	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	23	20	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	27	0	3	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	27	3	3	7

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed concern over the lack of a suitable outdoor recreation area for older pupils. They commented on the provision of speech and language therapy and communication with the therapists, which they felt was insufficient.

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

68. There has been an increase in the number of children at reception class age since the last inspection and currently there are seven. They are taught with other pupils aged five and one pupil aged six. They make very good progress and achieve very well, which gives them a very good start to their compulsory education.
69. Children develop personal and social skills very well. They learn to relate to their teacher and to learning support assistants positively. On a one-to-one basis with staff, children work well and their concentration levels improve. They become tolerant of other children and many will work alongside each other. For example, during a playtime, a learning support assistant read to a child and an older pupil and they clearly enjoyed the experience. A few will play with another child, running cars along a play mat and having 'crashes'. Children are eager to learn and to please their teacher and have learnt to make choices, of songs, or who to choose next to answer the register. They wait their turn patiently. Higher attaining children are aware of the feelings of others and will often accept assistance from a more able-bodied pupil. They are aware of the difference between right and wrong by the time they are five.
70. Language and literacy skills are developed very well. Children improve their communication skills. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to indicate their needs. They eye point, smile and vocalise in response to direct requests. Staff record carefully chosen messages on Big Mack communicators, which the children quickly understand how to use. They learn that words convey meaning and build a vocabulary of words they can understand and many sign well; for example, imitating the signs in 'Crocodile Tea' and joining in with the signs and actions in the 'Bear Hunt' stories. They begin to match symbols to words. Several develop speech well, becoming more able to express their feelings. A few copy initial letters and, with help, sequence the letters of their name. They enjoy listening to stories and learn that pages need to be turned.
71. Children learn to understand mathematical language very well. They will follow instructions to find objects hidden in a box and many are clear about big and small. A few can sort shapes including circles, squares, spheres and cubes and can copy simple patterns. They recognise and name several colours and begin to match numerals; for example, they indicate two biscuits with two fingers and will give one or two objects when requested. Children develop a simple understanding of capacity by filling and emptying containers during water play and emptying bottles during the song 'Five Green Bottles'. They improve their understanding of number through singing counting songs.
72. Their knowledge and understanding of the world increases. Children explore different textures, running rice and sand through their hands and feeling a range of materials such as velvet and net. They are eager to explore materials and the environment. They mould and roll dough and investigate jelly that they have made. Through using switches they become aware of cause and effect as they operate lights and other equipment in the sensory room. When using the 'Bumble Bee' program on the computer, for example, they know to hold the switch down. They enjoy using a range of computer programs, particularly 'Noddy', and many become able to use a conventional mouse. Many can locate familiar rooms in the lower part of the school. Knowledge of the wider world is enhanced through visits out of school, for example, to the swimming pool or to a farm to meet the animals.
73. Physical development is at a range of levels according to the needs of the children. Physiotherapy and standing aids ensure less mobile children have appropriate provision during the day. Hydrotherapy and sessions in the ball pool enhance their development. Children enjoy swimming and some move confidently in the water and develop kicking actions. During physical education lessons, many children learn to vary the length of their stride when walking, to stretch and to throw beanbags with increasing accuracy. They use the large play equipment in the playground, many climbing ladders, using the slide and pushing along tricycles and pedal cars with their feet. A few begin to develop pedalling skills. Control of the body improves. For example, one child is able to make marks with his index finger; others make marks on paper, including circles and lines, using pencils, paint and crayon. This is in the early

stages of developing handwriting skills.

74. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills. They paint pictures using colour and textured paper and make interesting collages and photograph frames by arranging and sticking pasta shapes on the card. They make patterns in shaving foam and choose colours to make footprints and decorate pairs of gloves. During music lessons, children use percussion instruments to make sounds. They hum, vocalise and a few sing words to songs and rhymes. Children enjoy playing with toys, using miniature toy pigs and a wolf to act out the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. By the time they are five, a few pupils use their imagination well. They pretend to park their pedal car in the garage and encourage their doll to draw.
75. The quality of teaching and learning for children aged under five is very good indeed. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure all pupils are thoroughly involved in activities at an appropriate level, which ensures all make very good progress. The teacher is skilled in maintaining the pace of the lesson. Through keeping a running commentary, smoothly changing activities and constantly assessing understanding and knowledge the teacher ensures that children remain interested and keen to learn. Time is not wasted and resources are to hand and well prepared. Support staff know exactly what their role entails and, like the teacher, have excellent relationships with the children who want to do their best to please the adults. Expectations are high. For example, all children make choices and are expected to behave appropriately.
76. Due regard is paid to the Desirable Learning Outcomes and, for September, the new guidance for the Foundation Stage. Assessment procedures are very good. Although it is early days to gauge the effectiveness of the baseline assessment, the teacher is part of a group working on the curriculum and assessment for young children. This demonstrates a desire to improve further. Home/school books are used well to ensure there is a firm and productive link with parents.

ENGLISH

77. Standards pupils achieve and the progress they make in English are very good at all key stages. Students in the Extended Education Unit also achieve high standards and make very good progress. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 and those with the most severe and complex needs in all key stages are learning to pay attention and respond to others. Many can make choices and express preferences. They communicate through facial gesture and expressions, signs and communication aids. Some respond to objects of reference, for example grasping the object that signifies going to the light sensory room and smiling. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 join in singing rhymes and anticipate their turn with pleasure. They enjoy sharing stories and retell their favourites through role-play. They learn to hold pencils and crayons to make marks on paper.
78. By the time they are 11, in Key Stage 2, pupils are developing their communication skills. They increase the number of signs they recognise and use and some begin to speak in phrases and short sentences. All pupils really enjoy sharing stories, especially using the story sacks that include objects they can hold, helping them to fully understand the story. They love going to the library, selecting their book and then sitting in the story bus to share it with an adult. Higher attaining pupils read several symbols and are beginning to recognise a few familiar words. They trace over the letters of their name and learn to write them. Some use the computer to write their sentences using text and symbols.
79. By the end of Key Stage 3 when pupils are 14, they improve their communication skills considerably through going shopping. They make shopping lists and take responsibility for paying for their purchases. In literacy sessions they learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make in words. They particularly enjoy tongue twisters and this helps them to remember what they learn. They make up their own sentences using similar words. Some copy these sentences whilst higher attaining pupils are beginning to use the computer to write simple phrases with just a little support.
80. The oldest pupils in Key Stage 4 communicate most effectively through gesture, signs or language. They are confident and talk to visitors politely. They are making good progress in reading; a good number are able to read simple passages accurately. Pupils use these skills well in their work for the ASDAN Transition Challenge. They use the computers to write stories

and reports about their activities. Students in the Extended Education Unit are mature and sensible, able to express their views clearly and prepared to listen to others. A number of the group are competent readers and enjoy reading in their own leisure time. They write letters of thanks to the many visitors they entertain and keep diaries whilst on work experience. As part of their Team Enterprise Activities they learn to take part in meetings and report on their success, for example making a video in which they talk about their achievements. This effort merited a Team Enterprise Award.

81. The main reason pupils are so successful in learning English is the consistently very high quality of teaching. Teachers know the subject well and can plan and select appropriate materials. They use the methods outlined in the National Literacy Strategy effectively. They also know the pupils really well and plan work that will build on what they already know and extend them further. Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough and can be used by all adults to guide their work with pupils. Classrooms are managed effectively and learning support assistants know how to work with the pupils and are aware of what the learning outcomes should be. As a result, individuals benefit from working intensively with adults who encourage and motivate them to do their best at all times. Every moment of lesson time is used profitably. All members of staff are skilled at managing behaviour. Teachers have high expectations and communicate these effectively. Pupils therefore know what they should do and how they should behave. Learning support assistants and teachers give timely reminders if needed. This consistent approach engenders well behaved, motivated learners.
82. Pupils are being encouraged to develop a love of stories and rhymes through the use of the newly opened library and the lovely resources for English. Story Sacks, many made by staff, are a wonderful resource, which help to bring stories alive for the pupils. As the story unfolds, the teacher dramatically brings objects to illustrate the story out of the sack. This is often accompanied by looks of wonder and squeals of delight. For example, in the sack for the Story of Mr Gumpy is a floor mat representing a river, a boat and all the characters in the story that go for a boat ride. All the pupils watched with interest as the characters were placed in the boat. There were gasps as the inevitable happens when the boat becomes overloaded and everyone is tipped into the river.
83. There have been notable improvements in the teaching of English since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been well introduced and adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers have worked hard to improve the use of signing and simple communication aids, which were identified as weaknesses last time. The school is now a signing community and non-verbal pupils have a good vocabulary of signs and symbols that they can also use at home. Training and support on the use of signing and symbols has been provided for parents. Communication aids are used as a matter of course in lessons and pupils enjoy waiting for the response from their peers when they press the button. This awareness of the importance of the development of communication and literacy skills is evident in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers in all subjects reinforce and provide additional practice in English. For example, pupils read recipe cards in food technology and comment on the work of famous painters in art. They read and complete worksheets, for example when learning about customs and celebrations for a Chinese wedding. Care is taken to teach technical vocabulary in all subjects, including, for example, high and low and long and short notes in music, screen, disk and mouse in information and communications technology and words connected with growth and texture in science.
84. The subject co-ordinator has a key role in monitoring, evaluating and improving performance in English. She acts as an adviser when needed and enthuses others with her commitment and interest in the subject. She has been instrumental in ensuring the consistent approach that is now present by writing a detailed scheme of work and ensuring that resources are readily available.

MATHEMATICS

85. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good overall. The youngest and the oldest pupils and students achieve very well. Teachers are enthusiastic about the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is already having a positive effect on achievement and progress.

86. By age seven pupils make very good progress and are beginning to develop the concept of number. Most have learned that numbers are used for counting, through songs and rhymes, and can select one from five objects when singing 'Five Green Bottles'. They know that numbers can be useful in everyday situations such as counting the steps in the school grounds. The higher attaining pupils are able to recognise and sometimes name numbers in written form and a few can count aloud from one to five with occasional verbal prompts. The majority can recognise different colours and simple shapes, the higher attaining pupils identifying these by name. Most can match and sort colours and shapes, some needing adult help. They are introduced to size and capacity, a few beginning to understand the difference between a full and an empty bottle. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are provided with a range of sensory experiences which help them to develop skills in looking, tracking, listening and touching a variety of objects and materials to appreciate number, size and shape.
87. By the age of 11, pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress. Some can now count to five and a few higher attaining pupils to ten. They can play snakes and ladders type games using dice and can count on from 1 in their heads, most with adult prompting but a few managing on their own. Some can recognise simple 2D and 3D shapes while the highest attaining pupil can sequence a pattern including circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. They are encouraged to make the relationship between events of the day and the hands on a clock, therefore associating clocks with telling the time. Pupils are introduced to real money; some can name coins, with the highest attaining pupils developing an early concept of value. Pupils with profound difficulties continue to explore their environment through sensory experiences, listening to number songs and visiting the shops.
88. By age 14, pupils maintain good progress extending their numerical skills. Most count confidently to 10 and some to 100 and beyond. They are beginning to add and subtract single figures and some have an awareness of tens and units separating 65 into 60 and 5. The majority can now recognise basic shapes and enjoy using them to make pictures such as the collage in their classroom showing ships and caterpillars made of circles, squares and rectangles. Most can now tell the time to the hour and half-hour and a few understand the connection between time and important events such as dinnertime and home time. They become confident in weighing and measuring, particularly through food technology. Pupils continue to work on understanding the value of different coins and how to put them together to make up selected amounts. When shopping they can now choose items and pay for them but only using a single value coin.
89. By the age of 16 years pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Most can count with confidence adding and subtracting up to 20. They have been introduced to decimals, some able to count the divisions between 1.0 and 2.0 although they find difficulty identifying the mid-point of 1.5. The majority know the days of the week in sequence and some know the months of the year. There is an increasing focus on applying their knowledge to everyday situations and particularly on developing confidence in dealing with money. They can identify all the coins and most become aware of the different values. Pupils begin to estimate the cost of shopping lists and the need to choose items carefully to work within the agreed budget, which at the time of the inspection was three pounds each to buy everything needed for their dinner the next day. They have also been introduced to calculators but most need help with the 'cancelling' function. After shopping they can recognise the different shapes of everyday objects such as that Swiss rolls are round and cornflakes packets are rectangular. They are more confident in telling the time and some have their own watch. Pupils with profound difficulties continue to have a wide variety of sensory experiences developing their levels of attention and self-awareness.
90. During their time in the Extended Education Unit, students concentrate on the practical application of numerical knowledge while continuing to consolidate their basic skills. In these areas, students continue to achieve very well and make very good progress. By the time they leave school the majority can go shopping, some independently. One group does the weekly shopping for an elderly lady and one girl did work experience in a charity shop. As far as possible everyone is encouraged to become independent and self-sufficient. A few can budget to buy bus tickets and take themselves to the supermarket at lunchtime, telling the time accurately enough to ensure they are back in school for afternoon lessons.
91. The good progress achieved by the pupils overall is attributable to the high quality of teaching,

which is never less than satisfactory, usually good and sometimes very good. Teaching and learning are very good at Key Stages 1 and 4 and at Post-16. Through the friendly and supportive atmosphere created in all lessons pupils build confidence to try hard and work as independently as possible. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, plan lessons well and provide a variety of activities which help to maintain pupil attention and concentration. In consequence, pupils respond well to mathematics, are interested and show pleasure and enjoyment. They are willing to listen, follow simple instructions, wait patiently for their turn and work together when appropriate. Teachers know the pupils very well and have high expectations for both behaviour and learning, taking into consideration everyone's individual educational needs. Staff intervene quickly, quietly and effectively to re-focus any disturbing behaviour and reduce any negative effect on the learning of others. Pupils' numeracy skills are practised and reinforced across the curriculum. For example, they use weighing and measuring in food technology and science, dates and timelines in history, sing counting songs in music, English and art and count in real life situations in the hydrotherapy pool.

92. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. There are examples of good practice when assessment is made against pupils' individual education programmes. They are regularly reviewed and used for planning teaching to meet individual needs. The subject is well managed and the schemes of work recently produced provide good guidance and support for colleagues. The policy statement is clear while the development plan indicates the way forward, particularly the extension of the Numeracy Hour throughout the school. Learning resources are good and easily accessible.
93. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards of teaching are significantly higher and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented following appropriate training of all teaching staff. The schemes of work have been extended to cover all areas of mathematics and the recent introduction of new assessment procedures is beginning to ensure pupils make progress from one class to the next.

SCIENCE

94. Pupils' achievement and progress in science are good overall and very good at Key Stage 1 where the foundations of careful observation and recording are made.
95. During Key Stage 1, pupils experience a variety of activities. Higher attaining pupils can identify various animals and by referring to their appearance or sound can say how they are similar or different. They can identify parts of their own bodies. All pupils have worked with water and air, for example looking at what happens when you put a candle in water. Pupils are given help to record their observations. Throughout Key Stage 2, switch users are involved, for example, in switching a fan on and off to blow paper boats across water. Pupils have an understanding of floating and sinking and know that seeds require light, warmth and water from first-hand experience. They understand the need to repeat work to get an average result. They can select equipment but generally need help to use it. The higher attaining pupils are developing the idea of a 'fair test'. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a better understanding of growth and change and can measure, still usually with help, the rate at which ice melts. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils can work safely and co-operatively on simple experiments without supervision. They can read off decimal numbers from a measure and can record their findings systematically. Lower attaining and some less mobile pupils need help with this. They have observed the effects of different shaped lenses on light and have used a mini-turbine to show how power is generated. Pupils are able to predict outcomes of their experiments and can discuss the causes of pollution sensitively.
96. Teaching and learning are good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. In the Extended Education Unit, science is taught well as part of food technology. At Key Stage 1, there is imaginative detailed planning focusing on experiences that involve play but also close observation. In a lesson on magnets, pupils all chose an object and tested it with a giant magnet. They coloured and decorated fish and the teacher made fishing lines with magnets attached so that they could use them to fish in the class paddling pool. The team of staff work well together to involve all the pupils and to encourage patient turn taking. Pupils enjoyed this activity and some could repeat the word 'magnet' and explain what had happened. Detailed records show the often small steps of progress that the pupils make and move with the pupils

to Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, others are encouraged to use their senses to develop vocabulary to describe differences. One of the teachers in the Key Stage 2 team is a subject specialist and encourages a methodical way of working. Planning for the group in the sensory room is good and again support staff and teachers work well as a team. Good planning for investigations can be let down by the quality and quantity of resources. Teaching is flexible, so that a pupil with behavioural difficulties is found alternative work that will motivate him. Occasionally lessons are pitched at higher attaining pupils, which means that some non-speaking or lower attaining pupils lose concentration.

97. At Key Stage 3, lessons are well planned and again the teacher supplements the resources. The team of support staff is well briefed and they handle any misbehaviour consistently and effectively. Help is given to pupils so that all can take part in measuring and comparing. The pace of the lessons is brisk and there is a lot planned for pupils to take part in. There are clear explanations and visual prompts for those pupils who need them. At Key Stage 4, planning is very detailed, with any written material supplemented with symbols. Every pupil is involved in demonstrating to the class, which they do confidently. The lesson is clearly linked to previous work. Pupils work co-operatively in groups of two or three, sometimes without adult help. Lower attaining pupils consolidate their knowledge. Some of the experimentation is beyond their understanding and geared to higher achievers. This is due to a lack of expertise at this key stage. No opportunity is missed to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy. Non-speaking pupils are encouraged to take part by staff recording appropriate messages on their simple communication aids. Relationships, as at all key stages, are excellent, between pupils, and between adults and pupils. Pupils have respect for equipment and help each other.
98. The science co-ordinator is a subject specialist who has clear plans for the direction of science in the school. There are very good schemes of work, which meet the needs of the pupils and show clear progress from one key stage to another. At present resources are barely satisfactory and are supplemented by staff bringing in equipment or borrowing from other schools. There is a three-year plan to improve on this. Information and communications technology is not integrated into the science scheme of work, for example opportunities for data handling, controlling and measuring are not exploited, and this is a shortcoming. The co-ordinator monitors the subject rigorously across the school by looking at teachers' lesson plans and will be observing teaching in the near future. There is a health and safety policy for science, which is followed. The co-ordinator has also distributed useful Signalong signs for science to all teachers and teachers introduce these to pupils when appropriate.
99. Since the last inspection the content of lessons in the upper school has improved so that pupils get more chance to experiment and investigate rather than use too many worksheets. The equipment in the sensory room has been improved and there has been staff training in its use. It is now used fruitfully by small groups for almost all the week and supports science teaching for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties very effectively.

ART

100. Pupils achieve good standards and make good progress throughout all key stages. Standards achieved by students in the Extended Education Unit are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. By the time they are seven, pupils apply paint with brushes, hands and feet to make pictures. They use blocks to print patterns and stick materials onto paper and card to make a collage of Old Macdonald's Farm and a 3D totem pole. Most pupils need help and those with the most severe and complex difficulties need hand on hand support. Higher attaining pupils select materials for collage work with care and work independently. By the time they are 11, pupils make three-dimensional patterns sticking coloured card onto ceiling tiles. They look at the work of Monet and higher attaining pupils comment that it is beautiful. They copy his use of colour when they stick tissue paper and feathers onto card to represent water. By the time pupils are 14, they make mobiles of folded paper aeroplanes. They copy Hindu script and emulate the work of famous artists. The oldest pupils in Key Stage 4 study the work of impressionists such as Van Gogh and make their own pictures based on how they feel. They also make drawings of flowers and fruits from observation. They are learning photography; lower attaining pupils use a video camera and enjoy seeing their friends on the camera screen. Others use a Polaroid or digital camera and improve their skills in framing and focusing the picture they wish to take. Students in the Extended Education Unit select from

paint, crayon or tissue paper to complete work for the Towards Independence Award.

101. Teaching and learning are good in all key stages and satisfactory in the Extended Education Unit. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was found to be variable and often unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers are very well organised and offer pupils an exciting range of materials for their collage work. For example, the youngest pupils were inspired by the choice of fabrics, sequins and coloured plastic that were available when making their faces for the class totem pole. Teachers use their knowledge of the pupils to good effect when planning lessons so that all can participate fully. For example, in the lesson on the work of Monet, the choice of a fan for pupils to use to blow their tissue paper onto sticky card was inspired. All pupils had fun selecting colours and switching the fan on and off but the response of the lower attaining pupils was remarkable. They watched the fragments of tissue paper flying through the air with fascination. Activities such as photography stretch the pupils and cause them to analyse what went wrong and to be more careful when next aiming the camera. Teachers use questioning skilfully in order to help pupils to look carefully at the work of the artists they study and to notice details in the use of shapes and colours. The contribution of learning support assistants in the teaching of art is noteworthy; they assist pupils to make choices and to realise their plans. All adults contribute significantly to the language development of pupils as they work together discussing materials and methods. In less successful lessons teachers appear less confident in their ability to teach the subject. They offer little guidance on the use of materials and although they use the work of artists to inspire pupils they fail to draw attention to the key features in the work.
102. The curriculum for art has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils benefit from working with a variety of materials and are introduced to a greater range of skills and techniques. Opportunities for modelling with clay are still limited although there are plans to include this soon. At the last inspection the art curriculum was criticised for not extending the cultural development of pupils through experiencing works of art. This has now been addressed and pupils regularly study the work of famous artists and have also had an opportunity to work with an artist in residence. The co-ordinator is dynamic and enthusiastic and has plans to improve resources and the range of work undertaken. Despite some improvement, there is still an issue regarding the level of subject expertise and competence of some teachers. The display of pupils' work around the school remains good, celebrating achievement and helping to create a stimulating environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Very few lessons of design and technology were seen during the inspection. Those lessons observed involved food technology. Judgements, therefore, are based on these lessons, the evidence available of pupils' work and teachers' planning. The standards of achievement in design and technology are high for pupils at all key stages. Pupils learn a range of skills, use different materials and make items for a variety of purposes. In food technology they learn to prepare and evaluate a wide range of food.
104. By the age of seven, pupils are starting to learn some basic food preparation techniques; for example, they help mix and roll pastry and then use a cutter to make lemon curd tarts. They assist staff in tidying up and in washing of mixing bowls and utensils. Most pupils make a candleholder from salt dough and use construction equipment and wooden bricks to build simple objects. Most pupils learn and practise simple joining techniques through these activities.
105. No lessons of design and technology were observed at Key Stage 2. However, it is clear from examples of their work and the continued development of skills, knowledge and understanding that they continue to make good progress during this period of their education. Pupils make candles from a wax modelling kit; they design and make a kite and a photograph frame from card and other materials and design and plan a garden with summer bulbs.
106. By the age of 14, pupils have continued to develop a range of skills in food technology. They are able, with learning assistant support, to make a pizza. A few pupils can follow a simple recipe for the pastry base, involving weighing out ingredients, mixing these together and rolling the pastry out to a suitable size and shape. Some can cook sausages in a frying pan and slice

these and other foods for the topping. Other pupils are able to help peel and chop vegetables for making coleslaw. All pupils help to make mobiles of planes using paper and card. They use large construction apparatus to make shelving. The higher attaining pupils are able to carry out these activities with little supervision.

107. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 4; however, it is clear that pupils continue to make good progress at this time. By the age of 16, pupils help identify the contents and design of a sensory area for the school. Most design a motif of their own name using the computer. In food technology all pupils choose a meal to make, for example, shepherd's pie and vegetables, and then evaluate their work. Many are able to follow a simple recipe with supervision; they continue to practise and improve on basic skills, such as chopping vegetables.
108. Students in the Extended Education Unit, prepare their own lunch. During the week of the inspection they prepared and boiled new potatoes and made egg mayonnaise. They improve their skills, for example, using equipment more effectively. They learn to present food practically and attractively. Higher attaining students are able to carry out such activities with little supervision whilst lower attaining students require considerable individual support as they take part in these activities. Students have made attractive fridge magnets using a plastic moulding kit.
109. Teaching and learning in design and technology are good overall. They are at least satisfactory and often good across all key stages. The best teaching involves carefully considered individualised planning and teaching, including for those pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. In some food technology lessons, however, there is insufficiently detailed planning for the development of key skills, knowledge and understanding. As a consequence, teachers cannot be certain that pupils are making the best progress, rather than continuing to practise skills that they already have. Good emphasis is placed on health and safety and, in food technology, staff stress 'healthy eating' in the foods that pupils prepare. There is very effective teamwork between the teacher and learning support assistants and staff clearly know the pupils well. These strengths allow effective support for pupils' individual needs. This, in turn, contributes significantly to the development of pupils' concentration and attention to their work. The best teaching also includes effective use of questioning, which helps teachers understand what pupils know, understand and can do.
110. The subject co-ordinator has developed an effective action plan for the development of design and technology throughout the school, based on the subject policy statement and an analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses of the area. This action plan has included the development of very high quality schemes of work that detail the important aspects of learning for pupils as they study the wide range of aspects of design and technology. These teaching and learning plans provide non-specialist teachers with clear guidance on teaching activities and assessment opportunities that match the key learning aims. This has yet to be developed fully in food technology. In this area there is not yet a detailed analysis of the key skills, knowledge and understanding of food preparation that pupils are to learn nor a plan of how these are to be introduced and developed in a systematic way. The long-term subject planning map shows that pupils will receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The recently developed assessment framework is starting to provide a detailed record of pupils' achievement and progress in design and technology.
111. Since the last inspection the curriculum for design and technology has broadened significantly and does not now focus too much on food technology. Food technology accommodation has been revamped in the lower part of the school and new areas are planned as part of the current building works. A broader range of resources is being acquired in line with the requirements of the developing schemes of work.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Geography has only been a discrete subject on the timetable for Key Stages 1 and 2 since January 2000. It alternates with history on a half termly basis up to the end of Key Stage 3. Geography is not taught in Key Stage 4 or at Post-16 but students can further their interests through the Challenge Certificates and the ASDAN modules. Before January the subject was

taught as part of topic themes at Key Stages 1 and 2. Geography was not taught during the period of the inspection but evidence from previous work, teachers' annual reports, observation around the school and wall displays suggests that pupils' achievements and progress are at least satisfactory. They are good at Key Stage 1. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in meeting National Curriculum requirements in the lower school and in the achievements of pupils in Key Stages 1,2 and 3.

113. By seven years of age pupils make good progress in becoming aware of their immediate environment and that a world exists much further away. Most can locate areas in the classroom where favourite objects are kept. They begin to link symbols to places, for example the toilets in school or swimming and shops outside. A few know how to get themselves around the school and can recognise differences between areas such as inside rather than outside in the playground. The idea of a world beyond their boundaries is developed through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' and given further emphasis using the postcards sent by families or staff when on holiday. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties become aware of their own bodies and some can identify themselves in space.
114. By age 11, pupils begin to explore further afield. They look at a village such as Loose and have made a map of the area indicating main places of interest, which is on display in school. They think about different jobs people do, such as farming; they have visited a farm and some realise that food comes from plants or animals. The higher attaining pupils begin to develop a sense of direction and can make a map showing how to get to certain places such as the route to horse riding. They continue to look at far away places such as India or Africa learning about weather and the way people live. In addition to formal lessons they take note of their own weather patterns during morning registration periods. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are helped to make tactile maps. They use a range of fabrics and textures to begin to develop understanding of the nature of landscape.
115. By 14 years of age, pupils have become more confident in locating local places of interest and importance such as the police and fire stations, the hospital and the theatre. They make visits to garden centres and the River Medway where they look at the variety of plants and animals. They study countries of the world like The Gambia in some detail trying the food, understanding the weather is very hot. The higher attaining pupils begin to make simple comparisons with their own experience. They have traced journeys to different parts of the world based on places visited by friends and relatives, using these places to discuss weather, food and clothes; for example, what you might need to take on holiday and what you might find there.
116. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, evidence from previous work and the achievements made indicate that pupils enjoy geography and respond well. The two half term modules which have been developed so far are planned well. There are clear learning targets matched to the Individual Education Programmes for the individual pupils. This indicates that the quality of teaching and learning are at least good at all key stages.
117. There is a geography policy but as the co-ordinator only took over the post at Easter she has not had time to prepare a curriculum development plan. Geography is recognised as the least well developed subject in the curriculum.

HISTORY

118. Since the last inspection there has been a major shift in how history is taught within the school. Beginning this January, the subject is taught as a discrete subject up to the end of Key Stage 3 alternating on a half termly basis with geography. Students then have opportunities to continue developing their interest in history until they leave school through relevant areas of the Challenge certificates and ASDAN accreditation modules. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Clear learning targets are now set and pupils' levels of achievement have been raised.
119. Pupils' achievements and progress in history are good so that by the time they leave school some have acquired the skills to carry out simple historical investigations with help and appreciate the need to look after and preserve old things such as buildings and artefacts. By

seven years of age, most pupils' achievements are good. They know about the passage of time as it affects their own lives through sequencing daily events, celebrating birthdays and recognising that Christmas and Harvest only happen at certain times. They look at old and new things and experience different events such as having an 'old fashioned' party with jelly, cake and party games rather than sausages and disco.

120. By age 11, pupils continue to achieve well. They look at a variety of old and new objects and situations comparing how they are different. When visiting a churchyard they look at dates on the tombstones and how the gravestones have changed in size, shape and material. Pupils have learned about the different ways of life in the past and are currently looking at modern and ancient Greece. Most know that ancient Greeks dressed in a different way and some remember they did a lot of fighting.
121. By 14 years of age, some pupils find history not only interesting but also exciting. They begin to understand the changes that take place over time, for example looking at old and new photographs of themselves, family and staff and seeing that people grow and look older. They also look at how places change, comparing photographs of Maidstone on VE Day and recognising some of the places they know today. They make timelines (1930 - 1997) and compare clothing, even checking that staff cannot wear baby clothes now they are older. They have experienced conditions in an air-raid shelter and made a mock-up under their desks in the classroom. The higher attaining pupils begin to develop ideas of observation and research through playing a 'history detective' role and pretend to be archaeologists by digging in sand for hidden objects. Through this, most realise the importance of treating artefacts with care and respect. They particularly enjoy the many visits to a variety of museums, especially the time travel in the Jorvik Museum in York
122. Throughout the key stages pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are provided with a full range of experiences. They explore all the artefacts, touching, smelling and, in some cases, closely scrutinising items. They clearly enjoy visiting the museums.
123. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. They are always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. The clear planning, good classroom management and high expectations of behaviour and independent learning ensure that pupils try hard and make good progress. The interesting use of resources, well-paced lessons and a variety of tasks keep the pupils concentrating and focused on the tasks. This means pupils enjoy history. They listen carefully, participate and answer questions in group discussion time. They wait their turn, for example, when playing 'pass the parcel', even though they are anxious for the music to stop. They show excitement at some events, such as opening the 3 dimensional model of a Norman Castle and different ways of 'storming' a castle. There are isolated occasions when some activities are too difficult, for example the choice of software, with the inevitable result that a few pupils lose attention and become distracted, but the work is usually well matched for the diverse needs of the pupils.

124. As a discrete subject history is in the early stages of development although it has been taught through topic work for a long time. The co-ordinator is working hard to provide detailed schemes of work to support the curriculum and has written a development plan, which identifies the need to increase the number of resources as they are required.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

125. Pupils' achievement is good at all key stages, which represents an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils make the most progress at Key Stages 1 and 4 and at Post-16, because the quality of the teaching is higher. Pupils are introduced to computers right from the beginning, and by the time they leave the school they are aware of what computers can do to help them communicate and learn. Apart from at Key Stage 1, all classes have information and communications technology on their timetables. It is often combined with literacy or numeracy and is used to extend pupils' learning in these areas. All classes benefit from having the technician for half an hour each week for specific skills training. For the most part information and communications technology is used effectively within subjects.
126. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use programs to explore cause and effect, sometimes with the help of a support assistant. By the age of seven, where the emphasis is on basic skills, some pupils use simple programs without supervision, for example in mathematics. Others are using switches, many with increased understanding of what will happen, to control equipment and lights, for example in the sensory room. By the age of 11, pupils are enjoying using paint programs and some are proficient using a conventional mouse. A few use the computer for counting, adding and subtraction. Some pupils are using single switches, for example to switch on a story tape in English. They use a touch screen to explore cause and effect but there is insufficient record keeping for teachers to plan with precision how pupils will make progress. By the age of 14, pupils are using talking books and being shown how to use the Internet, which has appropriate safeguards on it. Some pupils produce graphs using a mathematics program. Pupils' knowledge of symbols extends to French where symbols are used to write sentences. By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils, especially those with computers at home, can retrieve information from the Internet with some prompting, identify the parts of the computer, open programs, print off independently and use the word processor, with or without symbols, for creative writing. Older pupils using a word processor are happy to edit their work.
127. Teaching and learning are always at least satisfactory. They are good at Key Stages 1 and 4 and at Post-16 and it is here that most progress is seen. Good progress is attributable to using effectively the clear record keeping at Key Stage 1 where very small steps are recorded as well as the pupils' response to different programs. Although good recording exists in individual pupils' annual review reports, the day-to-day recording of progress in skills is not done consistently by all teachers. Where it is not done, it is difficult to track individual pupil's progress. A symbol supported word processing program is used to help pupils develop their skills in many subjects very effectively at Key Stage 4. Information and communications technology is included very clearly in lesson planning at this key stage, which ensures pupils have good opportunities to make the progress they should. All teachers take care to encourage pupils' enjoyment and excellent attitudes when using computers. As a result, many pupils concentrate for long periods and are patient when technology does not work instantly. Being allowed to use the computer is an effective reward for some pupils following behaviour programmes. Since the last inspection, an experienced part-time technician has been appointed. This is very beneficial as teachers know that all equipment is now in good working order and can be used in lessons. The technician also makes a sensitive contribution to training pupils and staff, for example in how to use the Internet. In consequence, the level of confidence of staff has increased and most now have good basic skills. There are plans for extra specialist training in how information and communications technology can help pupils with severe and complex needs.
128. Not all pupils have targets for improving information and communications technology skills in their Individual Education Plans. Where they do, it can refer to using a particular program rather than skills to acquire, for example at Key Stage 2. Pupils' equipment needs are stated on therapy plans after consultation with the occupational therapist and in some cases an assessment centre.

129. The co-ordinator has produced a curriculum development plan that shows the school on the brink of a number of exciting developments. A new scheme of work is being developed with other similar schools which the co-ordinator has good links with. The existing scheme of work sets out the skills that would be appropriate at each key stage and there are some suggestions for software but they are not always appropriate for the lower attaining pupils or switch users in the lower school. The new scheme addresses that. Record keeping for switch users is also being developed. Teachers' lessons will be monitored in the near future. The co-ordinator is involved in planning for the National Grid for Learning. The school uses the Internet for getting and sharing information and uses the local education authority's systems for administration.
130. Resources are good, with at least two computers in each classroom, a good range of appropriate software and access equipment such as big keyboards, touch screens, tracker balls, concept keyboards and switches. This makes a positive contribution to the progress the pupils make. The building works incorporate fast computer links to all classrooms and the Internet is planned to be accessible in each. Renewal of hardware is organised so that one computer can be replaced each year. Some non-speaking pupils have simple communication devices that record one message but there is no progression to more sophisticated aids. One pupil has a small, more complex, communication aid but it has no overlays yet. It was not seen being used during the inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

131. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are very good in French, which is an improvement on the last inspection. Recently, pupils in Years 5 and 6 (aged 10 and 11) have started to learn French. In these lessons most make good progress in learning French words and all pupils improve their understanding of English through the use of both languages. In some instances, pupils practise their mathematics. For example, when learning colours in French, they sort red and blue items into different circles. Pupils with communication difficulties indicate successfully where items should be put using switches. Lower attaining pupils explore colours and textures making accurate matches.
132. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils make very good progress. They begin to use French words and phrases in everyday situations. They answer the register in French and higher attaining pupils use phrases including 'je m'appelle' accurately. By the time pupils are 16, their understanding has improved considerably and they have usually made several trips to France and practised their skills. They help to organise and run a French café in school. This is very successful. Pupils decide what they will serve in the café, write menus and role-play customers, waiters or waitresses. Many become sufficiently involved to dress up and all respond well to the authentic French music and food. Students in the Extended Education Unit plan their residential visit to France with enthusiasm. Their confidence in using French grows. For example, most learn the names of items to be included in their sponge bag in English and many remember the French word as well.
133. The quality of teaching and learning in French is very good. Staff are successful in consistently using the language, which gives pupils good models to imitate. Learning support assistants take their turns and respond to greetings and questions carefully prompting where necessary to ensure pupils do as well as they can. Lessons are planned very well and learning is carefully reinforced. For example, higher attaining students played a card game testing their memories, matching pictures and repeating French words. Practical approaches work well, experiencing France through the café in school and actual visits. Similarly, in the classroom practical activities help pupils to learn. By the end of a Key Stage 3 lesson, most pupils knew that the Eurostar train went under the water through a tunnel. During the lesson, they sent a model train through a tube with the Union Jack on one side representing England and the French flag on the other representing France. This was in preparation for their forthcoming day trip to Lille. Staff plan and organise day trips and visits very well to ensure all pupils benefit from the experiences.
134. The co-ordinator for French is keen to develop resources to match the new scheme of work as

it is developed. Currently there are two terms written. The subject makes a positive contribution to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. For example, older pupils explore French literature as part of their ASDAN course. They look at extracts from Les Miserables, learn about the Hunchback of Notre Dame and research famous French buildings and landmarks including the Sacre Coeur. A new assessment system is in place and there are indications that this will successfully record pupils' progress.

MUSIC

135. Pupils' achievement and progress in music are good overall. They make particularly good progress during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4 where the quality of the teaching is high. During Key stage 1, pupils learn action songs. Many participate in the actions and play percussion instruments. The teacher ensures all are actively involved and making choices, for example, of song, or whose turn should be next. Most move to the sound of the music and can make their likes and dislikes clear. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils work on making their musical sounds louder and softer, recognising high and low notes and stopping and starting on a signal. Higher attaining pupils copy a simple rhythm. They listen to pieces of classical music and identify instruments that are playing. By the time they are 11, many are able to identify an instrument by the sound it makes and know that instruments are played in a variety of different ways. Pupils with more complex needs enjoy listening to music in the sensory room and will often sit quietly listening to a piece of classical music. Pupils at Key Stage 3 become more proficient at following simple notation. They sing and/or sign songs and are becoming very clear about the types of music they prefer. They explore music from other countries, including the Caribbean and Brazil, and by the time they are 14, pupils have increased the range of instruments they play. They are able to accompany a story, making appropriate sounds with instruments. They really enjoy Victorian music hall songs. During Key Stage 4, pupils explore different types of music further including band, pop, African and jazz. Many are confident performers and all played their horns or drums to the music of Colonel Bogey. By the time they are 16, pupils recognise beat and rhythm. Many can identify and name different instruments and are prepared to play their music individually or in a group. It was not possible to observe a music lesson for students in the Extended Education Unit; however, photographs, records and discussions with staff indicate that students achieve well and make good progress. Five students are taking the sound awareness section of the Towards Independence award. For some the music is used as a means of encouraging communication. Others will play percussion instruments; one will strum a guitar and has learnt when to stop and start. A few will sing into the microphone and are learning songs.
136. Pupils also make very good progress when working with the visiting music tutor. One young pupil became totally absorbed whilst exploring the sounds that an electronic keyboard instrument can make. In only his second lesson he remembered places on the keyboard and followed simple notation with some success.
137. The quality of the teaching and learning is good. They are extremely good at Key Stages 1 and 4. A major feature of the teaching at Key Stage 1, which is excellent, is the way in which all pupils are actively involved. The teacher gives clear instructions and phrases questions carefully to ensure pupils with more complex needs respond by smiling or eye pointing to indicate preferences for music. They too knock down the bottle, illustrating the 'Five Green Bottles' song, and have an opportunity to help the teacher. Careful planning of lessons at Key Stage 4 ensures resources are to hand and support staff are well briefed in order to give pupils the freedom to experiment and make a musical instrument. Staff work with small groups of pupils prompting, asking questions and encouraging. Pupils really enjoy the activity and learn a great deal about how sound is made and can be varied. In all music lessons no time is wasted: different activities ensure pupils do not lose interest. Music is used very well throughout the school day. Pupils sing hello and goodbye songs at the beginning and end of the day. In some classes musical cues are very effective in alerting pupils to the subject of lessons, for example, the theme tune from Doctor Who precedes history and Perfect from the Darling Buds of May leads into science.
138. Since the last inspection standards achieved in music have improved considerably. A new co-ordinator leads the subject well and has produced a well-written policy. The scheme of work has two terms completed and provides a very useful framework for non-specialist music

teachers. There is very good evaluation from class teachers on the previous term's work, which helps the co-ordinator make modifications and plan the next term's work. The development plan for the subject shows how standards are to be raised further, including monitoring of lessons by the co-ordinator. It is recognised that a list of resources, particularly instruments, would be useful for staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. Standards of achievement in physical education are very high. Pupils make very good progress throughout the key stages and in a wide range of activities, including gymnastics, athletics and swimming. This level of achievement is the result of the very good teaching and individualised planning of this subject.
140. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils are throwing beanbags under arm and over arm; some throw a considerable distance. They take part in walking and running races, trying to keep within their running track lane and with an understanding that they would like 'to be first'. Lower attaining pupils make good attempts at throwing and take part in races without understanding the competition aspect. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties participate in races with assistant help and support.
141. By the age of 11, most pupils have made progress with swimming during their lessons at the local swimming pool. All wear armbands and show confidence in the water, joining in games and enjoying playing with a very large inflatable ball. Most pupils are able to move by kicking their feet or by flapping with their hands. Some can float on their back, a few can move backwards by kicking their feet. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties join in music and movement sessions with their individual support assistants. They work together on activities involving body awareness, rolling over, moving their legs and balancing on a large ball.
142. No lessons of physical education at Key Stage 3 were observed during the inspection. This lack of direct evidence, together with the early stage of assessment and record keeping, does not allow details to be provided of the achievement of pupils by the time that they are 14. However, it is clear by the achievements of older pupils that they continue to make very good progress throughout this key stage.
143. By the age of 16, pupils are more skilled at a range of athletics activities. Most can throw beanbags under arm and over arm with increasing distance and improved technique. Some pupils can throw 'foam' javelins with an appropriate action. A few reach significant distances, showing improvement through practice during the lessons. All take part in shuttle runs and relay races. Most are better at keeping within their running track lanes. Many understand the idea of racing against one another, a few understand that they are part of a team.
144. The quality of teaching and learning of physical education across all key stages is very good. This teaching is characterised by the quality of individualised planning, the very good relationships with pupils and the highly effective teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils learn new skills systematically and improve their levels of concentration. The lesson planning, together with the level of knowledge of the subject and the individual pupils' skills and areas of difficulty, is such that the pupils move smoothly from one activity to the next with no wasted time. For example, the development of the best starting techniques for a race was humorously introduced as 'starting from a funny position'. This approach made pupils very interested, gave them opportunities to try different ways and led onto using the most effective ways of starting. Relationships with pupils, based on the teacher's knowledge of their individual needs and a high level of confidence in class management, are warm and very supportive. Thus encouraged, pupils put a high level of physical energy into improving their performances. All learning support assistants have a good understanding of lesson aims and are clear about their roles in achieving these. Key assessment opportunities linked to lesson aims are identified in lesson plans and are carried out with many pupils. However, they are not yet systematically undertaken and recorded for all pupils.
145. The subject co-ordinator takes the role very seriously and has produced a valuable action plan

for the implementation of the subject policy. This action plan is being used to good effect to develop this subject area. Purchase of additional resources is carefully budgeted and based on the developing curriculum plans. There are clear long term plans that show that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. These plans are turned into very good, detailed termly ones that clearly show how the pupils are able to build on previous skills, knowledge and understanding. Although the co-ordinator teaches the most of the subject throughout the school, some lessons for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught by other members of staff. These lessons are also carefully planned from the appropriate term plans. The use of these termly plans is relatively recent. They are starting to identify the aspects of learning which are most important and can be used as the basis of day-to-day and end of term pupil assessment. A good process for recording of progress and achievement has been established, although it is at an early stage of implementation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, the evidence from these, pupils' previous work and teacher records indicates good achievement in religious education during Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and very good in Key Stage 4 and Post-16. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in overall quality of planning and pupils' levels of achievement.
147. By seven years of age, pupils are achieving well. They develop an awareness of themselves and the need to care for others and the world around them. They are introduced to Christianity through stories Jesus told and learn that the Bible is a very important book and that we pray to God. They are told that not everyone is Christian: for example, some may be Jews and others Hindus, all of whom have different beliefs. Everyone takes part in the celebrations of the main religious festivals such as Christmas, Harvest, Diwali and Hannukah. By age 11, pupils continue to make good achievements. They learn that all religions have famous characters, important leaders and special books. They hear stories from the Old Testament about Jacob, Noah and Moses. Pupils learn about the Life of Jesus and have been introduced to the act of communion. Consideration is given to important features from four other religions, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. They look at the Torah, learn about the 5 Pillars of Islam, visit a Mosque to see where Jews worship and make objects to symbolise the use of light in various different religions. Many understand the relevance in their own lives by the use of a candle in the whole-school assembly to signify the period of religious education and prayer.
148. By 14 years of age, pupils have expanded their knowledge about Christianity relating this to their own lives. They think about moral issues such as truth, honesty and what it means to be a good friend. They begin to think about the importance of religious ceremonies and celebrations and how animals are relevant to various religions. They begin to approach the question of 'life after death' and why some people became 'saints'.
149. During Key Stage 4, pupils' achievements are very good. They begin to look at the different religions from a comparative point of view and how these main faiths approach different major issues such as birth, marriage and death. By 16 years of age they have some understanding of the significance of Christmas and Remembrance Day. They learn about religious journeys and 'pilgrimages' such as visiting Mecca and have researched and traced a possible journey for themselves. They begin to realise the reasoning behind looking after our world and recognise there are many people around the world who need our help, as in Romania.

150. By the time students leave the school at the end of their Post-16 course they can identify some differences between ceremonies from various religions and beliefs, for example weddings for Christians, Jews or the Chinese. They have looked at art in religion, visited Churches to see stained glass windows, looked at famous religious paintings and listened to sacred music. They have thought about major world events such as the Holocaust and know about some of the many support systems for people in need, such as Hospices and Cruse. They become aware of the significance of prayer and show reverence during collective worship.
151. Too few lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning but from those seen, coupled with the good achievements of pupils, the evidence would suggest the quality of teaching and learning is usually good. At times they are very good and occasionally they are excellent. Pupils respond well to religious education. They listen, participate well, enjoy role-play and show respect for both the content of the lesson and the artefacts, for example, when learning about the Christian approach to death and the Chinese customs at a wedding.
152. The subject is well managed. The curriculum follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus, which has been modified to meet the special needs of all the pupils. The planned sensory approach for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties ensures that everyone has access to a relevant curriculum. At the last inspection there were few resources but these are being built up, as teaching requires. The support of the local vicars is also greatly appreciated.