

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HEATHSIDE SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124909

Headteacher: Mr Odran Doran

Reporting inspector: Mr Tom Smith  
21044

Dates of inspection: 3-6 April 2000

Inspection number: 190010

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (Primary)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heath Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk

Postcode: IP4 5SN

Telephone number: 01473 725508

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Carole Noble

Date of previous inspection: 14/10/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Tom Smith	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught?
Mrs Shirley Watts	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Steven Parker	Team Inspector	English Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr Alan Tattersall	Team Inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs Helen Eadington	Team inspector	Under fives History Geography Personal and social education	Special educational needs.
Mr Norman Watling	Team Inspector	Science Design and technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Heathside School provides education and care for up to 63 primary aged pupils with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties. The school also provides nursery facilities for 14 children who attend on a part-time basis. The special educational needs of the pupils include a wide range of communication, physical, profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as autistic spectrum disorders. The majority of pupils are of white European origin. The attainment of all pupils on entry to the school is very low. Pupils come from a mixture of both local authority and private homes, with a significant number being cared for by single parents. 43 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Heathside is a good school and within it are some very good features. The pupils make good and sometimes very good progress because of the significantly high levels of very good teaching. The governing body and headteacher use the available resources efficiently and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- There is particularly good teaching of the physical curriculum, which includes pupils' independent movement, swimming and dance.
- Teaching overall is of a good standard and is instrumental in the good progress which pupils make.
- The spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils is well provided for.
- Procedures for the care and protection of pupils are very good. Personal and social education is good.
- The relationships with parents are very strong.
- The MOVE programme is very effective.
- Pupils receive good teaching in communication and numeracy.
- Pupils' attainments are carefully assessed and the information derived is well used.
- Everyone involved with the school is united in a wish to provide the best for their pupils.

#### **What could be improved**

- Develop schemes of work for design and technology, geography and history. Complete the schemes of work exist for English, mathematics, information and communication technology, personal and social education and religious education.
- The use of information and communication technology is not well planned for within lessons.
- Pupils within the autistic spectrum would benefit from improvements to the way the curriculum is provided for them, particularly with regard to staff expertise.
- The continuity of teaching and social provision for Year 3 is insecure.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in October 1996. Since then it has made good progress. Pupils are making good progress in both their communication and literacy skills. Pupils also make better progress in science. Teachers are well supported in their work by good levels of expertise shown by support staff. Class teams are very effective. Subject co-ordinators now have clearly defined roles and having control over their own budgets enhances these. The feeding routines at lunchtime are much improved. Resources are better matched to teaching objectives. Induction arrangements for new staff as well as for temporary or volunteer staff are clear and helpful. Some of the physical accommodation for pupils has been improved. The adoption of the MOVE programme has brought many benefits to these pupils. The governing body has ensured that all statutory requirements are now in place. As at the last inspection, the school continues to give good value for money.

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

The targets set at annual reviews and those contained within individual education plans (IEP) are both challenging and realistic. Children under-five make significant progress in their ability to communicate, and generally achieve well in other areas of early learning. Pupils within the autistic spectrum make satisfactory progress.

In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress across all areas of the curriculum and their achievement is good. Geography and history are not taught as separate subjects but this knowledge is provided within other subjects.

Achievement within the personal and social curriculum is very good. The greatest achievements are within the physical activity curriculum.

Pupils' achievements in both the literacy and numeracy are enhanced through the school's use of the National Strategies. They also use this knowledge and skills within other areas of the curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils arrive at school happy to be there and they are keen to concentrate on their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well both in lessons as well as on frequent visits to the wider community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop a noticeable confidence to "try anything" and these efforts are supported by very good relationships within the school
Attendance	Satisfactory. Much of the recorded absence is attributable to medical conditions.

As pupils move through the school they become more independent and this has beneficial outcomes in their learning and progress. Behaviour throughout the school is good and lessons are rarely disrupted through wilful misbehaviour.

Where possible pupils join in with the day to day running of the school, either in returning registers to

the office or tidying up at the end of lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the under-fives class, all areas of learning are well taught. Work is well prepared and effectively organised, giving children a stimulating learning environment. At Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching is at least good. Personal and social education is particularly well taught and this is enhanced by the very good quality relationships evident throughout the school. All adults have the utmost respect for the pupils they teach and this ethos permeates all school activity.

A particular strength of the teaching is the good and effective partnerships between teachers and support staff. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is good. Further staff development of the TEACCH programme is necessary before this provision becomes wholly effective. The structure provided by both the literacy and numeracy strategies has been well adapted to take account of pupils' capabilities. Teachers use many opportunities within other subjects to enhance the understanding and knowledge of both literacy and numeracy.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and pupils do not interrupt lessons as a result of wilful misbehaviour.

During the inspection teaching was never less than satisfactory. 83 per cent of lessons were at least good and 40 per cent were either very good or excellent. As a result of this high quality teaching pupils remained busy and worked purposefully during all lessons, resulting in good and very good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is both broad and very relevant to pupils needs. It concentrates appropriately on the development of communication and personal development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good. Pupils' achievements are highly valued and recognised. Many opportunities are used to enable pupils to appreciate both their local culture as well as develop an awareness of the wider, multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures and practices for both monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and well-being.

The school has very effective links with parents which it fosters and maintains through regular contacts. In their written responses to the questionnaire parents indicated positive appreciation of the lengths to which the school goes to keep them informed.

The curriculum for under-five children is well designed and prepares them well for their subsequent life in school. Pupils with particular special needs are well provided for except in the provision of speech therapy. There are very effective links with both the local community as well as other institutions. Visits to different places within the locality are effective in enhancing the quality of the curriculum. The school also provides well for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Inspectors who observed the daily assemblies remarked that one particular, in their experience, was the best they had seen from pupils with severe learning difficulties.

Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are effective. This is not the case for a Year 3 class where these procedures have not been effectively managed and maintained.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is most effectively led by a headteacher who has clarity of both vision and purpose. Staff are supportive of his efforts and carry out their own roles with enthusiasm and great expertise.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its role effectively. They show a determination to create an effective school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors constantly monitor the performance of the school. In their planning they set realistic though challenging targets – aimed at raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. Funding is appropriately allocated to meet the needs and targets of the school development plan.

The school's accommodation is generally satisfactory, although the changing accommodation for some pupils does not meet current standards or expectations. The resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory and have improved. Staff are sufficient both in number and have the expertise to meet the needs of both the formal and informal curriculum.

The headteacher, governors and staff share a commitment to raising standards and ensuring that all pupils achieve well. The school seeks best value and takes carefully considered steps to achieve this.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of information about their children that is provided by the teachers.</li> <li>They can see the progress that their children make, especially in their independence skills.</li> <li>That they feel fully included in a dialogue with the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The frequency of speech therapy available to their children.</li> <li>They have concerns about the frequency of use of supply staff.</li> <li>A minority wish to see more homework provided.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with the positive views expressed by parents and believe the school is deserving of their support. The inspection confirms their views about speech therapy and the use of supply staff. The findings indicate that homework is available. Further work needs to be done by the school to ensure that parents are aware of this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

*The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters makes it inappropriate to judge their attainments against national expectations or averages. The report does however, give examples of what pupils know, can do and understand. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need as well as their Annual reviews and Individual Education Plans.*

1. Pupils enter the under-fives class with very low levels of ability, particularly in their language and communication skills as well as personal and social development. As a result of very good teaching allied to a highly relevant curriculum, they make very good progress, which prepares them for the lessons within the National Curriculum. They make particularly good progress within their communication skills and physical development.
2. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make satisfactory progress and the parents of these children are warm in their praise of the teachers and support staff. Some pupils within this group do not make as much progress as might be expected because of inconsistent planning and lower expectations. The school has quite appropriately adopted the TEACCH system for these pupils, but the current levels of expertise among staff are insufficient to make effective use of its benefits. The senior management team is aware of this issue and has put in place a plan which should more effectively raise progress levels for these pupils.
3. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils with severe learning difficulties make good progress. By the end of each key stage, their achievement is good across a range of subjects. Within the physical curriculum especially (physical education, swimming, therapeutic movement) the progress of the majority of pupils is very good. This results from very good teaching allied to clearly identified objectives for each pupil. In addition, staff maintain good records of both progress and experience and are able to quickly identify where pupils make the most effective progress. The way in which the numeracy and literacy strategies have been planned and introduced also leads to very good progress for pupils. This is particularly the case in pupils' development of communication skills. Good teaching ensures and demands that all pupils make effective responses within any of the exchanges and this high expectation leads to the good progress and achievement on their part. The guidance provided by the national strategies has given a sound structure to lessons which teachers have imaginatively developed for the needs of their pupils.
4. Much time is devoted to the development of personal and social skills of pupils. At lunchtimes, for example, pupils have clearly identified objectives aimed at increasing their independence in feeding themselves. These objectives, once attained, become a matter of record and new objectives are then formulated. The whole process is sensitively handled by all of the adults with the result that, as well as being effective learning opportunities, lunchtimes are also pleasant social gatherings. Within lessons pupils are urged and expected to respect their classmates. For example, in the morning greeting sessions pupils with no speech join in using 'big mac' switches that enable them to offer pre-recorded greetings. It was touching to see the patience displayed by others as they waited for the sometimes considerable effort of this group of pupils.
5. Achievement of pupils is best where the good teaching they receive is also backed up by good planning. Where such planning is absent lack of progress is more noticeable. In information and communication technology (ICT), for example, while progress is not generally unsatisfactory, it is not as strong as in other subjects. This is in large measure due to the manner in which it is taught. Schemes of work do not specifically include ICT and opportunities are missed to help pupils make progress both within ICT and the subject being taught at the time.
6. Improvements to the way the curriculum is taught have led to corresponding improvements in other subjects. Lessons such as design and technology are taught as discrete subjects and where good planning backs them up they encourage pupils to develop specific skills. There is

still a measure of integration between subjects but the purpose and focus of each is distinct. For example in a reception class technology lesson pupils made a ladybird – a theme linked to their language development. Pupils adeptly crumpled tissue paper and stuck it accurately onto a piece of card, this was then coloured appropriately and the outcome was a realistic model of the insect. The intention of the lesson was to enable pupils to differentiate between spots and stripes as well as to identify colours – this they achieved admirably.

7. Parents are justifiably concerned that their children have insufficient access to the services of the visiting speech therapist. The time available to the school is insufficient to allow pupils to substantially benefit from this service – despite the acknowledged expertise of the present post-holder. For pupils with little or under-developed communication skills, the situation is detrimental to their development, and their ability to make progress across a range of activities is compromised

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The school has high expectations of them to achieve and is quick to give praise and celebrate their successes. The parents report that the children enjoy coming to school and on arrival they are generally happy to quickly settle into the activities of the classroom. They join in a wide range of activities with enthusiasm and staff encourage them to develop their independence. All the pupils feel secure in the school and with the staff, which fosters the good attitude they have to learning, as well as giving them the stimulation they require.
9. Overall, pupil's behaviour is good both in lessons and when out on visits – for example pupils have been taken to a local café to rehearse learned social skills. Pupils behave well reflecting the positive ethos of the school and the expectations of the staff. Staff manage challenging behaviour well, through anticipating and de-fusing potentially volatile situations. A "star" system is used to signify achievement, effort and consideration for others and this is celebrated in a whole school assembly, thus showing that the school's aims and values form an important part of the life of the school. There is a policy on restraint with which all staff are familiar. Incidents are fully recorded and monitored. There have been no exclusions.
10. There are very good relationships between the staff and pupils, based on mutual respect, which is the result of well-planned, interesting lessons and activities. Pupils are given responsibilities that are appropriate to them. They are eager to do jobs such as returning registers to the office. Pupils are becoming more independent and lunchtime is an opportunity for learning how to feed themselves and also social interaction. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are taken out on a variety of visits to enhance both their social and personal development. When moving around the school, pupils' show an awareness of each other and should they bump into or impede others, they will apologise. Pupils show good tolerance of each other and bullying is not perceived as a problem. When views are expressed by pupils others listen intently and should they disagree they make this known appropriately. Overall, the pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils also contribute in their own way by raising money for charity. Since the last report the school has made improvements to the lunchtime provision, to the extent that this is now much more of a learning experience.
11. Overall, pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Absences usually are the result of a pupil's medical condition. Nearly all the pupils have transport to school, arranged by the local education authority, and their punctuality is directly linked with the time of arrival of the minibuses and taxis. Lessons start on time. The keeping of registers complies with statutory requirements. Since the last inspection improvements have been made to the accommodation in the school, most notably the widening of doors to facilitate access by wheelchairs and larger mobility aids. Pupils who use these aids are now much more independent. This has resulted in increased opportunities for personal development.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

12. Overall, the quality of teaching is good but it is also very good or excellent in a significant

proportion of lessons. During the period of inspection, teaching was excellent in almost 9 per cent of lessons, very good in 31 per cent and good in a further 43 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection where, although teaching was favourably reported, the proportion of better quality teaching is now significantly higher. During the current inspection the school was experiencing significant difficulty, in the absence of the full-time teacher, in maintaining continuity of supply staff for one of its classes. This appears due to the lack of appropriate expertise within the area. The shortfall was temporarily covered through the efforts of two of the part-time staff. Of the current teaching strength, eight have part-time contracts, ranging from 0.8 of the week to 0.2 of the week. The sound deployment of these teachers ensures that continuity is maintained for pupils. In the nursery for example, where two teachers share the duties, their deployment ensures that each teacher only deals with the same pupils throughout their stay at the school.

13. As at the last inspection, the commitment of both teachers and support staff is a significant strength in ensuring the progress of pupils. The quality of these relationships and the high degree of professional expertise and understanding, results in high quality lessons throughout the school which extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers and support staff share information on a regular basis and the quality of teamwork and co-operation seen within lessons is exemplary.
14. The overall improvement in the quality of teaching has been brought about by several factors. There have been beneficial changes to the curriculum and the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced. The structure which these have provided, as well as the clearly identifiable learning targets, have resulted in good progress for pupils, particularly within the area of communication. Parents are especially pleased with the progress their children make in verbal and signing communication. The headteacher has put in place a well structured system by which teaching is monitored. This results in written reports to each teacher, identifying the strengths and weaknesses within the observed lessons. Where appropriate, further support is offered to teachers and this has resulted in a raising of the overall standards of teaching. Support staff are a significant part of the teaching teams within each class and their contribution, in the forms of their professional expertise and assistance with behaviour management, is considerable.
15. Teaching of science and English is strong, with one lesson in three being of high quality. It should be recognised, however, that the teaching of English forms a part (albeit a significant part) of the overall communication strategy and, as such, all staff play a significant part in its implementation. Physical education is also a significant strength. Included within this is the wider physical curriculum, such as the internationally recognised movement programme adopted by the school. When the latter aspect is also included, some three-quarters of lessons seen, result in very good or excellent teaching. Elements of this high standard of teaching include a detailed knowledge by staff of the individual education programmes (IEP) for each pupil. Individual behaviour programmes (IBP) supplement these where appropriate. Using this knowledge teachers direct their teaching to specific individual need and as a result pupils make significant gains in their learning. In English, for example, pupils are constantly challenged to make choices for themselves and teachers demand clear responses, which indicate that the pupil has understood his or her part in the dialogue.
16. All teachers manage pupils' behaviour very successfully. This is generally done in an unobtrusive way but pupils always recognise the demands made of them. For example, in the reception class a pupil was told off for a misdemeanour. In so doing the teacher heavily emphasised the expression "Oh dear!" and repeated this several times. It was no coincidence that this same expression was also the title to a story well known to the pupil, and its significance was clear. Unsatisfactory behaviour by pupils is not a significant part of classroom life but where they present a more robust challenge, such as in classes for pupils within the autistic spectrum, they are well managed by all staff and their needs are sensitively handled. Here too, pupils are expected to behave well. The resultant good order is a significant reason for the good working atmospheres in all classrooms. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are also subject to high expectations of their behaviour. In one lesson a pupil became over-excited and when asked to calm down then became very distressed. Staff maintained their firm approach, all the while offering the pupil the chance to calm down and re-join the class. This he eventually

did. This consistency of approach in behaviour management provides many opportunities for pupils to make good progress in their social development.

17. Throughout the school, pupils make best progress and respond well to lessons when they are actively involved. Where pupils were expected to remain seated for long periods of time they would become restless and uninterested in their tasks. In such situations, progress within lessons would be adversely affected. Even within some of these situations teachers ensure that pupils continue to learn. This occurred in a Year 4 science lesson, in which a target for an individual pupil was to remain seated for a five minute period. The pupil successfully achieved this, although less in the way of learning about science was accomplished. A good example of learning through activity was seen in a Year 5 dance lesson. Based on good examples provided by teacher and support staff, pupils made effective progress in being able to control their movement, such as being able to 'freeze' when the music stopped.
18. Relationships between adults and pupils are almost always excellent. Adults treat the pupils with considerable respect and this attitude under-pins the significant trust which pupils have in their teachers and other staff. From this, pupils feel confident to ask questions and attempt tasks which might otherwise be thought too difficult for them. Using this level of trust which is created, teachers gradually increase the complexity of tasks which pupils are asked to do, and in so doing raise expectations and resultant progress. Teachers and support staff have good intervention tactics which invariably head off potential flash points. For example, where pupils share time at the computers staff go to great lengths to ensure that the 'inactive' pupils are fully included in the task. At the end of lessons, where further disruption could occur, pupils are given tasks that enable them to channel their energy into constructive activity and in addition contribute to their social development.
19. Weaknesses in pupils' learning exclusively refer to a Year 3 class. During the inspection two part-time staff covering for the absence of the full time teacher undertook the teaching of this group. While the teaching seen also reflected the good quality within the rest of the school it was evident that the learning habits of these pupils were not as established as those in other classes. Disruptions were frequent and expectations about their work and behaviour were not fully understood by the pupils. This resulted in confusion for the pupils who then found it difficult to concentrate on their tasks. Progress in this class is not as good as the rest of the school. Monitoring of this situation has been undertaken and the headteacher has made plans to improve the teaching in this class.
20. Overall, teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and have developed imaginative techniques to encourage pupils' learning. Their experience allows them to become aware of all the opportunities that can be used to enhance pupils' progress and they use these effectively, even when the opportunities may appear to be out of context to the subject being taught. Their knowledge of pupils and their individual needs is very good. Assessments are regularly undertaken and detailed notes kept of significant events. Through these progress for individual pupils can be ensured – except in the case of the class for Year 3 pupils. Baseline assessments, as well as dependency data, indicate that pupils make full use of their learning opportunities. Some individual pupils show improvement of more than fifty points on their dependency scales, which is good, and such results are not uncommon throughout the school. Weaknesses in teaching exist in incomplete planning for some subjects of the curriculum. There are no schemes of work for design and technology, geography and history. Pupils' progress in these subjects is compromised because the breadth of knowledge and understanding cannot be ensured. Incomplete schemes exist for English, mathematics, ICT, personal and social education and religious education. The use of ICT is not effectively included in teachers' planning, consequently pupils do not always have the opportunity to either enhance the presentation of their work or further their understanding and knowledge.

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

21. The curriculum for children under five is good. All of the recommended areas of learning are taught, with an appropriate emphasis on personal and social education and on the development of children's communication skills. Planning ensures that children make progress in small steps

and, as a result, the curriculum is relevant for the needs of these young children.

22. A good quality curriculum is provided for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties across Key Stages 1 and 2. Based on a clearly defined philosophy that incorporates a range of appropriate influences, including the 'Equals' framework, the curriculum is organised into six areas of learning. These areas encompass strands, which emphasise the National Curriculum subject structure. In this way, the school's approach clearly reflects the developing statutory guidance for a curriculum for this group of pupils. There is a proper focus on communication and personal and social development as priorities for all pupils and, through the MOVE programme, on mobility for pupils with significant physical impairment. Consequently, the curriculum is very relevant and provides satisfactory balance, enabling pupils to make good progress in relation to their identified needs.
23. There are, though, some inadequacies in the way pupils' learning is planned. Much productive work has been undertaken since the previous inspection in developing individual subject policies and schemes of work, and the planning for science presents a very good model for other subjects to follow. The development of the role of curriculum co-ordinators has had a positive impact on the way teachers plan for and teach individual subjects. Similarly, the very effective adaptation of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has offered benefits in helping teachers to think in a more focused way about how to incorporate these important aspects of pupils' learning into their lessons. Despite this progress, there are still no schemes of work in place for design and technology, geography and history, and incomplete schemes for English, mathematics, information technology, personal, social and health education and religious education. Pupils' longer-term programmes of study are, therefore, insufficiently structured to secure breadth of learning across the whole curriculum and throughout their time at school. Generally, however, curriculum outcomes are good, because of strong, informal structures and very good, multi-professional teamwork. There are very clear plans in place to complete the necessary curriculum development work in the near future.
24. There is a significant and growing minority of pupils in the school who have autistic spectrum disorders. These pupils are included in class groups and mostly follow the same curriculum as all other pupils. They do, however, require a much more structured approach to learning than their peers and the school is currently exploring the potential value of the TEACCH programme. Some attempt is made to provide extra support for a few of these pupils through the additional literacy strategy and most teachers effectively prepare pupils for the day's activities and signal changes in activity through symbol timetables. At the moment, though, the needs of pupils with autism are not being fully met through the existing curriculum structure.
25. As with many similar schools, the fact that pupils are brought to the school from a wide catchment area makes it difficult to provide any extension to the normal timetable. Pupils participate in a range of visits into the community and other activities, like sailing, which provide good additional experiences. The school has links with and encourages pupils to become involved with other organisations that provide after school activities. There are, however, no structured lunchtime activities, and it is hoped that the planned adventure playground will go some way to providing an additional facility and focus.
26. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. There are many visitors to the school, including artists and musicians who work very productively with pupils. Students from neighbouring mainstream schools also provide invaluable support in dance lessons. Pupils participate in joint drama festivals with other special schools and this year will join their mainstream peers in a neighbouring high school's sports day. There are very valuable links with local businesses and the successful multi-professional partnerships both within and beyond the school provide important additional perspectives on and support for pupils' needs. Links with the secondary school, to which the majority of pupils transfer, are strong and good liaison and preparation ensures that this transition is smooth. The school is highly regarded in the community and often receives very generous support from local people.
27. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies provide excellent opportunities to promote spiritual development through hymns, prayer, time for reflection and celebration of personal achievement. They provide very good opportunities for

pupils to learn about world faiths and the main events in the Christian calendar, with good contributions from visiting church leaders. Teachers make very effective use of music to create an appropriate mood for reflection during assemblies, in dance lessons and to accompany massage. Displays in school provide very good opportunities for pupils to appreciate poetry and the beauty of the high quality display of pupils' art. There is very good provision of visits in the community to appreciate the wonders of nature and to study young animals. This contributes very well to promoting pupils' spiritual development.

28. The school promotes pupils' moral and social development very well. Staff encourage high achievement in personal development and expects pupils to understand the consequence of their actions. For instance, a pupil upset another pupil, realised this and signed an apology. A feature of lessons is the careful and systematic promotion of personal responsibility and independence. During a drinks session in a Year four class, each pupil chose a drink using sign or speech, helped others, and tidied away, contributing to a sense of a shared community in class. Staff actively promote pupils' personal development at lunchtimes. There is a strong emphasis upon self-help in feeding and a high standard of social behaviour in the dining room. Pupils' achievements are valued and staff provide very good role models to promote pupils' personal and moral development. Achievements in personal targets such as feeding are recognised in achievement ceremonies.
29. Pupils receive good opportunities to create art in the style of other artists. They produce impressive art in response to a visit by a local artist. Pupils enjoy making music and benefit from visits from touring musicians. There is good provision of visiting performers, such as the regular performance of a local school drama group. There are good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their local culture, particularly through visits in the local area to explore nature and visit farms when they study science. There is limited evidence of pupils studying their own and local history or appreciating other cultures through geography. However, there are very good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of a multi-cultural society through the study of a wide range of cultures and exploring beliefs in religious education topic weeks.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

30. The arrangements to safeguard pupil's welfare and safety are very good. The school works very closely with both health specialists and therapists and clinics are held in the school by hospital consultants to minimise the time pupils are away from class. It is an advantage that the main, local hospital adjoins the grounds of the school.
31. Staff know the needs of the pupils very well. The Children's Charter as well as the school aims are built around the pupils' safety and well being. The kitchen works closely with the hospital dietician for advice on pupils' diets. A pilot scheme for a menu in special schools is being carried out at the school. The overall health and safety provision in the school is good and the recommendations, following an audit by the headteacher and local education authority in 1999, is in the short-term development plan. These should be implemented during this school year. Responsibilities are clearly designated and set, as for example the administration of medicines and the testing of water quality in the swimming pool. The procedures for child protection are very good and effectively monitored. The school staff work as an effective team to ensure that all children have the best support and guidance that is available. Parents express concern that insufficient speech therapy is available. Representations by the school to the local National Health Service (NHS) Trust have so far been unsuccessful in securing an increase in this provision.
32. Procedures for monitoring school attendance are good and good use is made of the school/home diary. Transport escorts are also used as a sound means of communication. The school works closely with parents to ensure that children attend school whenever they are able.
33. The whole school strategies for monitoring and managing challenging behaviour are very good and well understood by the staff. There is very good practice in managing difficult behaviour. This is particularly so where it concerns pupils within the autistic spectrum.

34. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good with the exception of Year 3 where they are unsatisfactory. All pupils have an individual pupil record (IPR) in which subject and individual education plan (IEP) targets are recorded. The curriculum is addressed in six areas: communication, numeracy, knowledge and understanding, personal and social development, creative and physical. Up to thirteen targets are set by class teachers for each pupil including three targets from the IEP. Up to six further targets may be set in conjunction with other professionals, for example the speech therapist or educational psychologist. The quality of targets in IEPs is good, most are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited. All pupils are assessed using extended baseline assessment scales and dependency scales. These are effectively used to establish progress.
35. The use of assessment to inform curricular planning is very good, with the exception of one class. Lesson plans include learning outcomes for individual pupils and these are closely linked to the targets set in the IPRs.
36. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good overall, except in Year 3. Targets are set for one term (with the exception of IEP targets which are set at the annual review) and regularly reviewed. Documents are good with clear evidence given for targets being met or not met. IEP targets are reviewed each term. Work is dated and marked according to whether it is completed unsupported or otherwise. Clear evidence of progress is available from pupils' records. Very good use is made of photographs to record progress for records of achievement. The IPRs are monitored each term by the senior management team. All pupils undergo Key Stage 1 and 2 national assessment tasks. These are reported to parents in two formats, one as a standard score for both teacher assessment and also as task scores - in most cases working towards level 1. The second format is a more descriptive report indicating what each pupil knows and can do. This latter is a model of good practice.
37. The criteria used at annual reviews, and insisted on by the local education authority, do not sufficiently indicate the substantial amount of academic progress made by many pupils. The standard LEA form does not allow for baseline and dependency scores or the possible future use of 'P' scales. This format is disadvantageous to the school when it wishes to identify actual progress made by pupils.
38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good overall. However, in Year 3 they are unsatisfactory when compared to the rest of the school. Good use is made of individual targets. Pupils are given a star award at the end of week assembly for achieving milestones in improved behaviour, helping others and playing productively, as well as for academic progress.
39. For pupils with more severe behavioural difficulties, there are examples of excellent practice, particularly in Key Stage 2. Behavioural plans are specific, with clearly identified targets agreed with parents. The plans are regularly reviewed to measure progress and targets adjusted accordingly. There is a lack of consistency across the school in implementing this effective system.
40. Pupils achieve very high standards in personal and social development. The majority of pupils learn to behave with courtesy and tolerance. They listen to each other, take turns during activities and show consideration for others by, for instance, standing aside to allow wheel chairs to pass them in corridors. Pupils' understanding of each other's needs is also readily illustrated by the way in which most ignore incidents of disruptive behaviour, accepting that it will be appropriately managed by adults in the group.
41. Throughout the school, all staff exercise quiet but firm control, with reminders of expected, acceptable behaviour, and this enables pupils to learn how to behave appropriately. Through a system of well-directed praise and rewards, pupils learn to appreciate when they have done good work or tried hard. They show pleasure at their own success and that of others, because the staff provide such good role models. This was movingly seen during a whole school assembly when a Key Stage 2 pupil with significant communication difficulties sang 'I can sing a rainbow' as a solo, and was greeted with spontaneous applause.
42. Good, and sometimes very good, teaching is characterised by the manner in which teachers



and classroom assistants speak frequently, warmly and with respect to all pupils, and pay close attention to those with multiple and profound learning difficulties. This effectively promotes pupils' attention and concentration. A good example occurred in a Key Stage 2 art lesson when a classroom assistant talked encouragingly to a pupil with profound difficulties, over the full duration of the lesson. The well-focused hand-over-hand support with the activity was reinforced by the constant and friendly use of speech and eye contact, and this effectively enabled the pupil to gain learning opportunities at an appropriate level.

43. Personal and social development is taught during specific sessions each day, and also within a cross-curricular context. There are also planned links with religious education although these are somewhat tenuous and not always effective. 'Hello' time at the start of the morning sessions is a feature of all classrooms, snack times are well-structured, and particularly effective use is made of lunch times to promote pupils' social development and independence skills. Sex and drugs education is included in individual pupils' programmes as this is judged to be appropriate.
44. The development of a detailed policy and whole school scheme of work would further improve pupils' good progress. The present draft scheme provides a sound basis for this, and is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is aware of the need to improve co-ordination in the planning and delivery of this aspect of pupils' development.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. The parent's views of the school are very positive. Parents express great satisfaction with the care that the school takes of their children and the progress they are making. An example of this is that over the last two years, three children have transferred to mainstream school and one child is currently attending for a half day each week. There is a concern that the speech therapist has insufficient time in the school.
46. The school's links with parents are good. They know they can contact the school at any time and the school keeps them well informed over any concerns regarding their child. The home/school diary is used daily for the school to make observations or comments about a child and for the parents to reciprocate. Very recently, a digital camera has been purchased and this will be a great asset for providing information to parents, as well as recording pupils' work in a more manageable format.
47. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. A few parents help around the school with activities such as swimming. The nursery class encourages parents to spend time with their children when they are first admitted to the school. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association raise money for school projects through social activities, approaching local businesses and sponsorship events. Currently their effort is aimed at raising a substantial sum for the provision of a new play area. The school arranges a crèche for certain events and there is an emphasis on including the whole family, for example at a disco which all can attend.
48. The quality of information sent out regularly to parents by the school is very good. The prospectus is clear, easily read and can be updated as appropriate. The annual report from governors provides parents with a clear view of the school and termly meetings provide for a more direct dialogue about their child. Approximately 99% of parents attend annual reviews and some attend the clinics held in the school, both of which help in the setting of targets as well as the giving of advice. Some parents expressed concern over the lack of homework set but the school works in partnership with parents and for "homework" it is expected that the practical work children do in school is continued at home. An example of this includes listening to the sounds around them when travelling on a bus and for some children, taking a book home
49. The links with other education establishments and the community are excellent. The transfer to secondary school is well planned and enables the pupils to get to know the school to which they are going, as well as meeting the staff of those schools. Three children have been successfully integrated into mainstream school and one pupil is currently attending for a half day each week. Students from local high schools and education colleges regularly help in the school on work experience placement; this enables a greater ratio of adults in the classrooms. Pupils will be

participating in a sports day hosted by a local high school and once each year the school joins forces with other special schools in a performing arts day, the outcome of which is performed at a local sports centre. Pupils from the mainstream school help in the organisation of this activity.

50. The school has an arrangement whereby the hospital consultants hold clinics in the school thus enabling the pupils not to miss school and for parents to have the opportunity to come into school. The link with the Suffolk Education Business Partnership is far reaching, in that as well as linking with local businesses it has enabled students to work together in creating a visual stimulation room. The local newspaper has written a series of articles about the school, all of which has raised the positive profile of the school.
51. Pupils visit shops in the locality and use the cd-rom at the local library. Good use is made of visits both locally and further afield. The priest from the local church visits the school regularly and participates in harvest festival and carols at Christmas.
52. The partnership which the school has with parents was favourably reported at the last inspection. Since that time some parents reported that this relationship became strained over events taking place within the school. The evidence gathered at this inspection indicates that parents are now very confident in the work of the school and the overwhelming majority feel fully included in the education of their children.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

53. The headteacher leads the school very effectively with clarity of vision and purpose. In this his senior management team ably supports him. He has played a significant part in the raising of the standards that now prevail in the school. Prior to his recent appointment, the school was reportedly in a state of decline, with poor staff morale and parental dissatisfaction being significant factors. The decline has now been reversed and standards of provision and attainment are rising, and continue to rise, throughout the school. Staff morale is high and characterised by a sense of purpose and dedication. Of the parents spoken to during the course of the inspection and from the comments of those who submitted written evidence, they too are happy with the leadership of the school. One parent wrote "Any matters I may raise are dealt with quickly" while another observed that "He (the headteacher) is always very honest and straight".
54. There is good delegation of responsibilities to staff and this is backed up by budgetary provision that allows them to plan realistically for the development of their subject. This has had a significant impact on the provision they make for pupils' learning, through improved planning for subjects and clearer identification and targeting of resources. The monitoring of both teaching and the outcomes of teachers' planning is effectively carried out by the senior staff and this has led to an overall improvement in the standard of teaching when compared to the last inspection.
55. Collectively, the governing body, headteacher and staff have a shared commitment to provide a school in which the interests of the pupils are paramount and raising of standards are central. Difficulties, such as recruitment of staff and long-term absences, have been well managed both by governors and headteacher and the sometimes difficult outcomes borne with cheerful dedication by all other staff. The governing body provides good and effective support to the school. They give unstinting time to the school and bring particular expertise from which the school benefits. They are more than simply 'critical friends', although this role too they carry out effectively. The chair of governors is very active in the life of the school, being a frequent visitor and through this means, has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Each governor has adopted a class, which they visit, and they too form clear pictures of school activity which effectively inform their discussion and planning. A criticism within the last report was that the governing body did not fulfil its statutory responsibilities. They have taken this to heart and acted upon it so that now they fulfil all such responsibilities soundly.
56. The development priorities chosen by the school have a significant impact on raising standards throughout the school. This is exemplified in the very effective teaching of literacy and numeracy. The headteacher effectively monitors the whole range of this activity, reporting

regularly to governors about progress as well as areas that need further development. Financial planning is good and there is clear correlation between investment and outcomes. For example, a substantial sum was invested in widening doors, facilitating movement of pupils in both wheelchairs and other mobility aids associated with the MOVE programme. This has resulted in increased independent movement by pupils, where previously they were wholly dependent on adult assistance. The purchase of specialist equipment to further aid this movement has brought direct benefits to pupils. All these outcomes have been carefully planned for, evaluated and monitored.

57. The headteacher, along with his deputy, provide the staff with strong support and appropriate advice in order to promote pupils' learning. Together, they carry out an effective programme of monitoring classroom practice which has resulted in high levels of good quality teaching. Use of information technology is effective in monitoring pupil attainment and a considerable data base is being compiled which will allow objective assessments to be made for each pupil.
58. There are sufficient teachers to provide the required curriculum for the school. They are experienced and hold relevant qualifications to teach pupils with special educational needs. There is a large number of part-time teaching staff. The arrangements to co-ordinate the work of teachers who share classes are appropriate to ensure continuity in planning. Several part-time teachers and instructors bring a very high level of specialist expertise to subjects such as physical education and this is a significant factor in promoting pupils' progress. There are sufficient special support assistants. A significant proportion of these hold professional qualifications and there is a commitment from these staff to improve their qualifications further, through school based and personal initiatives. There is excellent team-working between staff. This means that support staff take significant responsibility upon themselves and this has a positive effect in promoting pupils' progress, for instance when pupils receive support in small group instruction.
59. There is a very good induction programme for staff new to the school and staff development arrangements are good. Although a high proportion of teaching staff has joined the school in the past three years, they have settled well to school routines. This is the result of effective arrangements for induction. Newly-qualified teachers receive very good support. All staff value the care that the school takes to support them during their induction period. Arrangements for staff development are very good. All members of teaching and classroom support staff receive professional development interviews that successfully determine both professional and school priorities for training. The priorities chosen for development clearly reflect the needs of the school, such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Although there has been some training to meet the needs of the high proportion of pupils within the autistic spectrum, there is an acknowledgement of the need for more. There is a positive attitude to plans to introduce a new formal system of staff appraisal.
60. The school accommodation is good overall, with some very good features, but also a number of shortcomings. Classrooms are bright and welcoming. They vary in size, those for some younger pupils are somewhat cramped. The absence of a corridor between these classrooms also results in frequent but unavoidable distractions as people pass from one room to the other. Additional carpeting has been laid since the last inspection and this has brought about an improvement in the acoustic conditions as well as the general level of comfort. The school has developed very good additional facilities, such as a sensory room, a studio, a large-scale soft play area, a medical room, a physiotherapy room and a hydrotherapy pool. These are well used to enhance pupils' learning and progress. For example, all pupils can safely operate the environmental controls in the sensory room, increasing their incentive to learn. Further improvements need to be made to the external play areas for nursery and reception pupils which, currently, are quite bleak. The present accommodation does not allow for appropriate imaginative play by these young children.
61. In a recent major building programme the school entrance and administration area were significantly improved. This has resulted in improved security for both pupils and staff as well as to more efficient working practices for administration staff.
62. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained, and an internal maintenance programme is underway. This effectively promotes pupils' respect for the school premises. There are good

grass and hard surface areas for games and recreation. The school's grounds are to be significantly enhanced during the forthcoming term, following a fund-raising campaign for improving the existing adventure playground to meet the needs of all pupils.

63. Storage facilities are limited. The school is addressing this by converting a currently neglected and little used atrium into a central resource store. This will certainly improve access to resources by staff and release space in other areas of the school. The use of the hall continues to be restricted by the storage of equipment and by its position in the centre of the school. Pupils, staff and visitors pass through, frequently interrupting lessons.
64. Since the previous inspection resource provision has improved. This has, in large measure, been brought about by the delegation of budget to subject co-ordinators. The result is that subjects are now well resourced and allow a wider range of teaching methods to be used. Improvements are particularly noticeable in resources for science, religious education and for multi-cultural education. The library has been re-sited and is now used more effectively to develop pupils' literacy and investigative skills, although there is still a need for more non-fiction books. The school has recently purchased sufficient information technology equipment to allow every class to access the Internet. The senior management team is aware of the need for further staff training in the use of this technology so that pupils' learning can be extended. Resources for geography and history remain limited, and insufficient progress has been made in these subjects since the last inspection. Resource development overall is now closely linked to curriculum planning. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
65. Staff use the locality well in order to extend the experiences of their pupils. Pupils throughout the school benefit from frequent visits to farms, parks, shops, a museum, pet centres and a marina. These visits make a valuable contribution to promoting pupils' progress and experience of the wider world.
66. Budget management by the governing body, through its sub-committee, is very good. Resources are well targeted and expected outcomes identified. The school is currently running a budget surplus, but this is already earmarked for improvements to the accommodation. The quality of financial information provided by administration staff is excellent and this allows governors to be fully informed at meetings as well as helping them make judgements, based on actual figures. The school has responded appropriately to the recommendations of its last auditors report. Most of these were of a minor nature. As this report was completed three years ago a review of current practice would seem necessary.
67. Since the last inspection the governors and headteacher have responded well to the management issues raised in that report. Most significantly there is now among staff a clear understanding of their responsibilities and how these relate to the overall activity of the school. This has resulted in very effective classroom teams that provide good quality teaching, as well as learning opportunities for pupils. There is an effective system of professional dialogue and support which results in high levels of good and very good teaching. A weakness which still exists is the absence, in some subjects, of a scheme of work. The management is aware of this and plans are in hand to rectify the situation.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to continue to improve the quality of education and pupils' progress, the governors and headteacher should:

- (1) continue the development of curriculum provision by providing schemes of work for all subjects. Using the model of the current science scheme of work, these should be sufficiently detailed to help teachers in their work and therefore raise standards and expectations across the school;
- (2) incorporate the use of information and communication technology more effectively across the whole range of subjects. Lessons should include an expectation of its use, wherever appropriate, in order to support and extend the work pupils. The objective should be to raise, not only the quality of work which pupils achieve, but also their understanding of how computers can broaden their understanding of the wider world;
- (3) continue to develop the current curriculum for pupils within the autistic spectrum by increasing the availability of training for staff who provide for their needs;
- (4) improve the quality of teaching and social provision for Year 3 pupils. The school has planned a response to this and while not in place at the time of the inspection, this should be implemented without delay.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	80

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8.64	30.86	43.20	17.28	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	56
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	27

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.5	School data	0.2

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	55
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.43:1
Average class size	7.28

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	465

*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	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	675,279
Total expenditure	696,057
Expenditure per pupil	10,708
Balance brought forward from previous year	83,025
Balance carried forward to next year	62,247

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	27

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	44	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	60	0	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	35	6	0	29
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	41	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	4	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	37	4	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	26	0	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	52	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	33	4	0	13

### Other issues raised by parents

A minority of parents are concerned at the level of funding available to the school, particularly with regard to the purchase of specialist equipment. They feel that the school is inadequately supported by the local education and health departments.



## **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. At the time of the inspection there were fourteen children in the nursery, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. Children enjoy coming to school, and take an active part in a variety of self-selected and teacher-directed activities. The children's needs differ greatly. Some have profound and complex difficulties, others are on the autistic continuum and some are attaining at a high level, though still within the severe learning difficulty range. Children make a good start to their life in school and continue to make good progress in all areas of learning. Their personal and social development is good. The opportunities they are given, both during lessons and through breaks for snacks and meals, help them to learn to sit together, practice or increase their skills in feeding themselves, and understand the need for co-operation. Staff encourage children to take responsibility for jobs, such as returning the register to the secretary, and this helps them towards independence skills. From the well-focused praise children receive, they learn to appreciate when they have been successful and have tried hard. They show pleasure in their own success and that of others, because staff provide very good role models.
69. Children under five have good communication skills, including speaking, signing, and listening and are increasingly able to respond to simple instructions. Most join in or follow popular songs and rhymes, listen to shared stories, handle books appropriately and look with interest at the pictures. High attaining children are beginning to understand that there are links between written words and meaning. These children are beginning to practice writing skills through the drawing of shapes, and others are starting to point to symbols to explain what they are doing. Children make good progress in early mathematical skills. They understand number and sequence through counting rhymes and songs, and these are reinforced through the everyday routines of the classroom. Their understanding is further promoted through stacking blocks to make towers, and by matching shapes and colours.
70. Children in the nursery make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They experiment with a variety of materials such as sand, clay, and dough, and learn that they can manipulate and shape these things. Children explore the classroom and other areas of the school, and are given opportunities to explore reflective surfaces, push trucks along tracks and roll balls down tubes. They build up a bank of knowledge of animals and birds and the sounds they make, and further increase their awareness of the world outside school through a well-organised programme of visits to a farm, local parks and pet centres.
71. Children's creative skills are good. They use paint and colour effectively and experiment using fingers, sponges or brushes to make pictures. They are beginning to indicate preferences in their choices of colour and materials. All children enjoy music and learn a range of well-known nursery rhymes and action songs which they perform enthusiastically. Children achieve well and make good progress in their physical development, particularly during swimming lessons and MOVE sessions. They benefit from regular access to outside play areas, and the use of large-scale soft play equipment. They develop confidence and growing independence, and many show good spatial awareness as they move about. Children with greater physical difficulties respond positively to the careful, consistent handling they receive in physiotherapy programmes. Children's good progress is a result of receiving good, and sometimes very good, teaching. Work is well prepared and organised effectively and teachers provide a structured, stimulating learning environment. Very good planning which takes account of individual needs and children's prior learning, is a strong feature of all lessons. Classroom assistants also demonstrate substantial, detailed knowledge of the children, and share the teachers' high expectations of pupils' attention and involvement. Activities are organised well and a good range of resources is used to support and extend learning.

### **ENGLISH**

72. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English as the result of good and often very good teaching. The timetable is structured to provide a significant amount of time each day for communication-focused activities and teachers take full advantage of many other opportunities to reinforce this aspect of pupils' learning. This is especially noteworthy in the skills of speaking and listening.
73. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to listen carefully to questions asked by teachers and special support assistants (SSA). They make good progress because staff structure their approach to individual pupils, saying their names to focus their attention and encouraging them to think carefully about the activity. Because the questions are very well matched to each pupil's needs, they are confident to respond and are encouraged by the smiles and praise that they receive when successful. It is particularly noticeable that pupils wait for their turn and listen respectfully to each other's contributions. For example, whilst listening to a story about 'The Wiggley Worm', pupils responded well to the teacher's dramatic and engaging reading of the story and were able to identify words beginning with 'w' and recall important events. Pupils learn to use a wider range of vocabulary because teachers introduce new words very effectively, giving clear explanations, repeating them often and providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to practice them. The names of characters in stories, for example, soon become familiar to pupils and they can identify them successfully in pictures, also telling the teacher what they are doing. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress as they learn to make longer responses, for example using sentences rather than short phrases, because teachers have high expectations of them and encourage these skills by their thoughtful approach. Pupils who find it hard to communicate verbally also achieve well, because teachers and SSAs teach and encourage them to use gesture or approximate sounds. Where appropriate, Makaton signing is used as a means of ensuring pupils take a full part in lessons.
74. During Key Stage 2, pupils build successfully on this earlier learning and are able to participate well in more sophisticated activities, such as drama and role-play. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils listen very well to tape recordings as well as other pupils' contributions. In a drama lesson about 'Mrs Muddle's Holiday', higher attaining pupils were able to imagine themselves in the role of preparing for a holiday and could guess the contents of Mrs Muddle's case. This helped other pupils to learn from their peers and make valuable contributions at their own level. In most classes, pupils feel confident to ask questions and make observations. In a physical education lesson, for example, when pupils were pulling and pushing themselves up a sloped bench they could say what they were doing and used the word 'heavy' to explain why it was sometimes difficult. Very good use of signing and symbols enabled all pupils to contribute to the discussion. Across both key stages, all staff use every opportunity to encourage pupils to develop their skills to communicate with adults and each other. For example, in the greeting session at the beginning of the day, some non-speakers participate by using their 'big mac' communicators to say 'hello'. In social skills sessions and at lunch, all staff take time to talk with pupils and enable them to be part of the activity. Two older, higher attaining pupils who cannot speak have been liberated from their frustration of not being able to communicate by the excellent teamwork of the speech and language therapist, teachers and very able SSAs. They have worked very successfully with both pupils to develop alternative communication systems. One boy uses a complex symbol book that has been developed with him by an SSA and he can now conduct a conversation. Another boy, again working with an SSA, is fast developing the ability to use an electronic voice communicator to 'talk' about his experiences. These examples are typical of the good, individualised work that is done to enable pupils to participate effectively school and their wider life.
75. Teachers effectively use elements of the National Literacy Strategy, well developed by the English co-ordinator, to help pupils make good progress in reading. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make. Initially, they become familiar with their own and other pupils' names. Through a variety of games, pupils gradually learn to match name cards to pictures of characters in books from the reading scheme as they come to recognise the written word. Whilst lower attaining pupils come to appreciate books and stories as a source of information and fun, some higher attaining pupils are starting to recognise the significance of the written word as conveying meaning. During Key Stage 2, these pupils continue to develop this skill and, by the end of the key stage, a few pupils read their books fluently and use their skills to access learning programmes on the computer, sometimes

correcting themselves when they make a mistake. The most successful readers, together with non-readers who listen carefully to stories read out to them, can recall details and events from stories, sometimes even predicting what might happen next. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy books and reading as well as listening to well-chosen poetry. In this they take their cue from teachers' enthusiasm and learn to recognise sound and rhyming patterns. The very good 'book bags' in the library that often include toys and models to illustrate the story are well used. Pupils are also beginning to collect information from books and cd-roms, so that they practice skills in other subjects, such as science. A few pupils regularly take reading books home, and parents support their progress by sharing the books with them.

76. Pupils make good progress in writing. At the earliest stages of learning they participate in pre-writing activities to explore the potential of making marks. Teachers use a wide range of activities to encourage pupils in developing control. Pupils enjoy using paint, crayons, pencils and stencils to make pictures and start to develop the ability to reproduce a symbol or letter from the teacher's model. In one lesson pupils were using dry cornflour to make patterns on a table-top and then, by adding water to the flour, making more permanent marks. They then went on to do the same with chalks on paper. Quite often the free-form scribbling activity that pupils engage in, starts to take on some order, and some recognise this emergent writing as their 'story'. Many of the pupils in Key Stage 2 are still at the early stages of writing, but some of the older pupils are starting to record their news by dictating simple sentences and copying the teacher's writing, whilst others can write key words independently. The few highest attainers are writing simple sentences in neat script.
77. The subject has developed well since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced very successfully and has led to greater consistency in teachers' approaches to, for example the teaching of reading. The development of a communication policy and scheme of work has also helped in this respect. Additionally, teachers now have a clearer understanding of all aspects of the subject and are able to weave elements right across the curriculum in other subjects so that pupils can gain from their experiences. Many good examples were observed of very carefully planned lessons that focused well on the language of the subject, for example in personal and social education. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress has improved and is now more detailed and useful. Consequently, pupils are now making better progress, particularly in communication and reading.
78. The co-ordinator is both enthusiastic and knowledgeable and clearly motivates her colleagues. She monitors teachers' practice on a regular basis and gives useful feedback to help them improve their work. She has led the subject's development, encouraging teachers and SSA's to make very attractive 'big-books' for reference and improving the resources overall to what is now a good standard. The library has been expanded and the stock colour-coded to enable pupils to make their own selections. Good team work throughout the school and in partnership with the very supportive and encouraging speech and language therapist has resulted in good provision and impressive pupil achievements.
79. Improvements since the last inspection include sound developmental work on a scheme of work. This is helpful to teachers in enabling them to target and direct their teaching appropriately. As yet the scheme of work is incomplete and further work needs to be done in this regard.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Attainment in mathematics is very poor but pupils make good progress in relation to prior levels of achievement. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. They make good progress in numeracy skills because of the challenging targets set for them. Teachers promote numeracy opportunities very well within most lessons during the day. This, together with the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy ensures that there are sufficient opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning of number.
81. At Key Stage 1 pupils understand they can use figures to describe the number of biscuits on a plate. They make good progress understanding that they must choose another number as each

pupil takes a biscuit to eat. They remember numbers to five when they count and clap along to number songs. Pupils also recognise simple shapes and match colours. At the end of the key stage they make very good progress, counting to five using a number line. This skill is further aided by a pupil beating out the count on a drum. Higher attaining pupils can count back to zero. Lower attaining pupils make exceptional progress holding the drumstick with help and beating to three. They make this exceptional progress because teachers' expectations match pupils needs well and both teacher and staff demonstrate very good patience and understanding to allow pupils plenty of time to provide their own responses.

82. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in counting, with higher attaining pupils writing numbers to 10. They gain a greater understanding of capacity through filling boxes with sand and emptying them again so that by the end of the lesson they are more aware of the concept of full and empty. Higher attaining pupils consistently make good progress, developing greater understanding of number bonds. By the end of the key stage they add and subtract numbers beyond ten. They build upon their knowledge of colours to match them in games, with higher attaining pupils learning signs for purple and pink. They deepen their knowledge of shape when they print pictures with coloured squares. Pupils throughout the school develop skills and knowledge in number in other areas of the curriculum, for instance in physical education they consolidate counting skills during exercises that require a beat. Teachers provide good opportunities to promote counting, for instance to encourage pupils to count spots on ladybirds during a science lesson. They consistently promote language well, for instance, encouraging pupils to understand the sequence of incidents in the day through symbols and signs.
83. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work and are confident because teachers plan tasks effectively to match their attainment. Relationships are good and pupils are pleased with each other's success when they answer questions. Pupils are motivated to learn because lessons are interesting. Behaviour is usually good since teachers plan lessons well to provide clear introductions for pupils to follow to enable them to take an active part in whole-class numeracy sessions. They maintain their interest well because teachers ensure that lessons contain a variety of tasks, such as pupils working in small groups, with support, to maintain their confidence.
84. The quality of teaching is good; it is very good in a significant number of lessons. Teachers have secure knowledge to teach basic skills and are becoming increasingly confident in planning to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. Explanations are very clear with prompts, repetitions and impromptu songs to ensure that pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers plan work effectively to meet individual learning needs. This planning enables special support assistants to take significant responsibility for teaching small groups of pupils, thus furthering the progress of these pupils. The quality of teaching is particularly good where teacher's expertise and enthusiasm engages pupils' interest and encourages them to want to learn more, for instance, when they play number games. Teachers remind pupils of what they have learned previously, building effectively upon this during the activities in the lesson. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used resources and music very well. Pupils hit a drum with a regular beat and another pupil put a mark on the white board to help everyone to count the beats.
85. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment in relation to individual targets are very good. The assessments provide good information to inform curriculum planning. The co-ordinator is developing a whole school scheme of work with long term assessment to monitor progress over time more effectively. The co-ordinator has a strong impact upon promoting improvements in the subject. This includes monitoring planning effectively. There are good plans for training to implement monitoring of teaching and learning to provide further support. Resources for learning are good, with improvements leading to better provision for the National Numeracy Strategy. There are some good examples of planning for pupils to use information technology to promote their learning. However this planning is not consistent, nor is there sufficient, well targeted software to support learning.
86. Insufficient use is made of ICT. This was a recommendation of the last report and it remains broadly true. The availability of appropriate software is insufficient to challenge pupils across the range of their attainments.

## SCIENCE

87. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features in nursery and Key Stage 2 classes. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils' special educational needs as well as their capabilities. Lessons are well planned with clear learning outcomes expected for individual children and pupils. Good summaries of previous lessons are used to reinforce learning, for example Incey Wincey Spider being pushed down the plug-hole. Staff relate well to children and pupils and value them as individuals. Time is well used with activities changed at appropriate intervals to maintain interest and to promote learning. There is a high expectation of behaviour and work with pupils being encouraged to answer questions appropriately and correctly. Teachers transfer their enthusiasm to the classes and demonstrate a wide range of classroom management skills and subject expertise enabling children and pupils to learn well and make good progress.
88. The quality of learning is good with some very good features in the nursery and Key Stage 2 classes. In the nursery, children recognise mini-beasts, for example caterpillars, ladybirds and worms. They understand that small animals are delicate and need to be treated gently. Pupils of all abilities recognise young lambs and horses in a natural setting. Higher attaining pupils use their numeracy skills well, for example in trying to count the spots on a ladybird.
89. In Key Stage 1 pupils can examine frogs' spawn. They correctly identify frogs and experience what they are. They all experience a range of animal habitats, for example, plants, leaf mould and soil through looking and feeling the materials. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are fully engaged in the activities. By the end of the key stage most pupils correctly identify a range of mini-beasts, including woodlice and snails.
90. In Key Stage 2 most pupils know that birds develop from eggs. They know that birds have feathers and live in nests. They follow the flight of feathers blown through the air by a wind machine. Most pupils correctly respond to animal sounds and match these with cue cards. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils accurately name types of birds, for example woodpecker, budgie and eagle. They accurately match types of heads and beaks to bodies.
91. The attitudes and behaviour of children and pupils are good with some good features in nursery and Key Stage 2 classes. Children and pupils enjoy practical activities in science. They can concentrate on their task and ignore poor behaviour when it occurs. One pupil signed an apology to a classmate after throwing flour at him. On a farm visit children were fascinated by the live animals and most accepted the offer to stroke baby lambs.
92. The science curriculum is broad, balanced, well planned and appropriate to the needs of all children and pupils. There is a policy in place, together with schemes of work which fully address all programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Clear learning outcomes are specified for all activities. These are well designed to ensure progress and continuity across the school. Very close liaison in curriculum planning with the local secondary school for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) ensures that continuity is assured into Key Stage 3. This is a model of good practice. The procedures for monitoring and assessment are good. The co-ordinator regularly monitors the topics planned by other teachers and provides advice and support where needed.
93. Science makes an exceptional contribution to pupils' spiritual development through pupils experiencing the wonder of nature, for example the study of frogs' spawn, examination of insects, study of birds and visits to a local farm.
94. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about the subject, showing a determination to raise its profile and quality of provision. There is a clear and effective development plan for the subject. There is an inventory

of resources in place and effective financial planning for the future. She ensures a good level of support for her colleagues and has provided whole school in-service training. Good use has been made of the local education authority advisory service in setting up the new schemes of work and the assessment procedures. The subject is well resourced and staff and materials are well deployed.

95. There has been very good improvement in this subject since the previous inspection. The standard of teaching has improved, based as it is on good planning and supported by an effective scheme of work. This leads to a much more relevant and stimulating curriculum for pupils which directly helps to ensure that pupils make good progress.

## **ART**

96. Overall, pupils make good progress. By the end of each key stage they achieve high standards in relation to prior attainment. It was not possible, however, to see sufficient lessons in the subject to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching. In making judgements, consideration has been given to the displays around the school, as well as the quality of the teachers' planning. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in skills such as printing and painting as well as developing an awareness of colour. Teachers are skilled at adapting the demands they make on pupils and they tailor the tasks in such a way that they challenge the pupils according to their previous attainment. For example, in a Year 1 class pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are encouraged to manipulate play dough and make it into shapes to represent frog-spawn. Some teachers employ the services of a well cared for budgie in their effort to encourage pupils to focus on colour. In doing this they enable the pupils to make colourful feathers which were then stuck to a class display of a parrot.
97. Year 4 pupils show a good knowledge of colour and use this appropriately in their pictures. In their portrayal of Elmer the Elephant all pupils managed to produce good contributions to the school menagerie. They use printing squares or sponges to add texture to their elephant. Pupils' knowledge and use of both colour and texture is progressing well. Higher attaining pupils understand the concept of repeat patterns and can design a simple repeat. In Year 6 pupils use their expertise to design and make three dimensional artefacts. Here they cover balloons with papier-mâché in order to make masks and faces.
98. In the few lessons seen teachers make good use of pupils' previous knowledge and records to enable them to challenge the pupils' attainment at an appropriate level. In so doing they design activities which are a good match to pupils' previous attainments, with the result that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Insufficient use is made of ICT to extend or compensate for pupils' difficulties in manipulation skills. At the time of the last inspection, art was not taught as a separate subject but now that it holds a secure place within the timetable pupils are able to learn appropriate skills. In addition to this, teachers effectively incorporate the use of art into other areas of the curriculum – such as the painting and making of ladybirds in the reception class and the making of frog's spawn in science lessons.
99. The new co-ordinator has made a good start in planning a curriculum to suit the needs of all pupils throughout the school. Consideration is given to both the needs of the pupils and the expertise of the staff. It is a considerable advantage that the majority of teachers already possess good levels of artistic skills. This new planning provides breadth and balance within the subject and the subject is now well placed for further improvement. Resources are adequate to support the curriculum.
100. The subject was not reported at the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. The quality of teaching is good overall with some excellent features in Key Stage 2. Individual objectives are clearly identified within lesson planning and all are included in the course of the lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to make choices and act independently where possible.

Very good use is made of prompts and symbols to encourage recall. Restless behaviour is very well managed; children and pupils are quickly calmed and returned to the task. There is on-going, incidental reinforcement of language and communication through signing and symbols.

102. The quality of learning is good. Most pupils make choices using symbols or by smelling jars containing different ingredients. Most pupils understand the meaning of 'same' and 'different'. Some pupils correctly name butter, bread, toast, jam and honey, using either words or symbols. They take turns appropriately and experience a range of tastes, for example sweet, salt and savoury. They experience a range of textures in food, for example softness in bread and crispness in toast. In the nursery, pupils crumple tissue to make a collage. Some pupils spread glue effectively and develop their fine motor skills. In mathematics pupils use Lego bricks to make towers.
103. Currently there is no policy for design and technology, nor are there any schemes of work. This restricts the overall development of the subject and ultimately the progress which pupils make. The school has been unsuccessful in its attempts to recruit a teacher for this subject. The subject is taught through a range of activities designed to enable children and pupils to develop their fine motor skills. The emphasis is on developing skills which pupils will later use to construct models and make designs, translated into collage and picture making. There are many good examples around the school of models made by pupils including mobiles and masks.
104. Without the structure of a policy and scheme of work teachers have no means of ensuring access for pupils to a relevant curriculum, from which they will learn a range of skills built one upon the other. It also follows that without this structure, assessment and recording in the subject is insecure. Therefore, progress and continuity cannot be guaranteed. This weakness remains from the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. No discrete teaching of geography takes place in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2, and no lessons with planned inclusion of the subject were seen during the inspection. The scheme of work for science includes reference to elements of geography, and pupils experience these as part of topic work or within visits to the local environment. Overall, in both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress towards the geography targets identified in their individual education plans. The study of the local environment is invaluable in enabling them to develop knowledge of the area, become aware of directional language, and supports the development of the essential geographical element of a sense of place.
106. Observations around the school, discussion with pupils and staff and scrutiny of pupils' records of achievement, indicate that during Key Stage 1 pupils become familiar with changes in the weather and begin to use symbols to describe and record these. They learn the position and function of different areas of the school, and many become confident in moving around the building independently. They make appropriate use of spatial language such as 'beside' and 'round the corner'. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are familiar with some items of street furniture, and know that there are places beyond their immediate environment which may be different from those they know. They understand that people can move from place to place in cars and public transport, and that there are different types of houses. During Key Stage 2, a well planned programme of visits enables pupils to develop a sound knowledge of their local area and they follow direction markers on a local farm trail. They understand why different clothes are worn in different seasons, and know that some food comes from other countries in container ships. By the end of the key stage pupils are aware of environmental issues such as rubbish disposal and understand the difference between a cycle track, a pedestrian lane and a road.
107. Pupils enjoy the visits they make and show interest in the activities. They work well together and are supportive of each other. The quality of the topic teaching is good and teachers' geographical knowledge is satisfactory, but there is insufficient structured planning for the development of pupils' geographical knowledge and skills within the topic based approach.

108. There is no policy or scheme of work which enables the subject to be coherently addressed throughout the school. Geographical skills are often picked up incidentally during topic work which has a different learning objective. The co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher and has not yet fully taken up her subject responsibilities. The school is aware of the need for a geography policy and scheme of work, and these are identified as priorities in the school development plan.

## **HISTORY**

109. No discrete teaching of history takes place in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2, and no lessons with planned inclusion of the subject were observed during the week of inspection. The science scheme of work includes a reference to elements of history, and pupils experience these as part of science work. Alternatively they may understand concepts, such as the sequence of events or present and past, during the course of other lessons. These objectives, however, are not always planned for. Overall, pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress towards the history targets in their individual education plans. They develop a sense of chronology, and begin to recognise their own place in time.

110. Observations around the school, discussions with pupils and staff, and scrutiny of pupils' records of achievement indicate that during Key Stage 1 teachers make good use of symbols to help pupils to record, recall and predict daily and weekly routines. Pupils make progress in distinguishing past and present, and high attainers are able to remember and describe significant happenings in their own lives or the main events in a familiar story. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can distinguish between old and modern houses and through celebrating birthdays, recognise that they and their friends are getting older and are gradually changing. By Key Stage 2 pupils understand that there are different generations in their own and other people's families, and that ways of life change over time. They know that monuments are put up to mark people or events of the past, and have learned from museum visits that there are differences and similarities between domestic items from former times and those of today.

111. Pupils enjoy their topic work and work well together. They enjoy learning about their family patterns. The quality of topic teaching is good, and teachers' historical knowledge is satisfactory, but there is insufficient structured planning for the development of pupils' historical knowledge and skills within the topic based approach.

112. Comments made in paragraph 108, in relation to geography, also apply to this subject. The most significant weakness is that there is no policy or scheme of work. Pupils' learning of historical themes and concepts cannot therefore be addressed in a systematic and planned way.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT) because it is insufficiently included within teachers' planning. Where individual pupils have access to the technology and they work to planned objectives then progress is satisfactory, but this is not a common feature.

114. Within the reception class pupils work successfully with the touch screen and higher attaining pupils access the required elements of the program. One purpose of the using the touch screen is to develop fine motor and co-ordination skills in pupils and in this they are successful. They are able, by pressing the relevant part of the screen to elicit the correct sound from pictures on display. e.g. pressing the picture of a bus brings about the sound of a bus engine. Good records are maintained of each of the pupils' responses and through these, future learning opportunities are established.

115. At Key Stage 1 pupils, in addition to use of the touch screen, also begin to use the keyboard. The higher attaining pupils successfully associate individual letter keys with on-screen responses. These pupils showed the confidence to delete lower case letters and re-type the appropriate upper case letters. Lower attaining pupils effectively use individual programs to



listen to illustrated stories. Staff give pupils the responsibility for operating different controls and devices, for example, in the sensory room pupils of differing attainment levels are expected to use the controls in order to effect a variety of different responses. This approach is instrumental in raising pupils' awareness that they need to make their own choices. Teachers and support staff give advice and support yet encourage independence.

116. At Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils confidently use the mouse and select on-screen objects with this device. Others at this key stage still prefer to use the touch screen. When using the visual stimulation room a Year 6 pupil successfully matched coloured objects and two-dimensional shapes. Lower attaining pupils within this year maintained eye contact with a cloud as it passed over the screen, - touching the screen brought about the effect of rain which enabled the plants to grow.
117. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make satisfactory progress when taught individually. Teachers plan tasks that are challenging but carefully matched, so that the success the pupil achieves motivates the pupil to attempt more difficult tasks. These pupils are becoming aware of a range of responses that can be brought about using different switches.
118. Where ICT is fully included within the teaching and it is carefully planned pupils make satisfactory progress. For some individual pupils, particularly in year 6, progress is good. The central issue for the school to address, is that planning for the use of ICT is insufficiently rigorous throughout the school. Teachers do not effectively plan to provide ICT opportunities in all subjects and as a consequence many learning opportunities are missed which might otherwise reinforce or consolidate pupils' learning. A recent allocation of National Grid for Learning (NGfL) funding has been instrumental in upgrading the quality of hardware available to pupils. The range of available software needs further development, for example, autistic pupils with severe communication disabilities cannot use much of the software because of their individual difficulty.
119. The leadership of the subject is good. Now that the school has purchased more hardware and pupils have more opportunities to use it, it is reasonable to believe that the subject should improve from hereon. Levels of staff competence and expertise remain an issue to be addressed. However, there are plans to address this through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) as well as NGfL. The network currently installed is very new to the school and its potential has yet to be realised, especially by teachers who need further instruction on its capability as a teaching aid.

## **MUSIC**

120. Music is integrated throughout the life of the school and plays an important part in pupils' learning. Pupils' achievements in the subject itself are good. They make good progress in developing a range of skills as a result of good quality teaching, based on carefully planned lessons. Singing and signing are daily activities and as a result some pupils are good singers. Teachers make good use of musical activities as part of learning experiences in a range of lessons and situations, especially to develop pupils' language. Instrumental music or singing accompanies many literacy and numeracy activities and features prominently in personal and social education, particularly in the early years and for pupils with the most severe learning difficulties. A typical example of its good use was in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were helped to beat out numbers up to five on a drum when other pupils were pointing to the numbers or counting out objects. This not only taught them about numbers but also encouraged social interaction and co-operative skills as well as to developing an appreciation of rhythm.
121. The music curriculum is well structured and enables non-specialist teachers to prepare and teach successful lessons. There is a very good range of high quality and attractive instruments, which motivate and encourage pupils to use them with care and respect. There is also a good stock of recorded music that can be played on high quality sound systems. The music chosen by the dance teacher was particularly effective. Music is often the subject of assemblies. During the inspection, there was a very impressive occasion when the whole school participated in an assembly to learn about high and low and fast and slow music. Everyone had a part to

play, so that everyone was involved and the quality of both collective and individual performances was exceptional. At the time of the inspection a part-time peripatetic teacher was providing support in the early years classes and for an individual pupil. The school is hoping to employ a music therapist to do more individual work later in the year. Pupils have benefited from visiting musicians and participated in a music workshop in a local high school.

122. The co-ordinator has worked with other creative arts colleagues to develop an appropriate policy and schemes of work and plans to produce three further schemes to ensure progression of learning across the school at increasing levels of skill. She monitors colleagues planning and has started to observe other teachers working, in order to help them develop their skills further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. The provision for physical education adds considerably to the overall development of children and pupils. Pupils achieve very well, making very good progress as they move through the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils improve their movement in the soft-play room, climbing more steps and gaining confidence in descending. They count the steps, singing number songs and this promotes their number skills. At Key Stage 2, pupils follow routines based upon relevant and challenging targets to promote their physical and language development. They follow instructions, aided by symbols, to push a swing and to pull themselves up a bench. Pupils are aware when they achieve significant success, such as standing on a box and walking down a ramp and they applaud each other's success. Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in dance. They achieve extremely well through effective support and stimulation provided by staff. The teacher, support staff and volunteers provide effective role models to show pupils what to do, as they perform along with pupils in a large group. Pupils find the music very motivating and they respond well to the instructions to be strong or weak, according to the mood of the music. Pupils throughout the school make consistently very good progress in swimming lessons. They gain excellent confidence and trust through the high standard of care and concern for their welfare. At Key Stage 2, pupils build upon the confidence gained at Key Stage 1. They confidently enter the water, following instructions to undertake challenging work and by the end of the key stage they can enjoy being in the deep water at a local pool, improving leg movements to do the crawl stroke. Higher attaining pupils can swim a width of the pool. Pupils with profound difficulties achieve well in lessons aimed at promoting their physical development. This is further enhanced through effective support from staff.

124. The overall quality of teaching is very good, being excellent in dance. Specialist staff have a high level of expertise and high expectations of pupils to achieve, and this is a significant factor in promoting progress. The arrangements to support pupils within lessons are outstanding. Support staff play a significant part, along with volunteers, in promoting individual progress. There are excellent links with local schools to recruit and train volunteers to help with dance and this is a positive benefit to pupils from each school. A very significant feature of lessons is the high quality of planning to promote learning of basic skills. An excellent example of this was in a Year 4 lesson to promote language of pushing and pulling. A pupil wanted to complain that he could not pull a blanket because an adult was sitting on it. A cue card with the word and symbol for heavy was produced at the critical moment to enable the pupil to communicate effectively. This extremely good cross-curricular planning makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' progress, particularly in communication and numeracy. Teachers' effective planning ensures that lessons engage pupils' interest and provide good motivation. This means that pupils start lessons with positive attitudes try hard to succeed. Pupils receive support and very good praise for their efforts and success. This, together with the application of effective behaviour management strategies, ensures that pupils behave very well in physical education lessons.

125. The quality and range of the provision to promote pupils' physical development is very good. The arrangements to monitor pupils' progress are also very good, particularly through regular recording of progress where pupils achieve personal targets. Teachers use this information effectively to plan further work to promote more progress.

126. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership for the team of specialists and class

teachers, resulting in very high standards. Through careful planning and provision she ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of challenging activities. The hall is a good size but there are obstructions from stored equipment that limit movement by pupils. It is also a thoroughfare and there are frequent disturbances to lessons as pupils and staff gain access to other parts of the school. The on-site swimming pool is used effectively for pupils to develop basic water skills, with equally good use of a local pool to provide more challenging swimming activities for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Resources are good with some particularly exciting resources such as the giant suspended balloon, used effectively in games of pushing. The school makes very good use of local sailing facilities to enhance the personal development and physical skills of the pupils.

### **The MOVE (Mobility Opportunities via Education) programme.**

127. The school has adopted an internationally available programme, which promotes pupils' mobility. The programme is effective in combining the expertise of trained teachers as well as a range of other contributing therapists. Baseline mobility skills are established for each pupil and targets are set to enable progress towards independent mobility. Parents are fully involved in the initial assessment and kept informed of the movement targets set for their child. Through well-informed and enthusiastic leadership of the teacher/co-ordinator and a physiotherapist, a team of teachers and other therapy colleagues, SSAs, students and volunteers have become very proficient in implementing the requirements of the programme.
128. Throughout the MOVE sessions, the planning follows the good practice established in physical education lessons. Activities are both interesting and exciting and include action songs, parachute games and bubble catching. They all provide very effective motivation for pupils to want to take part and make a significant contribution to promoting good movement. Pupils make very good progress in their weekly session and the graded movement to achieve targets quickly because of exercises, positioning, and use of personalised mobility aids throughout the daily and class routines and activities. This whole school approach creates very good learning opportunities, through excellent teaching and management of the programme. This is effectively raising the quality of pupils' movement experiences through excellent sharing and passing on of skills and expertise.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129. There were no lessons in religious education during the inspection week so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching or pupils' progress in lessons and response to learning. Lessons to promote understanding of major faiths take place during most lessons in a chosen week each term, promoting learning of a theme such as Divali, across the school. Assemblies, the celebration of Christian festivals and lessons in personal and social education provide other required elements of learning in religious education. The termly themes are a good and relevant way for pupils to learn about the life and customs of people who follow other faiths. Since lessons cover the whole week then pupils have opportunities to deepen their understanding by making artefacts, role-playing festivals and sampling everyday events, such as tasting the traditional food. The evidence in pupils' records of achievements shows that they are fully involved in the study, creating and using artefacts. For example, pupils created artefacts and each class contributed to an assembly to celebrate Divali. The study of world faiths provides good opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development, where experience of everyday life and customs deepen pupils' understanding. For instance during Chinese New Year, pupils took part in dragon dances and ate with chopsticks. The high quality of creative work and photographs of pupils' involvement remain on display in school to remind pupils of their involvement and to reinforce learning.
130. School productions and assemblies provide a good means of promoting learning of the main events of the Christian faith. The high quality of assemblies provide an excellent means of promoting pupils' spiritual development. They reinforce the understanding of the value of caring and sharing and the celebration of achievement. Assemblies provide good moments for pupils to reflect upon feelings in prayers and hymns. Lessons in personal and social education promote other important aspects of the locally agreed religious education syllabus such as respect for other people. However, planning is not consistent to ensure that pupils build systematically upon

learning in the subject.

131. The co-ordinator provides good arrangements for the whole school to take part in celebrating major faiths. There are good examples of evidence of pupils' learning, within pupils' records of achievement. However pupils' learning in religious education is not consistently systematically monitored or reported throughout the school to aid teachers' planning to build upon individual achievement.