

INSPECTION REPORT

VERNON HOUSE SCHOOL

Brent

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101581

Headteacher: Mr G S Davidson

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 12–16 June 2000

Inspection number: 190024

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	5 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms P Anderson
Date of previous inspection:	28.10.96

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education	Characteristics and effectiveness of the school School's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
Ms J Bedawi	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	English Information and communications technology Art Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Quality and range of opportunities for learning Integration
Ms D Morris	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
INTEGRATION	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vernon House School provides full-time education for pupils aged 5–11 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of places is 50. There is a changing roll and at the time of the inspection 33 pupils were on roll, all boys and mostly in Years 5 and 6. There are very few infant pupils. Twenty pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and two pupils have English as an additional language. Just over 55 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure well above the national average. Many pupils come from homes that are seriously disadvantaged. Since the last inspection the range and severity of special educational needs amongst the pupils has increased very considerably. Many of the current pupils have additional special educational needs including speech and language difficulties and a few have mental health problems. Attainment on entry for most pupils is well below the national average due to their special educational needs and the extensive gaps they have experienced in their education. The school has set realistic targets to raise standards in English and mathematics for the year 2000. The main aim of the school is to re-integrate as many of the pupils as possible to mainstream schools. There is a very successful programme involving the use of an outreach teacher to support pupils as they move from Vernon House to mainstream secondary schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Vernon House is a good school. The headteacher provides effective leadership and gives the school a clear sense of direction. The good teaching and secure relationships result in improved behaviour and good standards of achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership by the headteacher sets a clear direction for the school in improving behaviour and raising standards.
- The good system for monitoring behaviour results in improved behaviour by the pupils.
- The school provides good opportunities which are also realistic for pupils to re-integrate into mainstream primary schools.
- The quality of teaching is good in most subjects.
- The provision for music is a strength. It is therapeutic and also develops pupils' musical skills, particularly singing.
- Some pupils once settled achieve noticeably improved standards in reading and writing.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good.

What could be improved

- The provision for design and technology and also for information and communications technology.
- Higher attainers in Key Stage 2 could be challenged more in English and mathematics.
- The use of assessment to inform planning and raise standards.
- Repetition of the curriculum in mixed-age classes for some pupils.
- The car park is not large enough for the buses that deliver and take home the pupils.

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

There have been significant improvements since the school's last inspection in October 1996. Standards have improved in mathematics. The fact that there has not been a significant improvement in standards in all curriculum areas is seen in the context of the special needs profile of the pupils being much more severe than at the time of the last inspection. Individual education plans now have specific targets. The priorities on the school development plan are now more closely linked to the budget and the provision for staff development has improved. Systems for monitoring attendance have improved as has the provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Improvements since the last inspection are good as is the capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening	n/a	C	n/a	n/a	
reading	n/a	C	n/a	n/a	
writing	n/a	C	n/a	n/a	
mathematics	n/a	A	n/a	n/a	
personal, social and health education	n/a	B	n/a	n/a	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	n/a	B	n/a	n/a	

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

Standards achieved in English, mathematics and science measured against pupils' attainment on entry to the school are high enough. Some pupils once settled make good gains in their reading and writing. Pupils make very good gains in their learning in mathematics and some attain standards close to the national average in aspects of the subjects by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 2. However, standards are not high enough for higher attaining pupils in one Key Stage 2 class because they are not always sufficiently challenged.

In information and communications technology standards are not high enough in data handling and control by the end of Key Stage 2 because the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these skills. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus seen in the context of the modified curriculum matched to the special educational needs of the pupils.

Standards are not high enough in design and technology. In music and physical education pupils make very good gains in their learning and attain standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that are in line with national expectations in aspects of these subjects. Standards in geography and history are high enough.

Due to excellent behaviour management, pupils make very good gains in managing their behavioural difficulties. Gains in social skills of taking turns and interacting with each other are good. Pupils with complex speech and language difficulties make good progress. Those with English as an additional language make good progress with their speaking and listening skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. They regard school to be a stable and rewarding experience. Attitudes to learning are good.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils generally accept instruction and guidance from school staff.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good but limited by insufficient opportunities to take on responsibility within the school. Pupils work well together and praise others for work well done.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	Aged 5-11	Aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	n/a	Good	n/a	n/a

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

The teaching of English, mathematics and science is mostly good throughout the school. However, the lack of challenge in one Key Stage 2 class results in pupils not always achieving high enough standards in reading, writing and their practical application of number skills. The teaching of design and technology and the data handling and control skills in information and communications technology is unsatisfactory due to teachers' lack of subject knowledge and confidence. In all other subjects teaching is mostly good. The best teaching occurs in music and physical education.

Teachers are very skilful in managing challenging behaviours and this contributes to good learning. Inconsistent use of assessment and homework are the main weaknesses in teaching across the school.

Overall the quality of teaching in lessons observed was at least satisfactory in 97 per cent. In 78 per cent it was at least good with 34 per cent being at least very good. A few lessons observed were excellent. The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. As pupils gain in confidence their learning improves in the subjects they study. In the few lessons where teaching had shortcomings there was a lack of challenge and the pace was pedestrian. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching occurred in one Key Stage 2 class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. However, the provision for design and technology and information and communications technology is inadequate. Very good counselling is provided. Very positive integration experience in mainstream primary schools is provided. Some pupils in mixed-age classes repeat topics and this is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The school makes very good provision for the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The provision for the social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of support and personal guidance offered to pupils is very good. Arrangements for child protection are very good. Restraint is used sensitively and always in the interest and safety of the pupil concerned. The use of assessment to inform planning is unsatisfactory. The maintenance and development of effective links with parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is good with a number of very good features. The deputy headteacher has not successfully fulfilled his responsibility for developing the role of subject co-ordinators.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is effective and supportive. It has a good structure of sub-committees to meet its statutory responsibilities. However, it does not ensure that all pupils receive their statutory entitlement to information and communications technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governing body have a good knowledge of the school's performance. Preparation is under way to develop a performance management policy.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources available to it. There is careful strategic planning linked to budget. The governors and headteacher apply the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The management of the school by an effective headteacher• The small classes and the fact that the teachers have a lot of time for their children• The school is welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lack of involvement in implementing individual education plans and individual behaviour plans• Inconsistent use of restraint• Inconsistencies in setting homework

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. No evidence was found of inconsistent use of restraint during the inspection. Indeed when restraint was used it was managed sensitively and caringly and in the interest of the pupil concerned. Parents'/carers' involvement in implementing individual education plans could be improved. Inspectors also share parents'/carers' concern about the inconsistency of setting homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry is well below the national average for almost all pupils because of their learning and behavioural difficulties. It is not fair to compare standards with the previous inspection because the special educational needs of the current pupils are far more complex than they were at the time of the last inspection. An increasing number of pupils have speech and language difficulties and a few have mental health problems in addition to their emotional and behavioural difficulties.
2. Measured against their prior attainment standards are high enough for most pupils in English, mathematics and science. However, standards are not always sufficiently high for high attainers in Key Stage 2 in number, reading and writing because of the lack of challenge for them in one Key Stage 2 class.
3. In English the progress that all pupils make is at least satisfactory in reading, writing and aspects of speaking and listening with the exception of a few higher attainers in Key Stage 2. For a minority of pupils, once settled, progress is good in all aspects of English and they develop noticeably over a short period of time. There is a minority of pupils who have higher levels of skill in reading and writing and the progress that these pupils make is sometimes unsatisfactory because they are not always sufficiently challenged. However, there has been some improvement in standards in writing overall since the last inspection.
4. Achievement in mathematics measured against prior attainment is very good in both key stages and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. A few pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards close to the national average in aspects of mathematics because of the very good teaching that they receive. The gains in learning for pupils with complex speech and language difficulties is hindered by their ability to grasp important mathematical language, such as 'estimate' and 'approximate'. Nonetheless staff work hard with these pupils and they begin to show signs of improvement in their mathematical understanding. A few pupils in one Key Stage 2 class do not achieve high enough standards in their mathematics lessons because of lack of challenge.
5. Although gains in learning in science are good overall and pupils make good progress these pupils are sometimes taught content that is too difficult for them to understand in one Key Stage 2 class and this results in some unsatisfactory behaviour.
6. Because of the lack of opportunity to develop control and data handling skills in information and communications technology (ICT) standards in these aspects of the subject are not high enough in Key Stage 2. However, in respect of using the Internet standards are high enough in terms of web access, cutting and pasting and merging text with pictures. Standards attained in relation to the attainment target taught in religious education are in line with the expectations of the syllabus at the end of both key stages. The fact that Year 6 pupils have grasped the subtleties of panentheism (Brahmin is one Being that lets itself *be* in different forms) in their study of Hinduism is most impressive.
7. Achievement in art measured against prior attainment is satisfactory throughout the school. However, the lack of access to a full range of media and reduced time for the subject in Key Stage 2 has a negative impact on pupils' gains in knowledge and

understanding and so has a negative effect on standards. Standards achieved in design and technology are unsatisfactory in both key stages because of teachers' lack of subject knowledge and confidence in their teaching of this subject.

8. In geography and history standards are high enough seen in the context of pupils' special educational needs. In music pupils make very good progress seen against their prior attainment. They sing well, understand basic notation and follow a steady beat with a range of rhythms. They have a good appreciation of music. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards in line with the national expectation in music. Progress in physical education is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2 because of the very good teaching. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection in games and gymnastics and are in line with those expected of seven- and eleven-year-olds. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are competent swimmers. However, standards in dance are below those expected because the pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to perform dance routines.
9. Because of excellent behaviour management and high quality counselling all pupils make good gains in the management of their own behaviour and this makes this school successful. Due to the high quality integration experiences in mainstream primary schools the pupils make good gains in their confidence and self-esteem. Those pupils with complex speech and language difficulties make good progress with their speaking and listening because of the good support that they are given. High attainers in one Key Stage 2 class do not always make sufficient progress because they are not always sufficiently challenged. This lack of challenge not only hinders their academic progress but also sometimes has an adverse effect on their behaviour. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills because of the quality of support that they are given. Progress in literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory but not all teachers make sufficient opportunities to develop these important skills. Too little attention is paid to developing pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum and this has a negative impact on their learning of important computer skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The school has maintained the high standard of attitudes, behaviour and personal development indicated in the last inspection report. All pupils enjoy coming to the school and regard it as a stable and rewarding experience. For many it is an essential point of stability, providing the opportunity to develop strong relationships and to succeed. Despite the complex problems that many pupils face, they have a good attitude to learning and to the school environment.
11. Pupils behave well in lessons. They generally accept instruction and guidance from school staff. When there are difficulties within a class, the majority of pupils continue with work and do not become involved. This is a considerable strength and indicates significant progress for most pupils. Pupils concentrate well and remain on task for long periods. This assists their learning and that of their peers. In a very good Year 3 art lesson, pupils concentrated well, took turns appropriately, were eager to answer questions and took advice in a constructive way. In school assemblies, and in many lessons, the inspection team were impressed by the attention given by most pupils to the singing, the stories and the exhibiting of work. These behaviours are positive improvements for individual pupils since they started at this school and, in turn, provide a new standard for other pupils to meet.
12. There is no vandalism and little or no bullying or harassment. Although many pupils have

arguments and sometimes relationships with other pupils can be strained, there are never concerted or prolonged feuds and no examples of racist, sexist or vindictive behaviour between pupils have been reported or observed.

13. Maintaining long-term friendships can be a problem for some pupils. However, during the inspection, many examples were observed of pupils working well together, praising others for work well done and providing sympathetic support to peers when they find their problems difficult to cope with or when self-discipline has been exerted. The way that many pupils begin to see the importance of their actions on others is a strength of the school and is the result of hard work by both staff and the pupils themselves. Pupils gradually begin to see the problems confronting others and often respect the strength of character needed to overcome them.
14. Pupils' personal development is good, but limited by the opportunities to take on responsibility within the school. Reports, observations and discussions with the pupils themselves indicate that there is significant progress in the personal development of all pupils attending the school. They greet visitors in a sensible way and are happy to share their work. They gradually become more confident in talking to the class and the whole school. The inspection team was impressed with the maturity of many pupils, who willingly and sensibly discussed the school, the visits and helped, for example, in explaining how the library was set up.
15. Attendance is good with good progress made since the last inspection when attendance was a key issue. Levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence show very significant improvement and are now recorded properly. Daily and weekly attendance is often above 95 per cent with increasing instances of 100 per cent attendance. There is very little pupil lateness and it is almost always the result of transport delays through local traffic congestion. Far more pupils than at the time of the last report attend for part of the week at mainstream schools. Pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy being in school. Lessons start promptly and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school operates a non-exclusion policy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons and at least good in 75 per cent. It is very good in 34 per cent. In a very few lessons the quality of teaching is excellent. It is unsatisfactory in only one lesson. This reflects a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Very few lessons were observed in design and technology and in information and communications technology (ICT) due to the timetable during the week of the inspection. However, the scrutiny of planning, examination of pupils' work and honest discussion with the teachers confirms that the quality of teaching in these two subjects is unsatisfactory. This is because of lack of subject knowledge and confidence on the part of the teachers to develop pupils' skills in design and technology and ICT.
17. A very significant strength of the teaching is the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the learning and complex behavioural difficulties of each pupil. Their knowledge of the pupils' individual personalities enables the teachers to manage them very skilfully and this results in marked improvements in their behaviour and so in their learning. For example, in a Year 5/6 physical education lesson pupils with very challenging behaviours worked collaboratively and participated in a game of netball at a standard just as good as their peers in a mainstream school and this was due to the very secure relationship between the teacher and the pupils.

18. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of most National Curriculum subjects and religious education is at least satisfactory and often good. However, most teachers are not secure in their knowledge of design and technology and ICT and this has a negative effect on pupils' learning in these two subjects. The very good subject knowledge, high expectations and clearly planned learning outcomes in a very good physical education (PE) lesson in a Year 5/6 class had a very significant impact on pupils' learning. This successful PE lesson made a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and social skills development and even some of the pupils with the most severe behavioural difficulties were able to collaborate well with very good team spirit.
19. The quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. In the best numeracy lessons pupils are challenged by teachers who make good use of their individual number targets and who use questions effectively to check the gains made by the pupils in their learning. The pace of teaching in almost all literacy and numeracy lessons is brisk and this contributes to good behaviour and so to satisfactory learning in reading, writing and also to good gains in mathematical skills. In the literacy sessions gains are often at least satisfactory when the teaching is good because of the low starting point for most of the pupils, an increased number of whom have speech and language difficulties. Where teaching is unsatisfactory in a Key Stage 2 numeracy class the pace of teaching is pedestrian and pupils are not sufficiently challenged and so become restless and misbehave. In one Year 3 lesson a high attaining pupil was not sufficiently challenged during a mental mathematics session. Also high attainers are not always sufficiently challenged in reading in one Key Stage 2 class. Listening and numeracy skills are taught across the subjects, for example in science, music and physical education. However, the development of these skills is not consistent in all subjects and this has a negative impact on learning.
20. Teachers' short-term planning for lessons is usually good. Clear learning objectives are determined at pupils' annual reviews and are used to devise very specific learning targets on their individual education plans. When teachers make use of these specific targets in planning their lessons it makes a very positive impact on pupils' learning. In one Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson teaching was inspirational because excellent use was made of these targets to inspire pupils in their learning. Yet in another Key Stage 2 lesson the teacher did not make use of the number targets to inform his teaching. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are generally good. They are prepared very well to cope with integration into mainstream primary schools. Learning support assistants and welfare assistants are used very effectively and efficiently and so impact very well on the good quality of learning of pupils. Resources are generally satisfactory and they are used well. However, the teaching of religious education is hindered by the lack of artefacts to make the subject even more interesting.
21. Assessment and the use of homework are weaknesses across the school and parents'/carers' concerns about the lack of consistency in setting homework are justified. Little use is made of homework to extend the learning that takes place in school.
22. Good learning in lessons and over time for pupils once they are settled, particularly in reading and writing, mirrors the good teaching. The gains the pupils make in their learning and the progress they make measured against their prior attainment has improved since the last inspection. This is seen in the context of the pupils on roll and how much more complex the special educational needs of these pupils are compared with the time of the last inspection. The learning and progress of these pupils with complex special educational needs and also for those with English as an additional language are good. The good teaching results in improved behaviour and improved self-

confidence for the pupils who, once they feel better about themselves, begin to believe in their potential and so make good gains in their learning, as seen in music and physical education. Because of the very secure relationships with their teachers they concentrate very well most of the time and are focused on their learning as in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson on data handling. They are proud of their achievements, for example in art and writing.

23. In a number of subjects there are examples of good, very good and sometimes excellent teaching. In one good literacy hour session with Year 2/3 pupils the teacher used a range of texts to indicate different forms of the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story and revised punctuation. Language was well used by the teacher to make the story and the points accessible to each pupil. A good Year 6 music lesson saw the introduction of 'On Ilkley Moor'. The lesson was characterised by good teamwork, very good use of humour, questioning, posture and breathing. Maps were used to make Ilkley Moor real for the pupils. The satisfaction and enjoyment of the pupils was emphasised by the fact that a small group of hesitant pupils sang with confidence and enthusiasm a song that they had never heard before. Very good planning and a high level of professional skill ensured effective outcomes for each pupil. Very good teaching in a Key Stage 2 religious education lesson evoked curiosity for pupils about Hinduism and contributed very successfully to their spiritual development.

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

24. The full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education are planned for and taught within each year. Statements for the majority of pupils indicate the need for a 'modified curriculum' and in many subjects, such as English, mathematics, religious education, art and music, the school has made modifications that are both appropriate and practical. Music is a particular strength of the school. However, the provision for information and communications technology (ICT) is weak and does not fully meet statutory requirements. There are also weaknesses in the provision for design and technology.
25. The previous report recommended an audit of time spent on curriculum subjects. This has been undertaken and the range of subjects is better. With the exception of design and technology and ICT, the balance of the curriculum has also improved since the last inspection. However, within ICT, history, geography and design and technology work still needs to be done to provide an effective range of experiences for all pupils.
26. The previous inspection also identified the need to develop 'a coherent whole-school approach to planning'. Considerable work has been done to introduce policies and schemes of work in preparation for Curriculum 2000, but there is still work to be done. As there are a small number of classes in the school, it is inevitable that many have a two- or three-year age span. The school has not yet devised ways to ensure that pupils in such classes avoid repetition of some lessons during the year. Attention is necessary to ensure that continuity for each pupil is carefully monitored.
27. Attention is being paid to the balance between those parts of the curriculum that provide good opportunities for self-expression and personal development, such as art and music, and those where more formal and structured skills are being developed, such as English and mathematics. This recognises that personal confidence and emotional stability are crucial goals for every pupil and ones which provide the basis for effective learning. As afternoon lessons tend to be less successful, the school continues to

monitor when subjects are taught. This is a sensible approach.

28. Religious education is taught to all classes. Sex and drug education is provided where appropriate and tailored to individual needs. Once again, this is a sensible professional response to areas of extreme sensitivity. The school pays close attention to personal, social and health education (PHSE), but does not yet have effective guidelines or frameworks to ensure that all staff cover the full range of issues usually included within this part of the curriculum. However, the sensitivity with which PHSE is addressed on an informal basis is impressive.
29. Much work has been carried out to ensure the effective introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. Modifications have been made to ensure that structure, content and timescales are appropriate and adaptable. These ensure that time is maximised. In most subjects not enough attention has been paid to the development of more advanced skills, such as research, evaluation and sustained writing. These are being addressed, but currently restrict the progress of a few higher attaining pupils. In general, the use of literacy skills within most lessons is good and number skills are often utilised in subjects such as science and music. More could be done, especially with regard to the development of language skills and the use of data in information and communications technology, science and design and technology.
30. The school's geographical position does not aid the development of extra-curricular activities as pupils have long distances to travel home by buses at the end of the school day. However, work in this area is satisfactory. A number of pupils are involved in the Vernon House youth club, which is a whole community venture. Good use is made of lunchtimes to provide structured sports and other activities. In addition, there are a number of valuable opportunities for pupils to go outside the school, such as the very successful Legoland visit that took place during the inspection.
31. Community involvement in pupils' learning is good. Many links are well established including those with the Rotary and Variety clubs, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Alan Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund responsible for funding the inspection week trip to Legoland and the school minibus. Personnel from different external agencies are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. There is a very positive ongoing working relationship with the Homebeat Officer who is involved with the Community Youth Cub, a well used resource on the local estate, open to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Currently he is organising the 'Summer University' for Year 6 pupils due to start their secondary education. The school values the commitment of the Year 6/7 liaison co-ordinator who works hard and successfully to develop and maintain close links with the mainstream secondary schools to which pupils will transfer. Pupils are made aware of the wider community through projects such as the 'European Celebration' where their letters attracted praise and very positive responses from European ministers and politicians. The school is keen to further extend community links.
32. All pupils at the school have special educational needs. They have a wide range of emotional and behavioural difficulties, but many also have additional learning or medical needs. Overall the curriculum provision for pupils at the school with additional special needs is good. All pupils have a statement of learning difficulties and need to work in small class situations with high levels of staffing to enable success. Procedures at the school to support their special needs are good. Annual reviews are of good quality and are attended by many professionals as well as many parents. Pupils have very specific individual education plans which help to identify targets towards success. This is an improvement since the last inspection report. The recent rise in admissions of pupils with significant speech and language difficulties has provided a challenge for staff. A

speech therapist works at the school on one day weekly to support these pupils, but this is barely adequate. There is too little time to work appropriately with the large numbers of pupils who require support and to enable the speech therapist to develop this work further and this hinders the progress that these pupils make with their speech. A very good counselling service is also offered at the school to those pupils who require it, and to all pupils in Year 6. This prepares them effectively for the next stage of education. All pupils at the school have equal opportunities, and the school provides very good role models to promote equality of opportunity. School trips and activities are open to all pupils, and they are actively encouraged to take part in as many activities as possible. Two pupils at the school use English as an additional language. However they both have a good command of English and are effectively supported to ensure that they fully understand all aspects of learning.

33. Relationships with mainstream primary schools are a strength of the school. Very valuable work is being carried out within the re-integration programme and mainstream headteachers unanimously report how successful and well organised such activities are. Local schools benefit greatly from the expertise of Vernon House and there is agreement that the reciprocal nature of these contacts is mutually beneficial.
34. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is a strength of the school. Whole-school assemblies foster positive attitudes and promote spirituality through singing, turn taking, reflection, and through a recognition of special days and events. The quality of pupils' singing at these times is often excellent, and they are encouraged to join in with reflection about their own values, attitudes and behaviour. They are encouraged to explore the wonder and beauty of art, music and literature, and through their studies in religious education they learn to appreciate Christian values as well as those of other lifestyles. From the moment they enter school in the morning, pupils are offered opportunities to explore the principles of right and wrong. Many instances are created to enable them to discuss moral values, particularly relating to their own behaviour. If pupils are troubled when they arrive at school, they quickly learn to unbend and blossom in the lively, caring atmosphere of the daily assembly. Opportunities to be involved in counselling and discussion enable them to develop and extend their understanding of their own difficulties and how to resolve conflict.
35. The provision for the social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils are continually encouraged to understand about the difficulties of living within a community. The quality of relationships in the school is very good and staff provide very good role models. They treat pupils with respect and politeness and promote these values through the classroom lessons. Good opportunities are provided for collaborative working practices, particularly during physical education, music and art. Pupils are taught collaborative games and are encouraged to discuss conflicts that arise from these. Praise is used effectively to promote self-esteem and encourage pupils to feel good about themselves. At times there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within lessons. For example, teachers sometimes give out pencils and books, and collect them in, without enabling pupils to take on these simple tasks. However, all pupils take responsibility for their own belongings, and for their own lunches. They also help with clearing away and some help to tidy classrooms.

36. Contributions to cultural development come from a wide range of subjects and activities. For example, pupils learn about life in other countries and cultures as they study the lives of children in an Indian village as part of their geography studies. These pupils sing songs from other cultures and learn about their own culture through games, literature and art. They paint pictures in the style of other artists such as Van Gogh and write their own poetry about their experiences. They have opportunities to visit areas of local interest in the community as well as a limited amount of visits to museums and leisure facilities. The school draws on its own rich cultural environment to actively promote understanding and harmony.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The harmony of this happy school community is very successfully established and maintained by the caring, sensitive staff, who provide pupils with a secure haven for learning. The quality of support and personal guidance offered to pupils is very good and has a very significant impact on their overall development. It does much to counter the many difficulties and rejections in life, and in education, experienced by these young pupils.
38. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are in place. However, the low focus on the use of assessment to ensure that curriculum planning meets all pupils' learning needs in lessons is unsatisfactory. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress, so that gains in learning are clearly identified and built upon, are also unsatisfactory.
39. There are a number of procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in most subjects. These include formal testing, using work samples and day-to-day observations of activities such as reading. However, these procedures vary from one teacher to another and, in some cases, provide a quantity of information that is not used effectively. Thus, in English, most teachers monitor and record reading performance on a regular basis. They also have samples of work, kept separately and in pupils' books. In addition, there are reading test results and National Curriculum assessment information that is kept centrally. These many elements do not come together in a coherent way to give a clear and regular picture of where a child is and what his strengths and weaknesses are.
40. This weakness also prevents curriculum co-ordinators and class teachers from using the information as a basis for planning the next stages for individual pupils. Where pupils do not progress within a curriculum area, it is necessary to have up-to-date information which allows new targets and timescales to be set. On a day-to-day basis, teachers are very good at noting what a pupil finds difficult and adjusting language, questions and tasks to these limitations. Formal notes are not kept and the system works well on this informal basis. However, continuity for pupils where there are teacher changes is not ensured because the school does not assess how much information is kept and how it is linked to lesson planning. There has been insufficient progress on assessment and academic monitoring since the last inspection.
41. Attention given to pupils by support staff to address the considerable range of learning difficulties and additional special needs is good. The quality of one-to-one work is particularly effective in supporting teaching and learning.
42. The monitoring of attendance is good. The register is marked correctly with absence properly reported. Individual pupil attendance is recorded and monitored weekly by the

headteacher. The school contacts parents quickly if pupils are absent or if they attempt to leave the school. This is now comparatively rare. The majority of parents provide the school with reasons for absence. The school has an attendance book recording latecomers or pupils with appointments during the day. The services of the educational welfare officer are available if needed.

43. The monitoring and promotion of good behaviour, measures taken to tackle bullying and the use of physical restraint are very good and a major strength of the school. There has been significant progress in these areas since the last inspection. Pupils are clearly aware of the school's high expectations of behaviour and the intolerance of any form of bullying, harassment or aggression. They generally try hard to achieve these expectations and are increasingly successful. The enjoyable daily whole-school assembly provides a calming, productive start to the day and is used well to remind pupils of appropriate ways to relate to others and to behave. Encouragement is given to those who have made an effort or improved with a gentle, very quiet 'word in the ear' for those who forget. In class and around the school the good quality guidance in the positive school policies is used to ensure that there is consistent practice so that pupils know the 'boundaries'. Pupils know that staff will listen to them and easily ask for help if they have any concern about bullying. Any incidents are fully investigated with immediate action taken. In lessons, pupils often show disapproval when others misbehave. Staff are very skilled at preventing any potential conflict, but when it does happen, it is dealt with sensitively, in ways that are appropriate to the pupil involved. When it is necessary to use physical restraint, guidance is followed correctly with the least possible use being made of restraint. The staff involved always act calmly, continually talking to the pupil and clearly explaining how the situation can be resolved, encouraging pupil responsibility. Restraint and other behaviour incident records are extremely detailed. For instance, circumstances leading up to the incident are fully explained and parents informed, with records of any meetings. Some concern was expressed at the parents' meeting about using physical restraint. Inspectors found that there was absolutely no justification for concern.
44. The monitoring of personal development is good. Staff give high priority to building pupils' often very low self-esteem, celebrating success and supporting well when there are problems. Continual informal guidance and support is offered. This enables pupils to begin to focus on learning. Pupils see positive role models and relationships from adults in school. This helps in their efforts to form happy relationships, not only with known adults but, most crucially, with each other, effectively seen in the dining room. Good quality records of personal development are kept by teachers. Parents receive a summary in their annual academic report. Individual education plans also give a clear picture of pupils' personal development. At the moment the school has no formal programme for personal, social and health education to develop and enhance pupils' social and personal development. The school is aware that this is a priority for development.
45. Arrangements for child protection are very good. The school follows local authority guidance and policy. The designated person is very well trained and experienced. School staff are due to receive a training update and are aware of correct procedure and practice. A half-termly staff meeting is held to discuss general child protection issues. Staff alert the designated person if they have any initial or informal concern about a pupil and this is recorded. Both these initiatives show good practice. Sensitive records are securely kept and the confidentiality of pupils either 'in care' or on the 'at risk' register is respected.

46. Daily routines are well ordered and run smoothly. There is a medical room and trained staff. There is a good level of supervision at all times of the day, whether in lessons or at play. Pupils are provided with a nourishing lunch, with second helpings available. Activities take place at lunchtimes for those who do not want to use the small outside play area.
47. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and follows local authority guidance. Required tests on, for example, fire extinguishers and electrical equipment are undertaken. There is a new local authority system for recording areas that may present different degrees of potential hazard to those working in school. These records have yet to be completed by the school. The school is rightly concerned about the frequent dumping of stolen vehicles, sometimes set on fire, close to the back of the school. The headteacher is aware of other matters, brought to his attention, such as the very limited space available in the car park, so that buses are only able to exit by reversing.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The maintenance and development of effective links with parents is good. Parents know they can approach the school and receive a warm welcome. Good communication is very important and the headteacher is always available. Parents are able to contact him by telephone to gain support, for instance when liaising with outside agencies or to exchange information if their child has had a bad start to the day. Similarly, the school informs parents if the child has had a difficult day. There is good contact when pupils are preparing for secondary transfer. The primary/secondary school co-ordinator makes home visits and supports both pupil and families to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. The ease of two-way communication is greatly appreciated.
49. The majority of pupils are 'bussed' into school as few parents live nearby. This limits the opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school. There is no parents' association. Parents are invited to school events, such as celebration assemblies and sports day, and these are always well attended. All parents are invited and fully involved in annual reviews, and any individual meetings between external professionals and parents can be held at the school. However, parents are insufficiently involved in implementing their children's individual education plans.
50. Information such as newsletters and details about trips are posted directly to parents, who feel that this works very well. The prospectus and governors' report contains some useful information, but there are a few minor omissions. In addition to the annual reviews, parents receive an academic report on their child's progress. The quality of these reports is unsatisfactory. Religious education is not always reported. Comments are brief for subjects other than English, mathematics and science, saying only what pupils can do, or work covered. Target setting is generally confined to English and mathematics. A new format is being introduced this summer.
51. Parents are generally satisfied and positive about the school. They are very pleased with the improvements in children's behaviour and the way the headteacher listens and is there for them. They are concerned about the lack of homework, only provided if pupils want and are prepared to complete it. Homework is not established and contrasts poorly with expectations of mainstream schools. It is most significant when pupils transfer to secondary school. The setting of homework is inconsistent and inspectors fully agree with parents' concerns about homework.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The quality of leadership and management is good with a number of very good features. The headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and governors have made a number of significant improvements since the last inspection. For example, the provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is now very good and the priorities on the school development plan are costed. However, the deputy headteacher has not been as successful in respect of his responsibilities in developing the role of subject co-ordinators and in developing the provision for information and communications technology as there are weaknesses in these areas. The issue of a few pupils in mixed-age classes repeating certain topics in two different years has not been fully addressed. However, never complacent, the school is keen to improve further and there is a determination to create a centre of excellence to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a commitment to re-integration for these pupils as soon as possible into mainstream school with quality support once integrated. The school operates a fine balance between promoting high standards of behaviour for pupils with very challenging behaviours and developing their literacy and numeracy skills. There is a deep commitment to developing the talents of every individual.
53. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and governors work as an effective team and provide a clear educational direction for the school. The headteacher is a visionary and he has a very clear educational philosophy, which has been successfully communicated to all staff. He has an open door and is consultative and friendly. As a result of his open management style all staff in the school, including learning support staff, are valued. Consequently they are keen to move in the same direction to promote a caring school and good learning environment where all pupils are treated as individuals. The whole staff expect the highest standards of work and behaviour from all pupils.
54. Satisfactory systems are in place for monitoring teachers' planning. The headteacher visits all classes frequently and he has a very good knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. However, the curriculum co-ordinators do not have non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The headteacher and governing body are keen to develop a model for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators but they recognise that the system they adopt must fit the needs of the school. The management of pupils with additional special educational needs is very good and these pupils receive the best possible support available to help them with their speech and language difficulties. Within the constraints of available resources they receive very good speech therapy support, but they do not receive enough of this very good support.
55. The school's aims and values are very good. The overarching aim, 'For pupils to access inclusion as and when appropriate', is realised in practice and pupils develop in self-confidence as a result. The school development plan is good. It is an effective tool to manage change sensitively and thoughtfully. It provides a clear focus for the whole staff who know what is in it and the part they have to play in achieving the priorities. The school development plan drives the budget. The priorities are worked out in practice and this results in a good quality of education for all pupils. It is regularly and rigorously monitored and evaluated to see the impact that the priorities have on improving educational opportunities for pupils.
56. The headteacher leads by example and sets a very positive tone. Consequently relationships amongst staff are good. Hence the culture exists where there is a deep commitment to challenging and extending all pupils to achieve their very best in an

environment where it is very safe to make mistakes. All staff work extremely hard and successfully in building up the confidence and self-esteem of every pupil in a range of imaginative ways. There is a commitment to inclusion for pupils. As soon as they are ready they are supported in going back to mainstream school and there have been many success stories, including successful integration of pupils with the most challenging of behaviours.

57. The governing body is effective and supportive. The chair and vice-chair of governors visit the school regularly and are kept well informed about what is happening in the school. There is a good structure of sub-committees to support the governing body in meeting their statutory responsibilities except for ensuring that pupils receive their statutory entitlement in information and communications technology.
58. There has been satisfactory improvement in staffing, accommodation and learning resources since the last inspection. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified, staff expertise, particularly in managing pupils' behaviour, has improved and a good programme of staff training has been implemented. The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the complex needs of the pupils. They are very ably supported by the high quality welfare assistants. The deployment and support of staff is good. Procedures for performance management are developing and new staff are individually monitored by the headteacher on a daily basis. The school is effectively staffed by additional external therapists who help to meet the very wide range of special educational needs of the pupils. Teachers are regularly visited each day by the headteacher who has a very high profile role in successfully managing and supporting pupils' behavioural and emotional difficulties. This provides good support for teachers.
59. The previous inspection report recommended a review of curriculum co-ordinator roles. This has been carried out and progress has been made, although there is still work to be done. Curriculum co-ordinators are clear about their roles and have produced good, practical guidance to staff, together with policies and some schemes of work. In some subjects, such as literacy and numeracy, there has been effective training for staff and an intensive training programme for information and communications technology has been planned for the coming two terms by the ICT co-ordinator. In particular, the music co-ordinator, in conjunction with the specialist music teacher, has provided an opportunity for all staff to work in tandem to develop skills within this subject. This has been a good model for staff skill and curriculum development. However, the lack of non-contact time for subject co-ordinators and the heavy demands of classroom work have meant that few co-ordinators link closely with colleagues to develop practice within their subjects. Insufficient opportunities are provided for curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the teaching of their subject and provide support as appropriate. Although the roles of senior managers have been clarified since the last inspection, in practice the roles are not established enough to have a positive impact on teaching and standards.
60. The accommodation at the school is satisfactory and enables the curriculum to be taught appropriately. The internal accommodation is good and pupils respect it and treat it with care. There are sufficient classrooms, with some spare rooms for individual work and for therapeutic input. The school benefits from some good specialist accommodation, such as a home economics room, a medical room, a gymnasium and a library. Some of the rooms are used to promote local community relationships, but are not always used efficiently during the day. The external accommodation is satisfactory overall. The playground has been improved since the last inspection and has some effective play apparatus in place. There is little field space, however, and the car park area is inadequate for its purpose. During arrival and collection times, the pupils'

transport often has to reverse in narrow spaces, causing severe congestion and a safety hazard for pupils and staff.

61. The quality and amount of learning resources available to the school have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall. The central resource area is effectively managed and provides a valuable contribution to learning. Good use is made of external providers to improve provision in some subjects. For example, in history the local museum visits the school with resources to support aspects of the curriculum such as Roman artefacts and Victorian resources. There is a good library but it is not always used efficiently as it is often the venue for a range of therapies. Resources for information and communications technology are particularly good, but there are too few artefacts to support learning in religious education.
62. Educational planning is well supported by the governing body's finance committee. Close attention is paid to educational recommendations provided by the headteacher and staff. The previous inspection identified the linkage between development planning and finance as a key issue. This has been addressed and the detailed set of priorities within the school's development plan are either costed or set within realistic financial limits. This has been a positive development since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors manage the budget well. Care is taken to ensure that financial planning takes into account unforeseen developments as well as those identified. This calls for close co-operation and sensitivity between staff and governors. The welfare assistants and learning support assistants are effectively and efficiently deployed. The school receives a range of grants and these are efficiently and appropriately used for the purposes designated. All of this is well supported by efficient and highly professional support from the school's bursar and administrative staff. They provide experience and serve as a very good first point of contact for parents and outside agencies. Financial procedures are effective and are carried out efficiently and promptly. This supports all staff in often stressful situations. The minor points in the most recent auditors' report have been addressed. The school applies the principles for best value well. Taking into account the improved behaviour, good teaching in most subjects and very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to raise standards and continue the improvements made by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - i) improve the quality of provision for and raise standards in design and technology and information and communications technology (these weaknesses are identified in paragraphs 6, 7, 9, 18, 52, 95, 96, 102, 103, 104 and 106);
 - ii) ensure that higher attainers in Key Stage 2 are always challenged to achieve high standards in English and mathematics (these weaknesses are identified in paragraphs 3, 4, 9, 19, 29, 69 and 81);
 - iii) establish clear and consistent procedures for assessment which allow accurate judgements to be made of pupils' progress and achievement throughout the school and make more effective use of assessment to inform planning to raise standards (his weakness is identified in paragraphs 20, 21, 38, 39, 40 and 75);

- iv) continue to improve the car parking facilities so that buses leaving the school do not have to reverse out through the gates (this weakness is identified in paragraph 60).

In addition there are two other matters which the governors may wish to consider for inclusion in their action plan:

- v) provide opportunities for curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects for which they have a lead responsibility throughout the school and by so doing provide quality support for all teachers who have to teach their subjects (this weakness is identified in paragraphs 38, 52, 54, 59, 83, 115 and 122);
- vi) enable parents/carers to be more involved in the implementation of their children's individual education plans and individual behavioural plans by ensuring that they have copies at home in order to support the school more effectively in working with their children (this weakness is identified in paragraph 49).

INTEGRATION

- 64. The re-integration programme is a major strength of Vernon House. It assists a large number of pupils to re-enter mainstream education, which has previously proved troublesome and threatening for them. All aspects have proved highly beneficial for the pupils and for Vernon House itself. There is considerable evidence to indicate that mainstream schools, staff and pupils have also been beneficiaries. Meetings during the inspection indicated that the school's social inclusion work is highly regarded by the local education authority and held in the highest respect by headteachers within the borough. Observations by the inspection team indicated that the scheme is working very well indeed. The receiving schools value highly the training, the high quality support and the sound advice they receive from Vernon House staff. In turn, they are keen to support this high level of professionalism with their own planning skills and the broader range of role models that a mainstream school can provide.
- 65. All pupils are assessed for their suitability for mainstream integration. This detailed evaluation considers the emotional and academic maturity of each pupil and looks carefully at ways in which individual needs can be met within different contexts. Thus, individual pupils may join mainstream primary classes to further their English skills, to boost their confidence or to prepare them for full-time re-entry. In most cases, all three are relevant targets. A number of pupils move rapidly from one day per week to two and three. At each stage the receiving school and staff are consulted. No firm decisions are made concerning full re-integration until everyone, including the pupil, is happy that the time is right. During the inspection, one pupil was observed integrating into a mainstream English lesson. The observation made it clear that the pupil now works independently, listens attentively and produces written work of a similar standard to others within the mainstream class. Careful monitoring and sensitive support ensures that no pupil is asked to take on too much too soon. Eight pupils have been re-integrated during the past year and this represents a high and consistent expression of the school's commitment to re-integration and to the borough's social inclusion policy.
- 66. A joint Years 2 and 3 swimming lesson with a local primary school exemplified the second form of integration, that of whole classes. Although such integration is in its early

stages, the indications are that, with the sort of preparation that currently takes place, much can be accomplished. This re-integration session involves the class going in the school bus to join a mainstream school at playtime. Here Vernon House pupils and staff mix completely with their host school. The class then joins the 60 children for a swimming lesson. Once again, Vernon House pupils integrate well, show good behaviour, politeness and perseverance within the lesson. The whole session is characterised by the detailed and sensitive planning by all staff involved, excellent teamwork between special and mainstream staff and, above all, the mature enjoyment of the children themselves. It is an exemplary example of re-integration for a group of children with very complex needs.

67. The Year 7 Project has been set up to provide a secure re-entry for Year 6 pupils who move to local mainstream comprehensive schools. This is characterised by detailed planning, close co-operation with the SEN co-ordinators and staff of the receiving schools and ongoing support during the first year of secondary education. Parents and families are also closely involved and, as with all aspects of Vernon House's re-integration programmes, care is taken to match individual programmes to individual pupils.
68. The success of the re-integration work arises from a number of factors: the vision of the headteacher; the meticulous planning of staff, in particular the two co-ordinators; and the co-operation of mainstream schools, largely arising from the trust and respect for Vernon House. The Project is becoming an integral part of Vernon House's approach to the education of pupils experiencing emotional and behaviour difficulties. It is an excellent model for such work and sets an unusually high standard. It must now be ensured that the finance and contractual side of this work is organised so that the highly skilled staff have the same security that they provide for their pupils by securing sufficient funding to ensure that they have permanent contracts.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	34	41	19	3	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	33
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	n/a
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.2	School data	4.3

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

Average authorised absence in a school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is 11%. The average unauthorised is 9%. Consequently the attendance at this EBD school is good.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

The pupils attained standards below those expected of 7- and 11-year-olds in the National Curriculum assessment tests in 1999 because of their learning and behaviour difficulties.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	14
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y2 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.7
Average class size	6.6

Education support staff: Y2 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	542,343
Total expenditure	567,843
Expenditure per pupil	17,745
Balance brought forward from previous year	70,019
Balance carried forward to next year	44,519

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents/carers agreed that the school is well led and managed. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. They agreed that the school expects each child to work hard, achieve their best and helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents/carers agreed that their children are making good progress in the school.

A few parents/carers expressed concern over the use of restraint. Concern was also expressed over parent/carer involvement in implementing individual education plans and individual behavioural plans, and the inconsistencies through the school in the setting of homework.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. No evidence was found of inconsistent use of restraint during the inspection. Indeed when restraint was used it was managed sensitively and caringly and in the interest of the pupil concerned. Parents'/carers' involvement in implementing individual education plans could be improved. Inspectors also share parents'/carers' concern about the inconsistency of setting homework.

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

ENGLISH

69. At both Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' attainment is below the national average. However, the progress that all pupils make is at least satisfactory in reading, writing and some aspects of speaking and listening. For a minority of pupils progress is good in all aspects of English and they develop noticeably over a short period. Careful lesson planning and teaching that embodies a range of techniques and great sensitivity ensures that all pupils acquire and develop skills in speaking, reading and writing. This, in turn, assists them in making the most of the rest of the subject curriculum they experience at Vernon House. There is a minority of pupils who have higher levels of skill, especially in reading and writing. The progress of these pupils is not always as satisfactory as it could be.
70. Pupils enter the school at different ages and with a very wide range of attainment. However, overall attainment on entry is well below the national average for most pupils because of their learning difficulties and the gaps that they have experienced in their schooling. All find some aspects of speaking and listening difficult. Over the past few years the complexity of pupils' difficulties in this aspect of the English curriculum have increased. Year 2 pupils demonstrate skills appropriate to Year 1 children and find turn-taking, extended listening and sustaining discussion difficult. However, once they settle into the school they feel more confident in using the vocabulary they have, to risk answering questions and to venture answers and comments without fear of criticism. Skilled teaching, in particular good use of teacher questions and staff providing good role models in language, assist in the development of speaking skills, as do activities such as assemblies. In one assembly pupils demonstrate the art work they have undertaken. They tell the whole school why they painted as they did and many pupils show a good memory for details relating, for example, to the life of Van Gogh. The consistent and settled nature of most lessons also encourages pupils to listen more effectively to both teachers and peers. By the end of their primary education Vernon House pupils still experience difficulties in language skills and their range of sentence structures and overall vocabulary is usually lower than national norms. However, their confidence in listening to stories, discussions and instructions has increased enormously. These developments also provide valuable assistance in helping pupils to re-integrate into mainstream.
71. Achievement and progress for most pupils in reading are satisfactory. For a small minority they are good. All pupils have a range of reading materials and make good use of the library. This ensures that reading is given a high priority and assists in the development of good habits. There is a steady development in sight vocabulary and basic phonic sound patterns for pupils who need these and the Internet is used effectively to encourage the use of reading skills in other subjects. For those pupils who enter the school with established reading skills there is not always enough challenge within the reading curriculum. This means that some pupils with higher levels of attainment do not always make sufficient progress. All pupils observed during the inspection had a positive attitude to reading, enjoyed books and stories. Many made good use of non-fiction materials on subjects such as skateboarding and football to extend the link between their personal interests and the written word. By the end of Key Stage 2, only one third of the current pupils have attained Level 4 in English. This is less than the school's target which could be met if more detailed attention was paid to progress and development within the English curriculum in relation to the use of assessment.

72. Some progress has been made in standards with regard to writing since the last inspection. All pupils enjoy expressing themselves in writing. Some develop the skills of uniform joined handwriting, but the majority start with rudimentary printing at the early stages of Key Stage 2 and gradually develop consistent and tidy printing by Year 6. All pupils respond to tasks that require single word or single sentence answers. By Year 5 the majority of pupils sustain writing for a half to a full page. In one good Year 5 lesson, the group writes letters to thank the transport organisers for their trip to 'Legoland'. The class are initially unsettled, but the teacher uses humour, praise and clear rules to keep them on the task. Together with the support assistant, she develops a letter structure with them, ensuring that every pupil is involved. By the end of the lesson each pupil produces a well-structured letter, containing his own wording. This is compared with a letter written a few months before to emphasise the progress each has made. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils are confident in expressing themselves in print, but not enough opportunities are given to encourage individual pupils to sustain longer pieces of writing.
73. Teaching of English is good in over 80 per cent of lessons. It is characterised by the use of appropriate vocabulary and questions for individual pupils. Time is allowed for less confident pupils to respond and the use of praise is sensitively employed to build on early success. There is very good use made of humour, particularly with Year 5 and 6 pupils. Pupil progress is particularly aided by the planning, pace and teamwork indicated in the majority of lessons. Where individual pupils experience difficulties or where lessons are interrupted, staff usually maintain the lesson theme to ensure the attention of the rest of the class. Where teaching is less effective the pace is slower and individual difficulties cause more of an interruption. In one good literacy hour session with Years 2 and 3 pupils the teacher uses a range of texts to indicate different forms of the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story and revise punctuation. Language is well used by the teacher to make the story and the points accessible to each pupil. Although there are distractions, the teacher employs a range of very effective behaviour strategies to keep the group on task. When one pupil exhibits some disturbed behaviour, the support assistant works in conjunction with the teacher to support the pupil and minimise the distraction for the class. Easily distractible pupils in the lesson develop better stamina for reading, writing and listening as a result. Speaking, listening, writing and reading skills are developed across a range of subjects such as mathematics, science and religious education.
74. Satisfactory pupil progress results from good co-ordination within the subject. Recent additions to the reading scheme have improved opportunities for the development of reading skills. There is now a need to build on this by maximising access to the library, which is often used for therapy work, and improving classroom book areas. Sensible adaptations have been made to the literacy hour format and this is working well. At present the English co-ordinator is not able to share his skills effectively with colleagues. Insufficient advice and support is given to assist staff in avoiding the repetition of lessons for pupils within mixed classes and those remaining with the same teacher for more than one year.
75. Not enough work is carried out to ensure that assessment is clear and consistent throughout the school. Homework presents a problem in the school. Insufficient attention is given to when and how more English homework can be set.

MATHEMATICS

76. Standards of attainment are below the national average at the end of both key stages due to the learning difficulties that the pupils have and also due to the gaps they have experienced in their education. However, individual pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards close to the national average in aspects of mathematics and this is as a result of very good teaching and excellent behaviour management. Achievement measured against prior attainment is very good in both key stages and this is a very significant improvement since the last inspection.
77. Pupils' progress and achievement throughout the school, including those with complex speech and language difficulties, is very good. Higher achieving pupils also make very good progress and a few pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 attain standards close to the national average. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been made successfully and has had a significant impact on the development of numeracy and pupils' abilities for mental calculation. Numeracy is also used well across the curriculum, for example in science, music and physical education, but all teachers do not consistently take opportunities for its use.
78. Pupils in both key stages have difficulties in grasping mathematical language. They find it very hard to remember the meaning of terms such as 'approximate' and 'estimate'. Many have a fear of failure and this inhibits their ability to do well in the mental mathematics sessions. A very significant number also find it difficult to try a range of different methods to solve problems. Once teachers build secure relationships with the pupils they begin to overcome their self-doubt and take off in their development of mathematical skills.
79. Pupils in Year 2 find it difficult to give several definitions of 'add' and 'subtract' and they struggle with counting on and backwards in tens and twenties. They also have difficulties in accurate multiplication by two and five although one pupil is close to the expectation for his age. Overall pupils in Year 2 are better at computational activities than reasoning activities. However, they are able to prepare information for data handling activities with confidence.
80. In Key Stage 2 most pupils have difficulty in problem-solving activities through number patterns such as adding fives starting with seven, will always give answers ending in seven or two. However, their skill in handling data is at the level expected, for example in the exciting work they did on the England football team in Euro 2000. Many have a 'blockage' in seeing an angle that is bigger than or smaller than a right angle. However, a high achieving pupil in Year 6, because of very good teaching, is able to inverse operations successfully to check solutions to numerical problems. This Year 6 pupil can use good strategies for solving two- and three-digit multiplication and division problems, and he understands how to measure in practical applications, as for instance in deciding and then checking the areas of a carpet. Although all areas of the mathematical curriculum are covered, pupils have limited opportunities to use information and communications technology skills in their learning of mathematics.
81. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. In Key Stage 1 pupils' learning is very good because the teaching is conducted with a brisk pace and pupils are challenged. Clear planned learning outcomes, confident subject knowledge and ongoing assessment, especially in introductions and conclusions, ensure that all pupils learn at levels appropriate to their abilities. Learning also benefits because of the teacher's conscious effort to make mathematics fun and to remove the fear that pupils encounter in this subject. In Key Stage 2 the best teaching makes use of targets in pupils' individual

education plans to challenge them successfully during their mental mathematical sessions. On the rare occasion when teaching is unsatisfactory pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the pedestrian pace of the teaching results in pupils becoming restless and then badly behaved. Thus, they do not make sufficient gains in their learning. The most serious shortcoming occurred in a lesson for Year 3 as one pupil operating at Level 3 was not given the opportunity to reach that level yet alone exceed it because the work set was not sufficiently demanding. However, in most lessons in both key stages pupils' attitudes to learning are frequently very good. When they enjoy the subject, particularly the mental calculation aspect, they attempt the challenges put upon them with determination and they begin to succeed. This is helped by the skilful use of individual number targets by teachers and has a very positive impact on the progress pupils make in their learning and self-confidence.

82. Due to their emotional and behavioural difficulties the pupils find oral work very difficult because of their fear of failure but, due to the fact that almost all teachers know them well and handle these sessions sensitively, they begin to succeed. A few higher attaining pupils are desperately eager to offer answers and they are also beginning to express views on strategies and thinking. This is a very significant achievement given how damaged they were when they started in the school and is a remarkable success story. This progress reflects the excellent learning environment created in this school. Many classes in the group work, work successfully both independently and with each other, concentrating on the task in hand, co-operating in gathering and presenting data and rarely distracting each other.
83. The temporary co-ordinator for the National Numeracy Strategy has not had opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and this is a weakness as he is not able to share the good practice that exists across the school. Pupils have detailed and specific numeracy targets, but not all teachers use these consistently to inform their teaching or to monitor pupils' progress over time. There is detailed testing and recording in mathematics that contributes significantly to monitoring pupils' progress but assessment is not sufficiently linked to the targets on pupils' individual education plans.

SCIENCE

84. Standards of attainment are below the national average and this reflects the learning difficulties of the pupils. During the inspection almost all pupils across the school attained levels below average, with a very small minority of pupils in Year 6 attaining levels in line with those expected for pupils at the age of eleven. This is not significantly different to the results at the time of the last inspection. The two pupils at the school who are in Key Stage 1 are beginning to recognise the differences between trees, flowers and plants and communicate their observations using appropriate scientific vocabulary. They draw recognisable diagrams to represent their work and label them well. Work in their books show that they are developing a scientific approach to their study of the subject. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 undertake experiments in all aspects of science. They study the skeleton and know its function. Many pupils can name the major bones, and are beginning to understand about the way muscles work. They plot simple bar charts to show the difference between how much they can lift with each arm. By the time they reach Year 6, higher attaining pupils can sort solids from liquids and gasses. They show clear understanding of the process of evaporation and can make and draw simple circuits. They begin to explain the difference between living and non-living things. Average and lower attaining pupils are supported where necessary to enable achievement. At both key stages all pupils, including those with additional special needs, make at least satisfactory and often good progress in science. However, standards attained in knowledge and understanding by the end of Key Stage 2 are below those

expected of pupils of that age.

85. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in some classes in Key Stage 2. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers plan individual lessons appropriately and use a clear curriculum plan to ensure that a broad and balanced range of activities is provided. However, because of the way in which pupils are grouped in different aged groupings, the actual taught curriculum has some weaknesses in relation to continuity in learning. There is no way for teachers to monitor what each pupil receives over time, and this inhibits progress. There is a significant weakness in the management and co-ordination of the subject, and no overview of what is being taught, which has a negative impact on standards. Simple procedures for assessing what pupils know have been introduced. However, the lack of monitoring and use of assessment to inform the next stage of teaching and learning is a real weakness in the subject, and sometimes leads to pupils being taught content that is too difficult for them to understand. This can lead to unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour in some lessons.
86. Teachers in many classes use a broad range of practical activities to enable pupils to undertake simple experiments. For example, they enable pupils to use real resources to re-plant a range of plants and to learn about the need for water of living things. They promote learning by providing very good quality resources as pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn about growth by planting beans in jars. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in planning and organising a central garden as part of their science studies. They look after the garden, which is used by all pupils as a quiet area, and one in which they can reflect on difficulties that may occur in the classrooms.
87. The effective management of pupils during most science lessons has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. Teachers use effective behaviour strategies and vary tasks to keep pupils interested and well motivated.
88. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is satisfactory, although confidence is sometimes low. However many teachers use effective strategies to encourage the development of pupils' enquiry, observation and prediction skills. For example, in Year 6 pupils undertake experiments with growing of different seeds. The teacher effectively uses good questioning to help pupils follow a line of enquiry. The high expectations of pupils within the lesson ensures that they make very good progress as they offer their own ideas and explanations about why some seeds grow faster than others, and why they lean towards the light.
89. In many lessons, in both key stages, pupils develop their literacy skills as part of their science lessons. Some good extended writing takes place as older pupils write about their experiments. They are beginning to use computers to improve their presentation skills, as well as to present and interpret simple data. Pupils at the school learn best when they undertake practical tasks that they understand. They then behave well in these lessons and complete their work. Attitudes are less positive when pupils' tasks are not clearly linked to their own ability. When tasks are too difficult behaviour deteriorates. For example, some pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 were all asked to complete the same task as they learned about the purpose of roots. No opportunities were created for them to work at their own level. This led to some silly and unproductive behaviour, and limited the progress that they made.

ART

90. Achievement in art is satisfactory throughout the school. All pupils make satisfactory

progress in using paint, line drawing, observation and some printing skills. There is limited evidence of three-dimensional work and not enough time is given to the full range of media and drawing techniques. The school has maintained a satisfactory standard of work since the last inspection and there is a greater consistency in art standards between the different classes.

91. In Key Stage 1 pupils experiment with paint, mix colours and relate to the work and style of classical artists such as Van Gogh. They talk about what they are trying to achieve and remember some of the technical terminology. They enjoy these lessons and gain at both a therapeutic and a developmental level. This satisfactory progress continues through the school. In Key Stage 2 pupils are introduced to a wider range of techniques and are expected to observe and make decisions about their work. By the end of their primary education, pupils meet National Curriculum requirements with regard to many aspects of investigating and making. However, lack of access to a full range of media and reduced time for discussion means that knowledge and understanding are lower than the national norms.
92. Teaching in art is never less than satisfactory and usually good in all classes. Effective use is made of plants, still-life compositions by famous artists and classical paintings. Teachers discuss the feelings and thoughts behind the use of different techniques and provide pupils with sensible advice that assists them in developing their own work and style. In one good Year 5 lesson, the teacher introduces a Bernard still life. Aspects of composition, colour and relationship are discussed before pupils produce their own pictures. Using positive comments, practical suggestions and a clear direction, the teacher is able to settle an unsettled class and ensure that all pupils are working to the best of their ability. Using effective teamwork, the teacher and his assistant encourage the development of quite sophisticated colour techniques and spatial relationships. Classroom assistants contribute well to art lessons and provide support for individual pupils when they are unsure of a way forward. Art is well used within subject areas such as English, music, history, science and geography.
93. All pupils enjoy their art. They listen carefully, develop ideas of their own, enjoy the use of different media and take pleasure in the positive feedback they receive from displaying their work in class and assemblies. Their enjoyment and interest contributes to the satisfactory gains they make in their learning.
94. The co-ordinator and headteacher are keen that art should increase in importance for individual pupils and for the school in general. Imaginative work such as the Millennium and Easter egg projects indicates that blocks of time can be well spent with specialist support and contribute to pupils' improved self-esteem and feeling of achievement. Co-ordination and resourcing for this subject are satisfactory, but more could be done to extend the range of techniques used to improve the quality of provision for art and to raise standards. Displays are variable within the school. In most classes work is attractively displayed, but insufficient use is made of the large wall areas around the school to celebrate pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Standards in design and technology are below that expected for pupils at age seven and eleven. In relation to their prior attainment standards in the subject are not high enough. This is because too little design and technology is taught across the school and because too little attention has been given to the development of appropriate plans to ensure progress as pupils move through the school. There has been no significant improvement in the standards or in the teaching and learning of design and technology since the last

inspection. During the week of this inspection only one lesson was observed and few were planned. There is too little evidence of pupils' earlier work in their books or on display around the school. At Key Stage 1 pupils build with Lego and describe their structures. They use simple resources to cut and fix paper and card, and they generate their own ideas to develop their construction skills. They make a range of simple models. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue the development of their construction skills. They begin to make more recognisable structures and they develop their skills further by using simple designs to generate their models from their own ideas, drafting and re-designing where necessary. They explain what they are making and describe its purpose. They make comments on their own work. However, standards achieved in this subject are unsatisfactory because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop design and technology skills.

96. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is unsatisfactory. It is impeded by lack of subject specific knowledge and confidence by many staff and by the lack of overall management of the subject. During observations of pupils making different models, the positive relationships and opportunities for sharing and negotiating with others were evident. Because there are too few examples of this kind of activity within many classes, opportunities for the further development of pupils' personal skills are lost, and standards in design and technology remain low. Too little use is made of the good home economics room to help pupils develop their use of everyday tools and equipment. The overall low priority that the subject is given across the school inhibits the development of pupils' creative, designing and making skills.

HUMANITIES

97. Standards in history and geography are below national expectations for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but standards in both subjects are high enough in relation to the special needs of the pupils. This is not significantly different from the last inspection but must be seen in the context of the increased complexity of the special educational needs of the pupils since the last inspection. Pupils in both key stages develop their humanities skills well through books, artefacts, visits and discussions. At Key Stage 1 they find answers to questions effectively by observation and enquiry, although they need help in doing so. In history they learn to sequence the daily events, and they learn about stories from the past. In Key Stage 2 they begin to demonstrate a simple understanding of why changes happen over time. For example, they study the different methods of washing clothes through the last century to the present day, and identify inventions that have helped to change history. As they move through Key Stage 2 they demonstrate secure factual knowledge of different periods. For example, they know when the Great Fire of London was, and its significance in the changes that took place afterwards. In geography pupils at Key Stage 1 study the seasons, and can explain what happens when the seasons change well. At Key Stage 2 they begin to study their own environment and they use the Internet effectively to undertake further research into places where Legoland is situated around the world. They show clear understanding of places other than their own. They study life in an Indian village, following the daily activities of a child living there. Many pupils make valid comments and observations about life in a climate such as India. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is effectively fostered through humanities, and they practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills sufficiently through the subjects.

98. The quality of teaching and learning in humanities is satisfactory in both key stages. There has been satisfactory improvement in these areas since the previous inspection, and this is closely linked to the implementation of new schemes of work which enable teachers to plan lessons effectively. Teachers make good use of resources, both within school and in the local environment to foster interest and motivate the pupils. This ensures that pupils enjoy their humanities lessons. For example, during the inspection pupils all went on a visit to the local Legoland attraction. Much of the work in humanities was subsequently based on this visit. For example, pupils in Year 5 searched on the Internet as they undertook a research project based on finding which was the nearest site, how they would travel to other sites, and why the sites had developed in certain places. The effective questions that the teacher posed enabled pupils to develop their research skills well. Similarly in Years 5 and 6 pupils used the visit to develop their historical understanding of how societies change, and the impact of leisure time on people's lives.
99. Resources from outside the school are also used well to foster understanding. The local museum visits the school with different resources such as Victorian clothes, Roman artefacts and washing implements over time. These effectively supplement the school's own resources and help to promote interest.
100. Teachers manage pupils well during humanities lessons. They use a wide range of strategies to try to keep pupils on task. This is not always effective due to the very challenging behaviour that some pupils exhibit when they are excited. Sometimes their behaviour has a negative impact on their learning in humanities lessons. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge in history and geography and they use this to promote effective learning. The co-ordinator is aware of the weaknesses in the subject overall, which include the lack of assessment procedures, and the inability of teachers to monitor continuity in learning for each pupil. Links are being made with local primary schools to improve this situation. Some effective displays of pupils' work in both subjects enhances the indoor environment of the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. During the inspection there were limited opportunities for observing information and communications technology (ICT). Discussions with pupils, staff and the ICT co-ordinator provided extra information and a number of instances were observed where ICT was used to back up or extend subject lessons, such as geography, art and science.
102. The previous inspection indicated that ICT was not integrated into the curriculum. There has been some improvement in all classes in terms of hardware and the use of word processing and the Internet. However, not enough has been done to introduce data handling or control activities and, overall, the school does not currently meet the statutory requirements in this subject. This, in turn, means that pupils cannot make satisfactory progress and so are unable to reach an appropriate standard in this subject by the end of Key Stage 2.
103. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are familiar with basic disk handling and word processing skills. With assistance they can type short pieces of writing they have prepared. They are familiar with the basic controls and use the keyboard and mouse with care and accuracy. As they move through the school, they increase word processing skills and develop file handling, editing and formatting skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6 they become more involved with the Internet and half of the pupils reach satisfactory standards in terms of web access, cutting and pasting and merging text with pictures. Good use is made of

painting programs and these are often used to supplement art lessons. In a Year 2 art lesson, one pupil uses the computer's painting program to draw the spider plant that others are painting. Care is taken to gain the correct colour, develop good leaf outlines and build up an effective picture of the offshoots. The result is a competent picture that meets National Curriculum requirements. However, due to the lack of opportunity to develop data handling and control skills using the computer, learning in these aspects of ICT is unsatisfactory.

104. Where teaching takes place, it is competent and enthusiastic. Teachers show an adequate knowledge of basic processes, they encourage and praise pupils and they make efficient use of the single classroom computer. Teaching though is hampered in general by teachers' lack of knowledge and training. This means that some staff are not confident in the use of the new hardware. Consequently, pupils do not get the full range of opportunities within subject and specific ICT lessons.
105. Since the last inspection a number of initiatives have taken place. These include the development of a clearer and more detailed policy, the adaptation of parts of the national ICT programme of work and the introduction of new hardware which extends the opportunities for access to computers and adds the valuable resources of internet access and networking to the school. The co-ordinator has developed a policy and a system that provides a good basis for future development.
106. Training, which was identified as a weakness, is planned for the Autumn and Spring terms. The co-ordinator has linked the school to a full training programme and expects staff development and classroom practice to take place as a result. Grant money and budget allocations have been well used to develop an appropriate and up-to-date system within the school. This provision of computers is good but not all class teachers have more than a single computer in their classrooms with which to develop pupils' skills and confidence.

MUSIC

107. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection and pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and this represents very good progress for many pupils in terms of their musical skills, particularly in their singing ability and appreciation of music in general. This very good progress reflects the fact that the teaching of music is a strength.
108. Pupils in both key stages sing well, understand basic notation and follow a steady beat with a range of rhythms. They are developing a good level of skills within the commercial music scheme adopted by the school and remember and perform a variety of songs accurately, tunefully and with close attention to the words. Whole-school assemblies are characterised by the joyful and enthusiastic performance of all pupils, who bring their classroom skills together to produce music that make both pupils and staff feel good, especially at the start of the week.
109. Teaching is always good, often very good and, at times, inspirational. The specialist music teacher works closely with each classroom teacher, identifies clear learning objectives and follows these through with great precision and sensitivity. It is rare that these goals are not achieved. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the two teachers and the classroom assistant work with a group of six children to develop the concepts of 'long' and 'short' notes. All have clear targets for the lesson and this aids the pace of the teaching and the learning that occurs. Very good use is made of spoken language, gesture, voice and rhythm. The pupils have clear guidelines for both their learning and

their behaviour. Dynamics, beat and rhythm are all introduced in the form of games, and backed up with clear instruction and reinforcement. The lesson is a performance that is enjoyable for adults and children alike. A good Year 6 lesson sees the introduction of 'On Ilkley Moor'. The lesson is characterised by good teamwork, very good use of humour, questions, posture and breathing. Maps are used to make Ilkley Moor real for the pupils. The satisfaction and enjoyment of the pupils is emphasised by the fact that a small group of hesitant pupils sing with confidence and enthusiasm a song that they have never heard before. Very good planning and a high level of professional skill ensure effective outcomes for each pupil.

110. Resources are satisfactory within music. Planning is good and the training provided by the specialist teacher is of a very high quality indeed. Staff have learnt a lot from the co-teaching of music. A sound basis has been laid for class teachers to take greater responsibility next term. The way in which limited resources and a small amount of specialist time has been used to raise staff expertise, skills and confidence is an exemplar of how curriculum development, teaching proficiency and pupil achievement can develop.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

111. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection in games and gymnastics. In games and gymnastics standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and when the pupils leave school at the age of eleven. Standards attained in swimming are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, with some pupils being competent swimmers using a range of strokes and swimming lengths with good breathing technique. In dance standards are below those expected as pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to perform dance routines. Outward bound activities for eleven-year-olds have been modified in the context of pupils' needs to ensure that they are safe but the main obstacle hindering their development of orienteering skills is the inadequate playground facilities.
112. The Key Stage 1 pupils are learning good skills for sending and receiving large balls, using their hands and feet. They are catching and bouncing balls with confidence. However, the difficulties they have with language inhibits them in describing what they have to do, such as 'stretch' and 'watch carefully' but, due to very skilful teaching and the use of encouragement, they can talk about 'what is difficult'. They can explain the importance of warming up.
113. In Key Stage 2 pupils are continuing to develop their ball skills; they can all pass and control the ball in a game of netball. They develop very good control in handling a cricket bat and develop very good eye/ball co-ordination skills. Because of very good teaching pupils with very challenging behaviour in Year 5/6 work together collaboratively in team games and this is a very good achievement for them. Their interest and enjoyment of their PE lessons makes a very good contribution to their learning. The integrated swimming session with a maintained primary school was excellent; a visitor would have assumed that this was a single class.
114. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Very good teaching was observed in Year 5/6. Where teaching is most successful, as in the Year 5/6 classes, the impact of the teachers' very good subject knowledge, challenge and clearly planned learning outcomes are very noticeable on the learning of pupils. Very good gains are made in lessons where teachers successfully achieve a fine balance between instruction to help improve learning, encouragement to pupils to concentrate and think about what they are doing, and opportunities to develop their skills. Lessons are of

sufficient length for learning and progress to be relevant and successful. Teachers plan in such a way to encourage the development of pupils' personal and social skills and this has a very significant impact on improved behaviour. Pupils are very positive in their approach to PE and they work with a great sense of enjoyment whilst making their hearts pump and breaking into a sweat. Their keenness to succeed has a significant contribution on their improved behaviour and on the standards of performance they attain. During the netball game in Years 5/6 the pupils were totally absorbed in their work, they listened attentively to the teacher and followed her instructions to the letter. Their relationships with their teachers are good, and notably respectful; they also co-operate well with each other and develop the skills of waiting and taking their turn. This enables them to learn well and attain standards equivalent to their peers in mainstream primary schools.

115. Extra-curricular provision for sport is limited because of the constraints placed on the school by transporting the pupils home at the end of the school day. However, teachers organise structured games such as rounders during the lunch break and these games are very popular with the pupils and contribute to the development of their batting and fielding skills. The gymnasium is adequate but outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory to develop pupils' game, athletic and outward bound skills. The co-ordination of the subject has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work and he gives useful practical advice on lesson planning to other teachers who are non-specialists. However, he does not have non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and so is not in a position to demonstrate particular techniques to other staff or to share good practice where it exists.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Due to the emotional damage experienced by many pupils the religious education curriculum has been modified in accordance with the needs outlined in their statements. The religious education scheme focuses on what pupils know about religion and feelings are appropriately explored in distinct therapy sessions rather than in whole-class lessons. This is a sensitive and totally appropriate decision on the part of the management and governors of the school.
117. Standards attained in relation to the attainment target taught is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Achievement measured against prior attainment is very good and reflects the skilful teaching of this subject.
118. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know that the Bible is the holy book for Christians. They understand that Jews and Christians believe in the same Creation story as they both regard the book of Genesis as being God's word. In one lesson observed lower and higher attaining pupils made valuable contributions during a discussion on how the world could be a better place and made very good gains in their spiritual development.
119. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a very good knowledge of the Hindu gods and scriptures. They have a very good understanding of panentheism (Brahmin reveals itself in different forms although it is one Being) at a level appropriate for their age due to the very good subject knowledge on the part of their teachers. Their understanding of the role of Ravan in the Rama Sita story is in line with the expectations in the agreed syllabus.

120. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is based on good subject knowledge and draws effectively on pupils' prior knowledge. It successfully evokes curiosity from the pupils and makes a valuable contribution to their gains in knowledge and also to their spiritual development. Good use is made of questioning and the 'scaffolding technique' (building on language used by pupils) to build pupils' confidence in speaking and listening. In one very good lesson in Key Stage 2 the teacher's knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and the customs associated with the Hindu festival of Diwali was used very effectively to inspire pupils in their learning. The teacher's ability to answer pupils' deep questions about 'New Beginnings' resulted in very good learning. There are insufficient tactile resources to support teachers in their effort to make the subject interesting and to bring it alive. For example, in the very good lesson on Hinduism in Key Stage 2 the teacher did not have models of Rama and Sita and only a picture of a mandir.
121. Learning in lessons in Key Stage 1 is consistently good and in Key Stage 2 it is very good. In Key Stage 1 pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories. In Key Stage 2 pupils make very good progress in lessons where the teacher inspires them and arouses their curiosity and so impacts very positively on their learning. This was observed in a Year 4/5/6 lesson, where the teacher used resources very effectively to teach that Hindus believe in one Being that manifests itself in different forms. The joyful and magical expressions on the pupils' faces were a delight to witness. In the same lesson the teacher's very good subject knowledge about the details of celebrating Diwali contributed to pupils' very good learning about this Hindu festival.
122. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the development of a scheme of work since the last inspection. However, the lack of a formal procedure for assessment to inform planning to raise standards further is a weakness. The co-ordinator does not have non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and this is also a weakness as he cannot therefore share good practice that takes place in individual classes across the whole school.