

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE DAVID LEWIS SCHOOL**

Warford, Alderley Edge

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111499

Headteacher: Mr. C. D. Dean

Reporting inspector: Mr. M G Whitehead  
21061

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> January – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 190065

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special School for Pupils with Epilepsy and Learning Difficulties associated with medical conditions.

School category: Non-maintained

Age range of pupils: 7 to 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mill Lane  
Warford  
Nr Alderley Edge  
Cheshire

Postcode: SK9 7UD

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A G Curtis

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M. G. Whitehead	Registered inspector	Modern foreign language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
S. Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Partnership with parents and carers
M. Cureton	Team inspector	Humanities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Religious education	
H. Probert	Team inspector	Science	
		Music	
J. Stirrup	Team inspector	English	
		Design and technology	
R. Sharples	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Residential	
		Art	
T. Watts	Team inspector	Information technology	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Set in the Cheshire countryside, the David Lewis School is a non-maintained residential special school for pupils aged 7-19 years. Pupils have severe neurological impairments, particularly epilepsy, and associated cognitive and behavioural difficulties. There are 59 pupils on roll of whom 53 are resident. Whilst the numbers on roll have diminished in recent years, the severity of the disabilities of pupils has increased. The ability levels of pupils are also lower now than they were at the time of the last inspection. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language. Many associated behaviour difficulties are presented by pupils.

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

The David Lewis School is a good school that provides a high quality of education for all its pupils. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the very effective management by the senior staff ensures that pupils make good progress. The high quality of teaching throughout the school is a great strength and also helps to ensure that pupils make good progress. Taking into account the high quality of education that the school provides, the good progress that the pupils make and the high levels of care enjoyed by all pupils, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the senior management team is very effective.
- The high quality of the teaching ensures maximum learning.
- The whole school community is built upon high quality relationships.
- The school's curriculum is a strength particularly provision for physical education and careers education.
- The overall quality of care given by the school is very good and the medical care provided is excellent.

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

- The school should continue to seek to appoint, as a matter of urgency, a suitably qualified and experienced head of care.
- Through a programme of training, improve the quality of educational intervention of personal support workers.
- The skills of and opportunities for curriculum co-ordinators should be improved in order to facilitate their roles more fully.
- The quality of pupils' care plans should be improved so that they reflect the targets written in individual education plans and include areas for personal development.

*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**

It is important to note that there have been considerable changes at The David Lewis School since the last inspection. One of the most significant changes is in the nature of the special needs of the pupils and students who attend. There are now many more pupils and students who have much more severe learning difficulties. It is for this reason that it would be inappropriate to make comparisons between levels of attainment during each of the inspections. However, there are now improved assessment procedures that are being used effectively by teachers, individual education plans are of a better quality and programmes of study have now been introduced. Many of the weaknesses previously identified have now been addressed.

The quality of the curriculum has improved even further and is one of the school's many strengths. It is broad, balanced and the flexible interpretation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies has enabled pupils to make good progress. Subject policy statements are now in place for all subjects being taught.

The quality of teaching has improved overall and during the inspection we observed no teaching that was less than satisfactory, whilst the standard of teaching in nine tenths of lessons observed was good or better and in two fifths was very good or better. The level of pupils' attendance has also improved since the last inspection. The school's improvement since the last inspection is good and its capacity to maintain this improvement is also good.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school aims to provide an environment in which the complex medical, educational and care needs are addressed in a holistic manner. The school is very successful in meeting this aim as it is also in providing a curriculum which is appropriate to the individual needs of each pupil. This is reinforced through the individual education plans that are formulated through discussion with teachers, teaching assistants, carers and parents. In the light of these plans and the challenging targets that are set, the progress that pupils make throughout the school is good. All pupils and students reach good standards which are in line with expectations.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' and students' attitudes to school are good and teachers work hard to encourage them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school and when pupils and students go out of school their behaviour is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils and students is good and this results in very good relationships between all people in the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is facilitated by the very good medical provision and care available on-site, thus eliminating the need for many pupils to take time off in order to attend clinics etc.

Pupils' attitudes to work are good and, despite the many difficulties that they experience, pupils enjoy their lessons. They take part in discussions when they are able and are well motivated. This is particularly true of students in the 16+ classes. Careers education and work experience are very successful.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

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

All the teaching of English that was observed during the inspection was good or better, a particular strength is the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 in which 4 out of five lessons observed were very good or better. The teaching of mathematics was good in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, whilst the teaching at 16+ ranged from satisfactory to good. The quality of teaching in science was never less than good and at Key Stage 2 the teaching was very good. Lessons in personal, social and health education were observed and the teaching was very good in Key Stage 2 and 4, whilst the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good in Key Stage 3.

The whole school focus is on communication, and the skills of the teachers, teaching assistants and personal support workers are very important in this area. Emphasis is placed upon speaking and listening in many classes as this is the most appropriate part of the literacy strategy for these pupils. Numeracy is also present in many lessons where it is appropriate to count items and measure time, distances or make comparison between sizes and shapes.

It is through a very carefully planned curriculum that the school is able to meet the individual needs of the pupils and students very well. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is very high. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, ninety percent of the teaching was good or better and forty percent was very good or better. This very high standard of teaching is a strength of the school and a great benefit to all the pupils and students.

The quality of learning in the school is an almost identical pattern to that of the teaching. Pupils are well motivated by the teachers and, despite their learning difficulties, take an active part in most of the lessons. Occasionally pupils are off task and find it difficult to concentrate and this is usually due to their learning difficulty or the medication which they need to take.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for pupils at all key stages is good, it is broadly based, well balanced and highly relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop in areas that are spiritual, moral, social and cultural. Great attention is also given to the personal development of pupils, increasing their self esteem and teaching a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop in areas that are spiritual, moral, social and cultural. Great attention is also given to the personal development of pupils, increasing their self esteem and teaching a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength of the school. The ethos of the school is one in which the care of pupils and staff is all pervading and this is enhanced even further by the excellent medical care that is available to all. There is a good quality child protection policy but there is need for better quality child protection training.

The school works closely with parents, and parents are pleased with the education that their children receive. They are also very pleased with the levels of medical and nursing care that is available to their children at all times. There is regular telephone contact between school and home and also a good level of written communication. Parents are also pleased with the information that they receive about the progress of their children.

The curriculum for pupils at all key stages and 16+ are good. Courses are stimulating well balanced and highly appropriate to their needs. No pupil is disappplied from the National Curriculum. Techniques of intensive interaction are used to develop pupils' communication and promote their interaction with the environment.

Teaching and support staff provide a supportive nurturing environment and relationships are very good. Staff are kind to pupils and respect their dignity. The high quality of care is a considerable strength of the school despite the fact that there is currently no substantive head of care.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for all staff, pupils and students. He is very well supported by his deputy (Head of Education), other senior teachers and key staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities very effectively and has enabled the school to continue in a much more secure financial position.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good, the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching on a regular basis and constantly evaluates performance in all aspects of the school.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is good. Careful monitoring ensures that the resources are of a good standard and are effectively used. Staff are appropriately deployed and their roles are clearly defined and monitored.

The staffing arrangements are good. There is a good number of teaching staff, with a wide range of experience and areas of subject expertise. However, few teachers have specific qualifications in the education of pupils with additional special educational needs. The school regards this as a priority area for development and is running an excellent certificated course in autistic spectrum disorders that all teachers, all teaching assistants and some support staff are attending. There is a good training programme in place for subjects of the curriculum.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership for everyone. He has a clear vision for the future of the school. The school is very effective in applying principles of best value as the headteacher monitors very closely the effectiveness of the educational provision. He scrutinises all the financial and logistical activities of the school and ensures that each separate department of the school works effectively and efficiently. He also makes constructive comparisons between departments and encourages staff to learn from each other's good practice.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provides a high standard of medical care.</li> <li>• Parents are very comfortable about asking questions and discussing problems.</li> <li>• Parents are well informed about the progress of their children.</li> <li>• The good quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is some concern about the inexperience of some of the personal support workers.</li> <li>• Some parents thought that their children received insufficient homework though they appreciated the fact that traditional homework is inappropriate for most of the pupils.</li> </ul>

Following the inspection of the school, the team of inspectors agrees with parents about the strengths of the school and also with their concern over the lack of experience of some personal support workers.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The special needs of the pupils and students for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment by comparison with age related national averages or expectations. However the report gives example of what the pupils and students know, understand and can do. Judgements concerning progress and achievement will take into account individual special needs of pupils and the targets that have been set in their individual education plans.

2. The school works hard to ensure that every appropriate opportunity is taken to gain accreditation for the pupils and their individual efforts and achievements. At all key stages, pupils' levels of attainment are varied. Consequently pupils are working on courses that have their own levels of accreditation. These levels are ones that are set by the Government's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 'P' levels. Although pupils do not take the SATs tests, the teachers assess them. At the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils are working at level 2 whilst the majority of pupils are working towards level 1. This is true of their work in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history, information technology and modern foreign language. Throughout the school the pupils achievement is always satisfactory and for many pupils achievement is good, they could not be expected to do any better.

3. At Key Stage 4, the pupils follow courses within the Award Scheme Development And Accreditation Network (ASDAN) particularly the Youth Award Scheme and this helps pupils become more skilled at:

- improving learning and performance;
- working with others;
- using communication, number and ICT skills;
- problem solving.

4. Last year pupils took Achievement Tests in Numeracy

- 5 pupils reached Level 1
- 3 pupils reached Level 2
- 1 pupil reached Level 3.

Pupils also took Achievement Tests in Literacy

- 6 pupils reached Level 1
- 2 pupils reached Level 2.

In the Youth Award Scheme, 4 pupils gained Bronze Awards.

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

5. Pupils have generally good attitudes to school. They come into school in the morning happy and smiling and most pupils are calm.

6. Pupils often have difficulty settling at the beginning of lessons. Staff work very hard to ensure that all pupils are involved in the lessons. Pupils often show a great deal of interest when they are stimulated on a one-to-one basis. As the lessons continue pupils become purposeful with increasing levels of concentration and participation. Teachers

establish an atmosphere of calm, for example in years 10 and 11 music lessons where pupils listen quietly to the teacher playing music on the piano.

7. Pupils in the 16+ unit generally respond very well. Those pupils who are able to speak are very verbal and actively participate. Some pupils are quietly attentive, others who are unsettled become calm thanks to the gentle management and encouragement. There are good working relationships.

8. Standards of behaviour are good and have been sustained since the previous inspection. Behaviour of the pupils when they go out of the school environment is excellent. Challenging behaviour is usually well managed by teachers. Some pupils have their own personal support worker with whom they are developing good relationships. However although these workers try hard there is a minority who lack the confidence, experience, strategies and training that would allow pupils to engage more fully with the pupils with whom they work. Exclusions are rare but when the school feels that the needs of the pupils will best be met elsewhere it assists parents and education authorities to find more appropriate placements.

9. Relationships are very good and there is an atmosphere of trust. Pupils are encouraged to understand the impact of their actions on others, encouraging pupils to develop an awareness of their peers and show some empathy.

10. Much of the schools work is focused on personal development. During personal social and health education sessions pupils are encouraged to develop social skills. As they gain in confidence they make drinks and serve drinks and snacks to other pupils. Work experience is available within the supportive environment of the school and a small number of pupils are able to gain further independence and increase their self esteem by taking part in work experience outside school.

11. Attendance is good and attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection. Most pupils attend school on a very regular basis. Medical problems can result in regular absences for a small number of pupils.

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

12. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, ninety percent of the teaching was good or better and forty percent was very good or better. This very high standard of teaching is a strength of the school and a great benefit to all the pupils and students. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good and is a particular strength

13. All the teaching of English that was observed during the inspection was good or better, a particular strength is the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 in which 4 out of five lessons observed were very good or better. The teaching of mathematics was good in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, whilst the teaching at Post 16 ranged from satisfactory to good. The quality of teaching in science was never less than good and at Key Stage 2 the teaching was very good. Lessons in PSHE were observed and the teaching was very good in Key Stages 2 and 4, whilst the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good in Key Stage 3.

14. The whole school focus is on communication, and the skills of the teachers, assistants and personal support workers are very important in this area. Emphasis is placed upon speaking and listening in many classes, as this is the most appropriate part of the literacy strategy for these pupils. Numeracy is also developed in many classes where it is appropriate to count items and measure time, distances or make comparison between

sizes and shapes.

15. The very best teaching was seen when the lessons were carefully planned to meet the needs of the individual pupils. The activities and the vocabulary used in the room were carefully matched to the individual levels of the pupils. In this situation pupils were highly motivated and keen to take a full part in the lesson despite the fact that in some cases that may be limited to some basic vocabulary in a foreign language. In one particular situation pupils responded spontaneously in Spanish when the teacher entered the room. Another example was a music lesson which was lively and stimulating resulting in full participation of the group and very successful learning of tunes and rhythms.

16. Some very good teaching was also observed in science lessons where the tasks were clearly explained to the pupils and discussion took place concerning those to whom the tasks should be allocated. Pupils were encouraged to take initiative and use their previous experience.

17. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is greatly enhanced by the high quality of the teaching assistants and in this situation there is often a sharing of teaching responsibility between teacher and assistant. This arrangement is very effective and the pupils benefit greatly from the strengths of all staff.

18. Good, effective and appropriate literacy and numeracy teaching, based on the National Numeracy and Literacy Initiatives, is a strong feature of provision for every pupil. Religious education is taught throughout the school. There are daily opportunities for spiritual reflection for all pupils. A collective act of worship takes place weekly. A strong programme of personal, social and moral education is taught to all pupils.

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

19. Curricular opportunities for pupils at all key stages and 16+ are good. They are stimulating well balanced and highly appropriate to their needs. No pupil is currently disapplied from the National Curriculum.

20. Specialist staff are well and effectively used to teach science, physical education, swimming, music and design and technology throughout the school.

21. Art therapy, music therapy, physiotherapy, some aspects of hydrotherapy and speech and language therapy are well used throughout the school to promote the pupils' intellectual and personal development and enhance their sense of well being. Techniques of intensive interaction are used to develop pupils' fundamental communication skills and promote their interaction with the immediate environment. There is highly effective multi-sensory approach in all teaching and learning.

22. In Key Stage 2, the subjects of the National Curriculum are supported by well-structured opportunities for play, drama, and swimming. A programme of trips and visits supports history, geography and social development. Pupils have good opportunities for stimulating sensory experiences. A good level of multi-sensory provision leads to pupils successfully working towards the desirable early learning outcomes.

23. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is good. Subject provision allows pupils to build on what they already know, understand and can do. Modern foreign languages are introduced at this key stage, with opportunities for pupils to study Spanish. There is good, specialist

provision for design and technology, science and swimming. Pupils opt for horse riding if they wish and specialist teaching takes place in a large purpose-built gymnasium for some pupils.

24. In Key Stage 4, pupils work towards achieving a positive self image and some measure of independence in response to a well-structured system of challenges. These include, besides literacy and numeracy, a range of academic subjects, and additional opportunities for them to study sports and leisure, family, home and community, and vocational education. There is a good and appropriate emphasis on careers and excellent opportunities for pupils to undertake work experience. Pupils are able to study this wide range of subjects with varying, planned levels of support. Science, design and technology and swimming continue to be taught largely by specialists. Pupils achieve an externally validated award at the end of the key stage. External validation of pupils' achievement in numeracy and literacy is available to them when they reach the required level of attainment.

25. The 16+ curriculum is good. Whilst effectively building on what has gone before, it becomes distinct from previous provision. Pupils study academic subjects in which they achieve a further measure of success, building on their existing skills. All study mathematics, literacy, ICT and personal, social and health education. Current affairs sessions are a new feature of provision. There is a marked and highly effective emphasis on further work experience. Careers education is of excellent quality. Students continue to be carefully prepared for a measure of independent living. Further study options include music, information technology, craft, design and technology, art, trampolining, and fitness. There is a weekly leisure afternoon. Students continue to visit local places of interest, social centres and cultural facilities. There are excellent opportunities for them to prepare for the world of work and independent living and receive an externally validated certificate for so doing. Externally validated certification in numeracy and literacy continue to be available when students reach the required standard. There are effective and helpful links with a local college of further education, where some students successfully attend part of a catering course and two of them attend a horticultural class. The health education programme within the school includes drugs awareness and sex education, and pupils also receive individual attention to ensure that they gain a clear understanding of these issues.

26. The school's provision of work related education, including careers education and guidance is an excellent feature of the curriculum. The school works closely with the special needs careers advisor from the Cheshire Guidance Partnership. In key stages 3 and 4, and at post 16 pupils are taught about careers, and all of them have opportunities to take part in properly supported work experience. Some work on the school site where they help to run a cafe, take messages or help in the office. More able pupils, accompanied by a teaching assistant, go off site to supermarkets, garden centres, or a launderette, for example. Other links with work experience providers include a nursing home, veterinary centre, car valeting service and a well know national chain store. One pupil is successful in helping at a local auction house. All are interviewed by a specialist careers advisor and are given an action plan, which is frequently renewed. Pupils are given help in preparing curriculum vitae, and practise being interviewed. They are presented with a survey of their academic and personal achievements both at the end of Key Stage 4 and towards the end of their career in the school, at 18+. These give pupils some guidance in making a realistic choice with regard to their future options. All are provided with good quality, professional advice and guidance on their future choices on an individual basis. This process is closely monitored.

27. The curriculum is enhanced for some pupils who are able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. There is a variety of residential experiences for pupils,

including outdoor activities and camping. The school is aware that the programme of activities in the residential accommodation is not yet fully integrated into the school curriculum. Three of the residential houses have set up sensory rooms to enhance pupils' experiences. Support workers work effectively in school with pupils to allow them to make the good progress, particularly in their social development. The school has strong links with two local primary schools, a local college, and local special schools. It welcomes the pupils from special schools and can provide work experience for some of them. Through these links, pupils meet other children and adults in different social settings and so increase their social competence and understanding.

28. The planned provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils meet for a period of reflection in their classrooms every day. In one of these, pupils showed spiritual awareness of nature, in their appreciation of the natural life of birds. In another, a lamp served to focus pupils' attention on the spiritual dimension of winter. In one lesson with a multi-sensory approach, pupils were able to achieve a sense of awe and wonder as they imagined, with help, the feeling of wind in their face, the crunch of pebbles on the beach, and cool sand.

29. The provision within the curriculum for pupils' moral development is good.

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

30. There have been considerable changes in staffing arrangements both in the school and in the residential provision since the previous report. This has been in part in response to the changes in the school population and the presence of a higher number of pupils with more severe impairment. Despite these major changes the school has sustained its high quality of care since the previous inspection. Teaching and support staff provide a supportive nurturing environment and relationships are very good. Staff are kind to pupils and respect their dignity. The high quality of care is a considerable strength of the school.

31. The provision for the management of epilepsy and other medical conditions remains paramount and this very high quality provision has been enhanced further by the introduction of a wider range of therapies and an effective school-based nurse. Pupils continue to benefit from a well-established multi-disciplinary approach that provides excellent support for their medical needs.

32. The school has a very well developed awareness of health and safety. There are regular, thorough risk assessments. There is a good quality child protection policy and the head teacher is conscientious about reporting concerns in accordance with locally agreed procedure. However the school is aware that there is an urgent need to appoint a head of care to meet the needs of the resident pupils. The school is sensitive to the fact that it is inappropriate for the headteacher to undertake the additional duties of a head of care. The school is also aware that it is inappropriate for the headteacher to be a named person for child protection. Although newly appointed care staff do get some information about child protection, there is need for better quality child protection training.

33. The majority of the pupils are resident and many remain on the school site for most of the year. Therefore to try to improve pupil's progress further, the school has moved away from the artificial separation of care staff and school staff. This has included appointing personal support workers who work with specific children both in the residential houses and in the classrooms. This provides the potential for much greater continuity and consistency of care and support. This is a very recent development and personal support workers have quickly become familiar with their roles within the residential houses where they provide



good support for pupils' physical and emotional needs. Some of these workers have had little previous experience in a classroom situation and have not yet developed the skills to support pupils in making educational progress. Despite the good quality induction programme there is a need to ensure that less experienced personal support workers have access to ongoing training especially in the areas involving supporting pupils in the classroom situation. There are plans to improve the training of personal support workers but these are in the early stages of development.

34. The houses for resident pupils provide a cheerful friendly environment for pupils. Some houses have been refurbished and provide very high quality accommodation where all pupils have their own rooms. The school is aware that Rowan House, where some of the younger pupils are accommodated, is in need of refurbishment and some of these pupils share rooms. All pupils are allowed to personalise their rooms and the extensive use of photographs to remind pupils about their place in their family and events in their lives is a very nice touch. The pupils have a choice of food, which is of a satisfactory quality. However, most of the houses do not cook food on the premises and staff are aware that there are missed opportunities for linking shopping and cooking with developing independent living skills.

35. The school has satisfactory procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress. The school has recently implemented the use of P levels in English, mathematics and personal development. In addition regular assessment occurs in all other areas. However there is not yet a whole school approach to assessment. There have been considerable improvements in the pupils' individual education plans since the previous inspection. The school has developed individual learning programmes in addition to individual education plans. These plans contain targets for literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. The plans are of variable quality, some, including those for physical education, are of very good quality and contain very precise easily measurable targets. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is good. Resident pupils also have care plans but these generally refer to physical care and do not always adequately reflect targets in the pupils individual learning plans especially those relating to personal development.

36. Although there are many valuable social activities available in the residential houses these activities are not sufficiently linked with pupils statements and targets on pupils individual education and learning plans. There are missed opportunities after school for care staff to reinforce and develop work which has been done by pupils during lessons. The school is aware that it has yet to establish a true 24-hour curriculum and is working towards this aim.

37. The school has very effective methods to record and monitor incidents of unacceptable behaviour and to promote good behaviour. There is a bound incident book; in addition any incidents are documented in great detail in carefully archived loose sheets and any cases of restraint are well documented. The head teacher monitors these forms and evaluates whether the action taken in response to an incident is in line with school policy and was appropriately handled.

38. The monitoring of attendance is good. The high standards of medical care minimise pupils' absence for medical reasons. The staff know pupils very well and work towards maximising the attendance of all pupils.

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

39. Parents are generally very satisfied with the high standard of provision that the school offers. Parents are very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and most felt that the school works closely with parents. There is very regular contact with parents by phone in addition to regular written information about resident pupils. Parents report that the quality of information varies depending on the residence. The school nurse and medical staff are in regular contact with parents.

40. Parents get good quality information about the progress of their children. The school has recently introduced annual reports to parents in addition to the full information that parents receive prior to annual reviews. These annual reports are generally of good quality, the reports in Key Stages 3 and 4, tell parents clearly what their children know understand and can do and about the activities in which they have taken part. A minority of reports do not focus clearly enough on what children can do and tend to concentrate on how pupils have responded.

41. Although some parents identified homework as an issue, traditional homework is inappropriate for the most of the pupils. The school has recently introduced personal support workers who can provide an appropriate link between the houses, which serve as a home to many of the pupils and school. The school is aware that this opportunity requires further development in order to ensure that work at school, especially that targeted at personal development is appropriately followed up and reinforced at "home." There are a small number of higher attaining pupils who are set appropriate homework tasks.

42. The majority of parents have very regular contact with their children whilst they are living at the residences. They are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's life at school. For example, by improving their child's environment by decorating their bedroom and providing many personal touches.

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

43. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for all staff, pupils and students. He has a clear vision for the future of the school and, through his energy and commitment, he ensures that all staff are appropriately deployed and effective in their posts. The headteacher is very well supported by his deputy (Head of Education), other senior teachers and key staff.

44. The school's systems for staff appraisal and managing the performance of staff are very good. The headteacher is very focussed on observing staff teaching, feeding back to them, having individual meetings with clear points raised, and targets set for any required changes. Staff are re-observed, and may receive further guidance, new equipment, and resources to develop their teaching further. This is a very clear, focussed system that covers all staff as a very well-planned routine.

45. The induction of new staff is good. The system for new teachers is clear and well directed. New staff have a mentor, advice and a full handbook for the school's procedures. They are observed teaching in a positive, developmental, way, and are given feedback, and opportunities to watch others teaching. New non-teaching classroom support staff

have a four-day induction course that is provided through the centre as a whole. This is a valuable system, but it is being reviewed to make it more directly relevant to the demands of the job within the school itself now that staff who were formerly "care staff" have a more education-related role. This is a good move, as it will improve aspects of health and safety, and special needs awareness, and the educational ethos of the school. Curriculum co-ordinators for each subject do not, as yet, have sufficient time during the day to enable them to monitor fully the teaching and curriculum of their subjects, some co-ordinators do not have the necessary skills to enable them to manage their subjects very effectively. The school is aware of this shortcoming.

46. The use of new technology through the school is very good. In classes, pupils and students use computers for communication and to support learning in other subjects. Some have accessed the internet, and others have used associated equipment such as videos, digital cameras, microwave cookers and programmable robot toys. Teachers and support staff use computers very competently for their subject planning and lesson planning, for reporting and completing assessments. Staff use digital cameras to record pupils' achievements and experiences, a scanner, and the Internet to research particular projects they are following. Administration staff are interconnected through an Intranet system, and, in their various jobs, they use the computing systems to manage the school's finances efficiently and competently, and pupils' files and records are kept up to date. They keep teaching records and other staff files up to date. Equipment and materials for use are ordered and monitored through the school's computer software which is carefully backed-up and access to which is carefully controlled.

47. The staffing arrangements are good. There is a good number of teaching staff, with a wide range of experience and areas of subject expertise. Few, however, have any specific qualification in the education of pupils with additional special educational needs. The school regards it as a priority to rectify this, and is running a certificated course in autistic spectrum disorders. This is very relevant to the needs of staff, although few pupils are classically autistic. There is a good and wide training programme in place for subjects such as Literacy, Numeracy and science. The training also covers other aspects such as the moving and handling of pupils, safety in the swimming pool, and other curricular focused training. Teaching assistants, who are attached to each class, are much fewer in number than previously. They are very well qualified and experienced, and are furthering their qualifications through the autistic spectrum disorders course and other training. Personal support workers, who are assigned to individual pupils, are often unqualified, and have had little educational in-service training to date. They now accompany children to their lessons and take an active part in the education of the children. They are responsive to the new demands being made on them, and are becoming increasingly valuable members of the team within each class. The training situation is being actively reviewed with a clear view to improve qualifications, to make the work a structured learning experience and to make the induction more directly relevant to their new roles. Administration, secretarial, cleaning and maintenance staff are effective and efficient. The school is a welcoming place, it is well run, and kept clean. It is as well maintained as buildings of such an age reasonably can be. There is also a very good range of support staff outside the classrooms, including epilepsy assessment staff; physiotherapy, speech and language therapy; music, art and play therapy; nursing; clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist; doctors; and visiting consultants and occupational therapy support. The support provided is very good.

48. The accommodation is adequate. Strengths are in the amount of space as a whole; there are sufficient rooms in which to teach, with good specialist facilities such as a music and English rooms, sensory rooms, and a classroom which currently doubles as an information technology room. There is also easy access to very good facilities on the campus, such as the swimming pool, the gymnasium and the library. These add immensely to the learning opportunities open to the pupils and students. The 16+ unit is becoming past its best, and does not allow easy wheelchair access, and will need to be replaced eventually. The specialist accommodation for art and design and technology is one large room that is allocated to these subjects, with plenty of working equipment and space. The room is very under-used, and could valuably be re-designated for other purposes. The school is aware of this, and is considering a change of use. The grounds are attractive, extensive, well maintained, and well used by the school, for games, sports and orienteering, for example.

49. The resources that the school uses are satisfactory. For information technology the resources are very good, with a lot of good quality older machines as well as new computers, separate equipment, peripheral hardware and good software. Resources for physical education are also very good, although the school shares some of the facilities with the adult and assessment units of the David Lewis Centre. Resources for science and music are good. For all other subjects the resources are satisfactory, with a sufficient range of equipment, apparatus and materials to teach the required elements of each subject. The age-appropriateness of resources has improved markedly since the last inspection, and resources for literacy and numeracy are being actively built up, particularly in the 16+ unit. The forthcoming area for re-resourcing is personal and social education, although resources in this subject area are currently satisfactory.

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

50. In order to improve the quality of education and care provided by the school, the chief executive, financial controller, governors, headteacher and senior management team should:

- (1) continue to seek to appoint, as a matter of urgency, a suitably qualified and experienced head of care. (Paragraph 32)
- (2) through a review of training and allocation, improve the quality of educational intervention of personal support workers. (Paragraph 47)
- (3) improve the skills of curriculum co-ordinators through training and ensure that opportunities are increased to enable them to fulfil their roles.(Paragraph 45)
- (4) improve the quality of pupils' care plans so that they reflect the targets written in individual education plans and include areas for personal development. (Paragraph 35)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	34	50	10	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	59
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A

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

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4***

Last year pupils took Achievement Tests in Numeracy

5 pupils reached Level 1

3 pupils reached Level 2

1 pupil reached Level 3.

Pupils also took Achievement Tests in Literacy

6 pupils reached Level 1

2 pupils reached Level 2.

In the Youth Award Scheme, 4 pupils gained Bronze Awards.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***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: Y3 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.6
Average class size	6.6

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	357.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	3 216 875
Total expenditure	3 633 953
Expenditure per pupil	71 254
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year <sup>1</sup>	(417 078)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values*

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<sup>1</sup> Although the figures above show that the school's budget is in deficit, the forecast for the financial year 1999/2000 shows an overall surplus of £157,459. This is a result of very prudent management of finance and staffing in order to establish the school on a firm financial foundation for the future. It is also important to note that the expenditure per pupil shown above is an average expenditure, and that an individual pupil may require expenditure which ranges from £24,195 to £107,000 according to the complexity of his/her needs.

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	33

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	52	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	48	0	9	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	12	3	15	3
The teaching is good.	67	27	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	33	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	48	0	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	48	45	0	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	39	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	27	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	33	0	0	3

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents expressed some concern about the inexperience of some of the personal support workers.



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

**ENGLISH**

51. Pupils' progress in all three key stages and at 16+ is good, and is an improvement on the previous report when it was considered to be generally satisfactory. The progress made is much influenced by the good overall teaching of the subject and the flexible introduction of the National Literacy Strategy.

52. This was observed in a very good lesson with a group of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2, when very good progress was promoted by the effective use and application of the National Literacy Hour. The lesson began with the imaginative and dramatic reading of a story. The telling of the story was much enhanced by the good use of a range of stimulating properties. Good questioning skills by the teaching assistant responsible for the lesson and the use of signing ensured that the three pupils in the group had a clear understanding of the story. Pupils were then provided with a range of challenging activities that matched the requirements of their individual learning plans. These included linking individual words with pictures, comprehension activities, and writing short statements to support pictures. Pupils also demonstrated satisfactory reading skills.

53. Pupils in Key Stage 2 with more complex problems are provided with the opportunity to listen to a good range of stories, and to explore them in a sensory manner. All pupils are encouraged to make an active response to the stories through either gesture, signing or in an oral manner.

54. Good progress was observed in Key Stage 3 as a group of pupils with complex and multiple learning difficulties explored an improvised story about getting up in the morning and coming to school. The good use of a storybook made up of photographs of the pupils taking part in appropriate breakfast time activities, and properties such as a fan and ice cubes did much to make the story a meaningful experience for the pupils.

55. Reading and writing is often combined in a useful manner to promote good English skills. This was observed in a Key Stage 3 lesson as pupils read big books to extend their reading skills, before copying out what they had read in order to extend their writing skills. The good use of open-ended questions also helped to extend pupils' reading for meaning skills, which in turn promotes good comprehension skills. This effective way of working enables pupils to partake in a range of learning experiences, within a single lesson.

56. The ability of teachers to provide a good range of challenging and stimulating activities to meet the needs of individual pupils was observed in Key Stage 4 with two quite distinct group of pupils. In the first, the teacher worked with two pupils with complex learning difficulties on a short improvised 'Postman Pat' story. Within the short story the teacher utilised a range of teaching strategies to stimulate the pupils interest and to gain a response from them. These ranged from taking on an element of role-play, the use of recorded music, singing, direct questions and the exploration of tactile objects such as letters and a model letterbox. Despite the limited response from the two pupils the teacher demonstrated high expectations, and the determination to elicit a response from the pupils, no matter how small.

57. In a very active and animated lesson was observed with Year 10 and 11 pupils as they engaged in a range of English activities on the theme of 'Having Fun'. The lesson began in an enthusiastic manner as pupils brainstormed the theme of hobbies and pastimes. This part of the lesson promoted good oral skills with many pupils talking about their hobbies in an informed and confident manner. Good questioning skills by the teacher encouraged pupils to extend their original answers, and to think in greater depth, whilst writing pupils' responses on the board gave credibility to pupils' answers, and provided a list of key words for pupils' later written work.

58. Writing activities were matched to the needs and ability of individual pupils and ranged from simple to complex comprehension responses. A simple yet effective plenary session, with the teacher reviewing what the pupils had learned, provided a fitting conclusion to a very good literacy hour. The lesson was well paced and rigorous, with pupils giving full attention and commitment to their work. The lesson was much enhanced by the high quality support proved by teaching assistants and personal support workers. A number of pupils demonstrate satisfactory reading and writing skills, with some being on target to achieve the ASDAN qualifications promoted by the school.

59. A number of pupils are provided with the opportunity to develop sound word processing skills. This was observed in Key Stage 4 as pupils word process letters to their parents. These were later posted to their parents.

60. Teachers' ability to utilise a range of imaginative learning opportunities to develop pupils' English skills was observed in a Post 16 class made up of pupils with predominantly complex learning difficulties. After a dramatic reading of an ethnic poem, 'Who Dat Girl Lookin At Me?' pupils were provided with the opportunity taste tropical fruit, and dance to African music before looking at themselves in mirrors and responding to what they saw. Responses ranged from one pupil who nodded in agreement to statements made by his personal support worker, through to pupils who could describe their features in an oral manner, and a pupil who could voice his opinion in a confident manner, and write over short dotted answers produced by the classroom assistant. The teacher demonstrated real enthusiasm for the work in hand, had high expectations of the pupils, regardless of their ability, and provided each pupil with the chance to make progress, relative to his or her individual learning plan, no matter how small.

61. All teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use the national literacy hour in a flexible yet constructive manner. Lessons are planned in detail with clear learning objectives for each pupil in the class. The school uses an effective scheme of work, with assessment procedures responding to the individual and personal needs of pupils, rather than simply assessing their progress against the National Curriculum. The areas for concern identified in the previous inspection have all been addressed.

62. Drama makes a significant contribution to pupils' communications skills as they engage in a series of stimulating physical and oral activities. These include joining in with a series of songs and rhymes, developing body control and working as a member of a group. Work in the sensory room also develops pupils' ability to develop confidence, inter-active skills and the opportunity to respond to a range of sensory stories.

## MATHEMATICS

63. Taking into account the change in pupil population since the last report the school has taken positive steps towards creating a relevant and balanced mathematics curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils' progress in learning across all the key stages is good and this is directly as a result of the good teaching throughout the school

64. At the end of Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils recognise a triangle and colour in a triangular shaped sail on the drawing of a boat. All the pupils require help in participating in the activities and the lower attaining pupils require a high degree of assistance when they place coloured wooded triangles onto a body-shaped pegboard. The imaginative use of number rhymes associated with well-prepared resources creates a stimulating environment for the reinforcing of the subtraction of numbers. In response to the singing of the rhyme pupils take a felt figure of a bear out of the bed. When they achieve this pupils are encouraged to respect the efforts of others by applauding.

65. In Year 9 pupils take part in a group game of bingo. The game is well structured to meet the range of abilities of the pupils. The more able pupils understand that they require twelve numbers to play the game and that the numbers on the opposite sides of a die add up to seven. They apply this principle when shown a number on the die by stating the number on the opposite side. During the game the teacher makes good use of challenging questions to extend all the pupils, for example, for the higher attaining pupils the question is posed "If it rains 2 centimetres each day for 1 week, how many centimetres fall in the week?" These questions motivate the pupils and they enjoy the anticipation of their turn to answer. An atmosphere of healthy competition exists between members of the class. Lower attaining pupils use a number line to add and subtract 2 and display a good level of concentration during the game of bingo. A pupil tells the time accurately, for instance, 12.38 and subtracts thousands, hundreds, tens and units.

66. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils measure the volume of liquids using litres and millilitres. In a Year 10 lesson, all the pupils find it difficult to predict the capacity of two containers by looking at them. They consider that the tallest container holds the most. With good assistance from the staff involving ongoing explanation and questioning the pupils practically fill the containers with rice to compare the capacities. The use of this practical approach enables the pupils to understand that capacity is not dependent on the height. Effective use is made of the computer and an individual pupil shows good independent learning skills when completing a program on calculating sums of money to 20p, using 1p and 2p coins. Pupils at Key Stage 4 Take the Associated Examining Board (AEB) test in numeracy.

67. Students in the 16+ unit are using mathematical skills in practical situations such as shopping and cooking. Photographs in their 'CENTRA' files show them weighing apples and measuring quantities of milkshake using a spoon. The focus in the unit is to develop independent skills and other pupils use a large switch to operate the computer. More able pupils use scissors to cut around an outline drawing of their body in order to compare the heights of group members.

68. Throughout all key stages there is a consistent staff approach towards the increasing of the pupils concentration span and imaginative methods are used to present activities in an appropriate manner to stimulate the individual. Pupils respond well to this approach, and show progress in the amount of time they stay on task. Displays on notice boards are well presented and in Key Stage 4 are linked with other subjects, for instance, a comparison of tree shapes, the position of football teams in the Premier League and the

use of block and line graphs in a Christmas tree survey.

69. The co-ordinator has requested inputs from other members of staff in order to develop the existing schemes of work. Good use is made of published material to meet the changing needs of the pupils. The recording of achievement and the use of ongoing assessment are very thorough.

70. Since the last report the range of resources for pupils with more complex learning difficulties has increased and overall equipment is used well to deliver practical learning activities.

## **SCIENCE**

71. Pupils' progress in science is good across all key stages. The younger pupils explore sound and light using a wide range of multi-sensory resources. From a variety of objects and instruments they explore loud and soft sounds and make recordings which they playback using a Big Mac. They are encouraged to experiment with loud and soft sounds in a variety of settings. Older pupils study light and dark and the earth beyond. Some of the higher attaining pupils were able to recall the speed of light and sound and the distance between the earth and the sun. Others differentiate between different light sources and learn that light cannot pass through some materials. They increase their vocabulary to include words like opaque and transparent.

72. In another group, older pupils focus their learning around the generation of sound in the everyday environment, computer programs and music recordings to support their learning. They develop their vocabulary related to sound messages like bell, siren, horn and blowing, shaking and hitting. Other pupils are studying reflection and magnification through the introduction of shadows and silhouettes in the making of a model theatre. All the pupils make good progress for their abilities and the higher attaining pupils discuss what they investigated.

73. The pupils' achievement and progress is directly linked to the quality of the teaching. Throughout the school the teaching is always good and sometimes it is very good. The lessons are well planned and based upon a newly developed scheme of work based upon National Curriculum Programmes of Study and the Equals Scheme. All pupils have set individual targets and full account is taken of the school aim to develop both communication and participation. Selected topics are resourced to ensure pupils have good opportunities to listen, look, handle and explore a wide range of materials related to the topic. The younger pupils and those with complex learning difficulties have opportunities to learn using a multi-sensory approach and this has a positive effect upon their learning. Good relationships and understanding of the individual needs of pupils also have a positive effect upon pupils' achievements. The introduction of a science specialist teacher has also brought continuity and consistency to science teaching. For example, a range of topic specific equipment has been organised in trays which can be readily transported around the classrooms for science lessons. However, there is only limited evidence to indicate that the environment of the school is used to support and enrich the science curriculum.

74. The detailed scheme of work, the initiation of the assessment and recording system, together with the increase in multi-sensory resources, is having a positive effect on progress and achievement in science.

## **ART**

75. Throughout the school pupils' progress in learning and their attitudes towards activities are good. Both these areas are directly influenced by the good quality of teaching. Further evidence to support these judgements has been obtained by looking at examples of pupils work in folders and on displays in classrooms.

76. In a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils are developing skills of manual dexterity when producing a rocket out of cardboard and silver paper. The positive relationship between staff and pupils on a one-to-one basis ensures the practical involvement of pupils in the activities of sticking and gluing. An individual pupil in this group can independently draw a series of cartoon figures and sequence the resulting pictures to create a story line. Pupils experience a range of tactile activities such as touching bubbles, and creating pictures using a roller and sponge.

77. In a Key Stage 3 lesson, very good use is made of a range of different materials, such as gauze and fur fabric to stimulate the sense of touch. With help, the pupils experience the different feelings of tissue paper and glue when creating the petals of a flower. At the end of the lesson the teacher plays the guitar to develop the pupils colour recognition while singing the 'Rainbow song'. Pictures based on a 'green ' theme are composed using wool, tinsel and tissue paper.

78. In Key Stage 4 pupils identify two matching colours in the classroom. Staff manage the individuals with care and sensitivity and ensure that all the pupils are involved. Resources are well prepared to meet the needs of the group. As part of their ASDAN work, pupils have used a range of media, such as, paint, glued tissue paper, clay, pieces of wood and felt tip pens to represent the work of Ute Mertens and Monet. The work on Monet was reinforced by a visit to a Japanese garden in the grounds of a local stately home. A theme based on dinosaurs involved the pupils in using a 'scrunch' technique with tissue and a range of different papers to form a collage.

79. A whole school Scottish day involved pupils from across the school in the painting of a tartan mural on the wall of a corridor. In order to stimulate and introduce a range of visual elements, such as, texture, shape, form and space a number of lessons are taught in sensory areas. For example, in a Key Stage 3 classroom and in the 16+ unit staff have used imagination and creativity to convert spaces, such as, a stockroom into a stimulating visual environment. The sensory room in class 3 delivers a winter theme, and bubble wrap is used to simulate icicles, while white and silver material represents ice and snow.

80. The introduction of a recently acquired published scheme aimed at the creative development of pupils with special needs further enhances the learning opportunities and continuity of appropriate art activities across the school. Alongside this, the further development of ongoing record keeping methods and the acquisition of appropriate resources assists in the effective co-ordination of the art curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. Pupils' progress in both design and technology and food studies in all three key stages and at Post 16 is good and often very good. Pupils' progress in these subjects has been maintained since the last inspection, and is much enhanced by the good teaching displayed by specialist teachers, and the genuine interest that pupils bring to the lessons

82. In Key Stage 2 pupils make individual chocolate raisin cakes and contribute to the creation of pizzas. All food study lessons are well planned, with references to previous learning experiences. This consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding, and

provides opportunities for pupils to use previously learned skills in a new context. Pupils examine the texture and taste of all ingredients prior to using them. A number of pupils demonstrate a simple yet effective understanding of the creative process and are encouraged to make comments as they go along. This is done by gesture, affirmation of teacher's statements, and simple oral comments. The teachers and all teaching assistants use Makaton signing in an effective manner to elicit a response from pupils, and to ensure that they all make an active contribution to the lesson.

83. Good work in food studies was also observed in Key Stages 3 and 4 as pupils engaged in Chinese stir-fry cooking linked to the Chinese New Year, which occurred during the period of the inspection. Appropriate emphasis is placed on good hygiene as pupils' wash hands and clean all working surfaces prior to starting the lesson. Staff utilise a good range of open-ended questions to promote discussion and pupils are given the chance to sample and talk about the different ingredients to be used in the completed meal. Some pupils make informative comments about the various ingredients and are able to make comparisons between different vegetables and oils uses in the cooking process. Whilst response to the lesson is extremely varied, most pupils demonstrate a real enthusiasm for the work they are involved in and approach it in a positive manner. The teacher of food studies is very secure in his subject knowledge, and presents it to the pupils in a meaningful manner.

84. The same class was observed in an interesting and imaginative design and technology lesson as they designed and made a model of a room of their choice. Prior to starting the practical activity the teacher re-capped on the previous lesson, and gave clear instructions for the current one. Whilst being given a broad framework for the finished product, pupils are provided with the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, and choose the range of wallpapers and carpeting to be used in their models. Whilst pupils receive good support from teaching assistants and personal support workers, many pupils take pleasure in the opportunity to take some control of their own learning. All tools and materials are used in a safe and sensible manner. Whilst some pupils simply paint the inside of their model rooms, others estimate the size of the wallpaper they need, by wrapping it around the outside of their boxes. One pupils was successful in using a ruler and pencil to measure the inside of the box and transfer these measurements onto a roll of wallpaper prior to cutting it out. Although the quality of completed work differs considerably, all pupils take pleasure in their work, and show justifiable pride in what they achieve. Their achievement is good, they do as well as could possibly be expected. The teacher demonstrated real enthusiasm for the work in hand and created a motivating environment in which good learning could take place. An active working atmosphere existed throughout the whole of the lesson.

85. A very active lesson was also observed in the upper school with 16+ pupils creating coiled pots. With good support from personal support workers pupils are provided with the opportunity to develop sound manipulative skills as they build up a series of coiled clay threads into pot. Pupils approach their work in a committed manner, and demonstrated a sense of awe and wonder as their coiled pot started to grow and take shape before their eyes.

86. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and well informed co-ordinator who is in the process of introducing a new scheme of work for the subject. This challenging scheme of work will provide pupils with increased opportunities for pupils to explore a wider range of design and technology activities. Whilst resources are adequate to meet the needs of the current curriculum they will need to be extended if they are to meet the requirements of the new one. The issues for concern identified in the previous report have been addressed.

## **HUMANITIES (INCORPORATING GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY)**

87. Few lessons were seen in history or geography but pupils' work was scrutinised, teachers' planning was examined, and some pupils were able to explain what they had learned.

88. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils begin to understand their immediate environment in geography. They can make marks on simple worksheets, and have some understanding of patterns and routes. In history, objects of reference enable pupils to have some understanding of who they are. Some pupils have felt their grandmother's clothes and smelt her perfume in the classroom, and have made the connection between their senses and the person they know. By the end of the key stage, a high proportion of pupils begin to understand the pattern of their days, and can say what they will be doing next. They have some idea of past, present and future.

89. By the end of Key Stage 3, high achievers have some concept of how people lived 100 years ago. They have seen a video of life in a Victorian-house, and some pupils are able to notice some differences between previous life styles and their own. When visiting a local Victorian shop, they make similar connections. In geography, low attaining pupils are increasingly able to tell left from right by the end of the key stage. In one lesson, they were able to walk home to the boarding accommodation by a circuitous route, identifying, sometimes with a great deal of help, left and right turns.

90. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have successfully tackled a traffic survey as part of their study of the environment, and understood that traffic can be damaging both to the environment and to health. They have undertaken a Christmas tree survey, and understood the costs and benefits to the environment of buying different types of tree. Pupils have photographed buildings in a local park as part of their geography studies, and photographed historical buildings and an archaeological site for history. They use maps and a globe to begin to understand the wider world, which is further developed in the study of current affairs at 16+.

91. Pupils make a good progress because the lessons are suitable for them and have a multi-sensory dimension. Topic work in Key Stage 2, good cross-curricular links in Key Stage 3 and the well-integrated curriculum at Key Stage 4 aid learning. Pupils learn well because they are well taught. Teaching is entirely satisfactory and some of it is good. Lessons are well planned, and teachers and their assistants work together effectively as a team. There is a very high proportion of individual help to enable pupils to make the most progress of which they are capable. Teachers understand their pupils well, and know how to structure the lessons so that they are able to learn. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are cheerful, positive and enthusiastic.

92. Since the last inspection, the school has done well to adapt to pupils with more severe and complex educational needs than formerly. The curriculum is entirely suitable to the school's present pupils. Assessment is good, and informs teaching. Co-ordination of the subject is excellent.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

93. Information technology is not taught as a separate subject through Key Stages 2 and 3, but it is in Key Stage 4 and in 16+. In the lower half of the school, pupils are learning soundly, and achieving at an appropriate level. In the upper school, pupils and students are learning focussed skills at a rate that is good.

94. Throughout the lower school, the expectation is that information technology will be used to help pupils in their communication, and in the learning of other subjects. Teachers plan their lessons to include some information technology, and they do it well. Pupils operate switches and some keys, to look at the screen and the other devices which are attached to computers, and they understand different aspects of cause and effect to do with computers. They use computer equipment to aid their learning of mathematics and English, particularly. Teachers commonly and well use large switches during "hello" times so that pupils can press the switch to have a sentence spoken, and this is good. There is, however, no monitoring for the information technology content of teachers' short-term or lesson plans, nor of their termly plans, nor of what is actually taught as regards information technology. Thus it is difficult, if not impossible, for staff to know how pupils are progressing in information skills, and how they are developing their understanding and knowledge in this area. In fact, pupils *do* have an appropriate level of skills in Key Stages 2 and 3, and the highest attaining ones have been able to access the Internet, and to use digital cameras as part of their classroom work. This may be because they were previously taught the subject separately, with a deliberate focus on the acquisition of relevant skills, and they have retained these skills, or it may be because their teachers taught them as part of on-going lessons. The danger is that their skills could decline if they are not actually taught in a planned and structured way, and the school will not know if this is happening because it is not monitoring the situation. Several teachers in the lower school are, however, very competent and knowledgeable in the use of information technology, and the use of the equipment and software is good.

95. Where information technology is taught as a subject, by a specialist in Key Stage 4 and at Sixteen Plus, it is taught very well, and pupils and students get a real benefit from this focussed learning. They are learning targeted skills and are gaining good knowledge that enables them to use the equipment better in other aspects of their school lives. It is a very good move by the school to continue this specialist teaching. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with a clear focus on specific skills at the keyboard, or for knowledge and use of other technological equipment, such as videos, printers, robotic toys, tape recorders, television, microwave cookers and digital cameras. Staff have good and positive relationships with their pupils and students, and this contributes well towards a very positive learning attitude on the part of the youngsters. They are keen, interested and eager to use the computers, to see the screen programs, and to use the peripheral equipment. Many are highly motivated by the positive teaching, are fascinated by their control of things, and love the work. Staff use the resources very well, imaginatively, and in a well structured sequence of activities in each lesson. This gives pupils a clear view of what they are doing, and helps their learning to take place in small structured steps that are well tailored to their individual needs. Their progress is well charted, and this leads directly to alterations in the planning for what will be taught next, and how it will be taught. Some of the reporting to parents, however, is more about what a class has been doing, rather than how much a



particular pupil or student has actually achieved.

96. There is good coverage of the different aspects of information technology, especially towards the top of school, for example in controlling things, modelling, word processing, working with graphics, and using peripheral equipment such as videos, digital cameras and some Internet access. The curriculum is broad, well focussed on the needs of the pupils, especially with regards to communication, and it meets statutory requirements. There is still a need to monitor coverage in the lower half of the school. The resources for information technology are very good, plentiful and accessible. Whilst most of the computers are not PCs, they are very good quality machines with a long and valuable life in front of them. They have good and relevant software for them, which is mainly not available yet for new PCs, and they are well fitted with external equipment such as rollerballs, printers, big keys keyboards, touch screens and single-touch switches. The school will need to develop a long-term policy of renewal of software and related equipment, as well as the computers themselves, as the machines become dated, and the same format cannot be replaced.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **Spanish**

97. Spanish is taught to all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. The lessons are arranged in a carousel to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to experience a foreign language. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to excellent and is designed to meet the very complex individual needs of the pupils.

98. The teacher is confident and very enthusiastic about the language and this confidence and enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils. During one lesson with a small group of pupils with profound and multiple needs the lesson was devised to enable all pupils to experience a 'pretend' journey of a young Spanish boy called Pepe who went to visit his grandfather. Pupils saw dolls dressed in the Spanish traditional costumes and listened to Spanish music. They rubbed saddle soap into the horse's saddle before they began their imaginary journey.

99. Pupils learned well and were delighted to experience not only the sounds and smells of Spain, but also the taste of Spain as they held and ate oranges and grapes which could have been picked from the orange groves and vineyards belonging to Pepe's grandfather.

100. Another group was delighted when their teacher entered the room and greeted him with a spontaneous 'Hola'. Pupils then went on to use some basic social sight vocabulary which they have rehearsed. They revised some of the meanings; 'Abierto' means 'open' and 'Cerrado' means 'closed'. This excellent lesson gave pupils the opportunity to use their Spanish vocabulary. They made sandwiches for the beach and said a polite 'Por favor' as they worked and made a 'grande bocca' (large sandwich) and then cut it into several 'piqueno bocca' (small sandwiches).

101. The lesson develops further as pupils rehearse their Spanish numbers and the lesson finishes as they watch a video of the Teletubbies in Spanish and call out the numbers in Spanish along with the characters. All pupils take a full part in the lesson and are very highly motivated. They learn well and have a useful selection of simple Spanish words which will be useful when they take a summer holiday to Spain.

102. The very skilled questioning techniques of the teacher and the variety of activities planned within the lesson were ideal for the pupils. The experience was beneficial to all pupils and their knowledge and understanding of a modern foreign language does a great deal to raise their self-esteem.

103. During each school term the whole school devotes a day which is set aside for an 'modern foreign languages' day. Recent the whole school held a 'Scottish day', in which they learned about Scotland and tasted the food, listened to the music, took part in their dances and learned a little of the national customs. The school has an extensive programme of such days.

104. The teaching of a modern foreign language and the 'off timetable' days contribute very significantly to the social and cultural development of all the pupils in the school.

## **MUSIC**

105. Pupils of all attainment levels make good or very good progress in learning. At Key Stage 2 pupils participate enthusiastically in singing and making sound patterns using percussion instruments with vigour and enjoyment. Materials like Saris are used imaginatively to create mood and a group atmosphere as the pupils respond to music and song with different pace and rhythm. They also respond to loud and quiet sounds and join in with songs like 'Mr Conductor' and 'Row, Row, Row the Boat'. During lessons time is allowed for pupils to explore individually a range of percussion instruments including drums, tambourines, cymbals and, with supervision, have access to guitar and piano.

106. In Key Stage 3 pupils consolidate their gains in music and extend their experience of instruments, singing and clapping. The oldest pupils develop their listening skills and experience of musical forms. They learn rules for composing loud and soft, stop and go and slow and fast. They make melodic tunes with every pupil participating and performing. They make rhythms with instruments and participate in songs like 'The Wheels on the Bus' and 'Old Macdonald's Farm'. They listen and respond to the skills of the teacher playing the flute, piano and guitar, responding appropriately with movements and clapping. Some use the sound beam to make their responses.

107. Overall the pupils respond positively to their lessons, which provide an enriching experience. They attend lessons expecting to participate and interact. Behaviour is good, they listen and take turns. Even the pupils with the most complex needs gain much from their experience.

108. The quality of the teaching is always good and sometimes very good and this has a positive effect upon the learning. Lessons are well planned, with appropriate content. Teachers provide clear explanations and stimulating demonstrations which encourage the pupils to explore the instruments and to make their own sound patterns. The resources for music are extensive. They are accessible and well used, which has a good effect upon learning. A detailed scheme of work has been put in place since the last inspection, which incorporates assessment, recording and target setting. This assists planning and progress in learning. Now that the scheme of work is complete, there is a need to monitor and evaluate individual progress and achievement across the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Physical education is a great strength of the school. Standards are high in all key stages through a very good range of physical elements. This is basically because of a very good combination of very high quality teaching and very good resources and accommodation.

110. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress. The more able pupils and students are also achieving at a level that is good in each aspect of the curriculum. This applies equally at all key stages and at Sixteen Plus – the rate of progress in individual lessons was either good or very good in all of the fourteen lessons seen during the inspection, and this reflects the pupils' learning in the long term.

111. In the pool, where there is very good individual attention and careful planning and observation of activities, pupils develop good water awareness and confidence, learn to float and swim, and to play games in the water. Some swim long distances, swim underwater, and use recognisable strokes well. They learn personal survival, and water games such as polo. In gymnastics and indoor games pupils benefit from a very good selection of activities being presented to them in a structured way. They learn to run, skip, hop; they practice forward rolls and log rolls (sideways); balance along beams and jump off the end in a star jump or straight jump with arms aloft.

112. On the trampoline, with direct one-to one teaching and very good support, many pupils have developed good confidence in bouncing and jumping, and some can do a full turn, seat drops and knee drops, with good control and a good recovery. In outdoor pursuits, pupils take part in orienteering sessions, and find photographic clues all around the school campus, and decide where they should be going for the next clue. They are enthusiastically encouraged to run, get their hearts going faster, breathe harder, all the while being told why it is good for them. They respond well for the most part, and are keen to get to the next stage quickly and find the clues. Pupils are gaining ball skills in games such as football, cricket and indoor hockey. They are beginning to grasp the rules of games, and why they are needed. In dance, pupils are learning to move in time with music, and to use long ribbon sticks in rhythmical ways as they move. The older pupils are learning things about the theory of physical education, such as about the body and how it works, heart rates, food and diet, and the value of exercise.

113. Some pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential centre for a week of outdoor activities such as canoeing, climbing and pot-holing. These periods are highly valued for their social and independence learning almost as much as for their physical activities. In all, these activities form part of a very broad and appropriate curriculum that well exceeds statutory requirements. It is very well organised so that all staff know what they are doing and why, and this has a direct benefit to the pupils by way of informed and structured teaching in a sequence of skills levels. The contribution of physiotherapy staff is invaluable in advising over such aspects as mobility, exercises, rebound therapy and Sherbourne one-to-one movement activities.

114. The teaching of physical education is largely by two specialists (one for swimming and one for other aspects of the subject). Non-specialist teachers also teach the subject very well. However, their lessons do not include any use of the trampoline, which is being very valuably used elsewhere. The overall quality of teaching observed during the inspection was very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable; they plan their individual lessons very well, and have a different focus for each term's activities, perhaps moving from the sports field to the gymnasium, or doing distance swimming awards one

term, and personal survival the next. The assessment of how well pupils are progressing is very good. It is accurate, regular, specific to certain skills and activities, and it is used very well to alter what is going to be taught next, and how it is to be taught. There is a very good range of small equipment and large apparatus available to the school, with very good accommodation accessible in the form of the on-site gymnasium, the swimming pool, soft play areas, outdoor adventure play facilities, the sports fields and the rest of the grounds. These facilities are used very well by teachers to get the best out of the pupils, especially when each pupil has a card with all of his individual targets and activities written on it. The support workers use these cards to guide them, and to keep pupils focussed on their intended activities, often whilst the teacher focuses her attention on one individual at a time for an intensive priority activity.

115. Most pupils are keen, interested and eager to join in all of the activities. Sometimes they may need a little persuasion to enter into the spirit of the session at first, but they are generally brought into the action well by staff. Most appear to find the activities very exciting as well as challenging and very enjoyable. Pupils have a very good and positive relationship with staff, and this contributes very well to the motivation and learning in all activities.

116. Pupils have good opportunities for homework every week. At the moment, these consist of swimming sessions in the evenings, and ten-pin bowling at a local centre, but at other times of the year there are other opportunities. There is a need to think about arranging some constructive activities whilst travelling to riding or, more especially, the outside gymnasium centre. This "empty" time detracts from the value of the intended activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

117. Three lessons in religious education were observed during the inspection. No lesson in religious education was seen in Key Stage 2 or 16+. However pupils' work and teachers' planning were scrutinised and some pupils were able to say what they had learned.

118. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand the notion of festivals. They understand that the celebration of Chinese New Year involves giving, and are able to experience this as they make "lucky" moneybags to give to others in a lesson. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have some knowledge of the events of Holy Week, and have some understanding of its significance. They know that Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, and was raised from the dead. Pupils identify and name a range of articles used by Jews to celebrate the festival of Sukkoth. They identify and name the Torah, and mezuzah. They taste and name a range of Israeli fruit. They understand the nature of the celebration, and some connect it with the biblical event it commemorates. Pupils are helped to light a candle. They know the words of the song "Shalom" and sing it with pleasure.

119. Pupils learn well because they are well taught. They remember events of Holy Week because they are helped to construct an Easter garden, a reminder of significant and important events for all Christians. They have some concept of the resurrection because they have put a model of a cave in the garden, and they know it would be difficult to move a large stone from before it. They understand aspects of Sukkoth because they have eaten the fruit, seen the bread, and lit the candle. Pupils are very well taught. There is a good multi-sensory dimension to all lessons. Planned activities for the pupils are imaginative, interesting and appropriate. There are good opportunities for all to take an active part.

Explanations are clear, patient and sensitive. Relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy the lessons, concentrate well and show great interest in them.

120. The subject is well planned and based on an agreed syllabus. Co-ordination is good. Since the last inspection the subject has improved. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good. Provision has adjusted well to the needs of the current pupils who have more severe learning difficulties than was the case at the time of the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

121. Personal and social education is not actually taught as a time-tabled subject as such in much of the school, although there is a good and broad curriculum to support it. Instead, it takes several other forms through the school curriculum, and through the school day. It is an important part of what the school does, and the school does it well. It is well co-ordinated and planned for overall coverage, and this is monitored to some degree by the subject co-ordinator.

122. The main focus for personal, social and health education is the morning break time each day. These periods are well planned, and well carried out, very often by teaching assistants. Pupils in the school, and the students in Sixteen Plus, are encouraged to sit together socially, and to choose their own activities such as reading, listening to music, helping with making drinks and snacks. They wash their hands, and sometimes the cups and plate, and are helped with toileting as necessary.

123. Generally in classes, personal and social education is planned through other subjects or on special occasions and projects, and it is covered well. This coverage includes incidental targets, but ones which are expected, like saying please and thank you, taking turns, sharing, not grabbing, not hitting and spitting, and not taking or breaking other peoples' things. Staff reinforce these targets as part of the whole-school policy on personal development and behaviour management, and they do it very well. When pupils are getting changed for physical education and swimming, they are encouraged to try to do as much of their undressing and dressing themselves as is possible.

124. Time spent travelling on the minibuses is sometimes well used, with music and singing, toys and games, reading books and other constructive activities. This is done well in the lower school, but on some occasions, however, nothing structured is planned for the pupils. On the way to a gymnastics session, which was very good in all other ways, the pupils had a very sterile experience for almost an hour, except for one pupil whose own support worker took it upon herself to read and chat with the pupil.

125. Only one actual lesson for personal and social education was seen, and this was very good, involving the preparation and consumption of pizzas. It was very well run by a teaching assistant in the lower school, and it involved very good social interactions, nice emphasis on good manners, and clearing away afterwards. Apart from this, it is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching, other than to say that pupils and students are progressing well in these aspects. This reflects well on the good teaching of personal and social skills through other subjects as a whole.

126. The personal autonomy and independent living courses at the top of the school contribute very valuably to this area. Pupils are learning to make sandwiches and drinks; they will wash clothes and do the ironing under close supervision; and they have run a café morning. There are many opportunities for pupils and students to improve their skills and

understanding of personal and social matters through their careers guidance, work experience, and independence learning, combined with well focussed visits into the community. There are also many structured social occasions for talking together, or opportunities in English where pupils and students are encouraged to speak, listen and discuss matters of immediate relevance to their own situations. These include choosing what they will be doing in the near future, and making decisions that will influence their later lives.

## **PROVISION FOR PUPILS POST SIXTEEN**

127. The Sixteen Plus unit for the oldest students in the school is run very well. It has a good and broad curriculum that is different from that of the rest of the school; it is distinctive, appropriate and relevant. Students have a good standard of achievement in all areas of this curriculum. Lessons were observed in many subjects, particularly in English, maths and physical education, but the “Options” and other lessons were seen as well. The teaching was conducted by the three teachers who are based in the unit, and by others who are specialists in their own subjects, such as physical education, information technology, design and technology, and swimming. The standard of teaching was never less than good in any lesson, and was often very good. This is a very considerable improvement since the last inspection, when some unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

128. Lessons are generally well planned and focussed on specific aims and activities that match well together. This guides staff straight to the point of the lesson, and helps students to see more clearly what it is they are doing. Much of the teaching is well based on the individual learning plans that are developed from the broader individual education plans. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous report, and it enables teachers and support staff to focus at least some aspect of each lesson directly on the needs of each student. Some of this individual planning is rather broad at the moment, as the system is still quite new. Staff are aware of this, and are striving to improve their targets by making them more specific and attainable in the short term, rather than being long-term targets. Staff use resources well, whether in the gymnasium and swimming pool, or in a cross-curricular option that includes craft, poetry and music in an “African” cultural theme. Students are very well supported, controlled and managed by staff, under circumstances where behaviour can be very challenging. The relationships among staff and students are positive, and staff have a good knowledge of both their subjects and their students. This enables the students to take a full and active part in learning, as undisturbed as possible. Teachers assess well, what students have achieved, using a range of appropriate forms. Sometimes the reporting to parents is limited to what a class has covered, rather than what an individual student has actually achieved.

129. Students’ achievements vary considerably according to their abilities, but they are at least appropriate to their previous level of achievement, and are good overall. Many will hold a conversation at an elementary level, and can answer questions well; their writing abilities are less than their verbal understanding, but many are able to copy-write accurately, and can read single words and phrases. The higher achieving students can use a computer to enter text, make screen displays appear, and produce pictures. Some can swim very well, for distances of twenty lengths each lesson; and others can use the trampoline very competently, doing well controlled turns and seat drops. Their counting, awareness of shape, space and size, and of money is good. The structuring of lessons towards practical goals helps students to relate their learning to the “real world” – by, for instance, having a “café morning” that involved a lot of money work, writing menus and letters, using the computers, colouring posters, speaking and listening, and discussing what activities they would undertake. Similarly, frequent visits to places in the local community

are also very valuable and help raise students' awareness of how to behave in public, whether at the shops and supermarket, the garden centre or museum, or a café and adventure playground. There are also good visits into the unit by outside agencies such as for the café morning, or for careers talks and demonstrations.

130. Students' progress in independence skills and personal skills is very good across a range of aspects. These are approached in school or and in the houses, and through the community links, and the very good careers and work experience system. The independent living and personal autonomy courses are externally accredited through CENTRA. The only other externally accredited courses at the moment are mathematics and English, through AEB, although students are also working towards the bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

131. Students are keen and interested in their lessons in the main, especially the practical subjects, and the independence-related ones, where they can understand the direct relevance of what they are learning. They are maturing well, especially since the base was established as their main teaching area, and they do not have to keep changing rooms between lessons – with the consequent loss of time and concentration.

132. Resources in the main are good, particularly the access to outside facilities such as the gymnasium, grounds and swimming pool. For mathematics and English they are satisfactory at the moment. They are being developed further, to accommodate both the new strategies for these subjects, and for the changing needs of the students. The accommodation is satisfactory, with large separate classes and additional rooms, separated from the rest of the school. This adds to the students' feelings of maturity and positive self image. This is a good improvement on the previous situation, but the building is a "temporary" structure which has some access problems for wheelchairs, and it is beginning to show its age.