

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE COPPICE SCHOOL**

Bamber Bridge

LEA area: Lancashire.

Unique reference number: 119893

Headteacher: Mrs. A. Jenkins.

Reporting inspector: Ms. V. Wilkinson.  
18461

Dates of inspection: 10.1.2000 – 13.1.2000

Inspection number: 190090

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special.
School category:	Community Special.
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed.
School address:	Ash Grove, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire.
Postcode:	PR5 6GY
Telephone number:	01772 336342
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body.
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. G. Woods.
Date of previous inspection:	8.7.1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
V. Wilkinson	Registered inspector	Art, Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
S. Walsh	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. The quality of links with the community (integration). How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
S. Mascall	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Provision for students over 16.
K. Cannon	Team Inspector	English, Modern foreign language	How well does the school care for its pupils? Personal and social education.
T. Watts	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology, Design and technology, Geography, Religious education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
A. Tattersall	Team Inspector	Science, History, Physical education	Assessment, recording and reporting. Equal opportunities. Special educational needs.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Coppice School provides education for pupils who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, aged from 2 to 19 years. Pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties that also include autism and challenging behaviour. There are currently 56 full time pupils and there are 2 children under five in the reception class who attend part time. Pupil numbers have increased from 46 since the last inspection and over the last few years significantly more pupils have been admitted to the school with severe learning difficulties or needs across the autistic spectrum. A nurse has been appointed to the school to meet the needs of an increasing number of pupils with complex medical needs. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need when they are admitted to the school. Four of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds but no pupils have English as an additional language. The majority of pupils live within the local and neighbouring districts but a small number are transported in from other areas of the authority. The majority of pupils are brought into school by local authority transport. 35% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. All classes have pupils from more than one year group and two classes have pupils from more than one key stage.

It is inappropriate to judge pupils' achievements against age related national expectations or averages. The report gives examples of what pupils know understand and can do. Because of the wide range of abilities and the spread of ages within each class it is not possible to report at the end of the key stages so the report refers to the progress made by pupils within key stages and classes. Judgements about progress and references to achievement take account of information contained in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need, their annual reports and their individual education plans.

The school aims to: -

Provide a happy, caring and supportive environment.

Through strong community links to enrich the curriculum for pupils so that they can develop the coping skills

and strategies they need to be as independent as possible.

To provide a stimulating and challenging atmosphere in which pupils can experience success and enjoyment

in their learning.

To create for each pupil a sense of belonging by using consistent approaches that foster security and self discipline.

To recognise effort and not just achievement throughout the whole learning processes.

To provide opportunities that help to prepare pupils for life.

To create an environment that offers curriculum provision that is sensitive and appropriate for all pupils and

that recognises differences and preserves pupils' dignity at all times.

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

The school effectively uses the resources available to it to provide good quality education for its pupils. However, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory despite the significant improvements that have been made since the last inspection.

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

- Pupils make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and good progress in English, science, history, French and personal and social education.
- Pupils make very good progress in physical education and at Key Stage 4 they make excellent progress in swimming.
- Provision for pupils moral and social development is very good and is reflected in their very good behaviour and their relationships.
- Provision for students over sixteen including careers guidance and work experience are good.

Students are well prepared for leaving school.

- There are very good links with the community and other institutions. Pupils have very good opportunities for integration.
- Pupils are looked after, supported and managed very well.
- Financial planning is very good and enables the school to effectively support developments.
- The school provides very good information for parents; they are kept well informed about their child's progress and events that are happening in the school.

### What could be improved

- Pupils' progress in information and communication technology and religious education are unsatisfactory.
- In a small number of lessons teachers do not meet the needs of the wide range of abilities in their classes
- The accommodation for pupils at Key Stage 4 and students over 16 is unsuitable and there are constant interruptions to activities that take place in the hall.

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

The school has already identified religious education as a priority for development and a programme of training has been implemented to develop staff skills in teaching information technology. The school is already investigating possible improvements to the accommodation for pupils and students at Key Stage 4 and post 16.

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

The school has responded well to all the key issues from the last report of July 1996. Despite considerable improvements the accommodation remains unsatisfactory but the school has appropriate and detailed plans to address some of the remaining unsatisfactory elements over the coming year. The progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is now more secure. The number of support staff has been increased in line with recommendations and the length of the school day has been increased for pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3. Registration procedures now fully meet requirements and the governing body has developed satisfactory procedures that enable it to more effectively monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are now provided with appropriate opportunities to study a modern foreign language.

### STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	By age 11	By age 16	by age 19
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	B
Reading	B	B	B	B
Writing	B	B	B	B
Mathematics	B	C	C	C
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B

Key	
Very good	A
Good	B
Satisfactory	C
Unsatisfactory	D
Poor	E

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

Overall pupils make very good progress in physical education and they make good progress in English, science, history, French and personal and social education. Their progress is satisfactory in



mathematics, art, design and technology, geography and music. It is unsatisfactory in information technology and religious education. Pupils make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Children under five make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, they are interested in their work and they concentrate well. Pupils are happy to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good both in and outside the classroom. When pupils go out of school into the community they are a credit to themselves and to the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and help pupils to gain in confidence. As they get older pupils develop independence and become increasingly mature.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance at school is good considering the complex medical problems that some of them have. The attendance of students over 16 is excellent.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	Aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

Teaching was satisfactory in three out of ten lessons, it was good in four and very good or excellent in two. Very good and excellent teaching was seen in English, science, history, geography, modern foreign language, physical education, personal and social education and vocational studies. When teaching is good pupils undertake well prepared work that challenges them and is suitable for the wide range of different abilities in the class. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons because the work did not meet the needs of all the pupils and a small number of them were not fully involved in the lesson.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	There are good opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of subjects and to develop their literacy skills. Schemes of work and effective planning ensure that pupils make progress. There is an appropriate focus on preparing older pupils for leaving school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural Development with particular strengths in the development of their moral and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school promotes pupils' health, safety and welfare very well. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and their personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school. The principles of best value are being appropriately applied to ensure that the school gets value for money from its purchases and financial commitments. The school has a very good ethos and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their personal development. There are a good number of qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. Learning resources are sufficient to support the curriculum but the accommodation is unsatisfactory.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body has implemented satisfactory procedures that enable it to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and fulfil its responsibilities for strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has implemented good monitoring procedures. The outcomes are used effectively to inform decision making and evaluate performance.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good and effectively supports developments. Staff are deployed well, resources are used effectively to support learning and good use is made of the available accommodation. The school provides good value for money.

The school effectively uses the resources available to it to provide good quality education for its pupils. However, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory despite the significant improvements that have been made since the last inspection.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
That children are happy and well cared for. That the school works closely with parents and is easy to approach with questions and problems. That the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good.	The amount of work provided for children to do at home. The provision of an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors confirm that pupils are happy and well cared for; that the school works closely with parents; that it is well led and managed and that teaching is good. Inspectors felt that the amount of work provided for pupils to do at home was satisfactory and when transport arrangements are taken into consideration that the school provides an acceptable range of activities outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 In relation to the targets set for them at their annual review pupils' achievements are good. The majority of pupils achieve very well in physical education and their achievements are good in English, science, history, French and personal and social education. Pupils make steady progress in mathematics, art, design and technology, geography and music and their achievements overall are satisfactory. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in information communication technology and religious education and their progress is unsatisfactory.
- 2 The outcomes of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 indicate that the majority of pupils are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Because teachers identify appropriate small steps for achievement in individual education plans and in lesson planning pupils achieve the majority of long term targets set for them at their annual review. The individual targets identified enable pupils to build successfully on past learning and to make good progress in a significant number of subject areas. However, pupils capable of higher attainment do not always achieve at high enough levels in reading, writing and mathematics because the targets set for them are not sufficiently challenging. All students leave the school with an accredited record of achievement and they have appropriate opportunities to achieve accreditation for their course work in English, mathematics and life skills.
- 3 The school has recently assessed all pupils using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities (Q.C.A) 'P' levels. These confirm the outcomes of teacher assessments for the national standard assessment tests and indicate that the majority of pupils are achieving at Levels 1 – 8 the foundation levels of the National Curriculum. The school has appropriately used the outcomes of these assessments to set individual and whole school targets for improving standards; initially in the area of personal and social education. These targets are appropriate and the school is planning to assess achievements again this year, using the outcomes to measure the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to establish new targets for improving standards.
- 4 Scrutiny of teachers' records and other relevant documentation indicates that the school has improved standards of achievement in English; particularly in literacy, in science and in history, it has maintained standards in mathematics, art, design and technology, geography and music. Although pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology inspection findings indicate that levels of achievement have been improved as a result of training to enhance teachers' expertise. There has been a recent decline in the standards of achievement in religious education This is the direct result of staff changes and a current lack of subject expertise across the school.

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

- 5 Pupils are happy to come to school. They arrive in the morning cheerful and eager to start the day. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, they are interested and involved in their lessons. They maintain concentration to the best of their ability and their positive attitudes and determination are a major factor in the good progress they often make in lessons.
- 6 Teachers encourage pupils' interest, especially when they use good quality materials to illustrate a subject and bring it alive. For example, Key Stage 3 pupils were very interested in the spinning wheel, bobbins, raw wool and fleece used to demonstrate how people worked in their homes before the industrial revolution. Although pupils respond particularly well to good teaching they are also very tolerant of teaching which is mundane. There are rare occasions when pupils' lose concentration, for example, when materials for a lesson are not well organised, there is a slow start to the lessons or they

are left unoccupied. In these relatively unusual circumstances higher attaining pupils can become distracted and choose to misbehave and pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour, as part of their severe learning difficulties, are difficult to bring back on task. Occasionally pupils with more complex needs become visibly bored because activities are not suitable and they are not actively involved in the lesson.

- 7 Wheel chair dancing which is conducted with the very valuable support of year 11 pupils from a local secondary school brings great enjoyment for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. They make sustained and considerable efforts to clap, wave their arms and move in response to the music. Pupils who integrate into local primary school classes for some activities have very good attitudes to learning. For example, in one session a pupil happily joined in with the action songs, laughing with delight. Higher attaining pupils were able to maintain their concentration in a formal classroom situation but when work was not well matched to their needs they became frustrated.
- 8 Pupil's behaviour is usually very good both in lessons and around school. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are considerate and show increasing respect for each other. Higher attaining pupils are keen to help those whose difficulties are more complex than their own. Pupils, who can sometimes be quite difficult in the classroom, will volunteer to help younger pupils into school from the transport in the morning. All pupils are welcoming to visitors and have good manners, which they are keen to demonstrate. When they go out of school their high standards of behaviour are a credit to themselves and the school.
- 9 Relationships are very good. Pupils respond well to the very good role models that staff provide, they learn to behave in a mature and appropriate way. Parents are rightly confident that the school is helping their children to be mature. Pupils gain in confidence as they grow older. In each class of secondary age pupils there are a significant minority who are able to work relatively independently. Students at post 16 relate well to adults and their peers. Students act in an age appropriate manner, some working independently and others with support but all show interest and enjoyment in their work. The more capable students are starting to show initiative and are very keen to support visitors and show them around the school.
- 10 Attendance rates are good considering the complex medical needs of many of the pupils. Attendance rates for students over 16 are exceptionally high indicating that they enjoy coming to school.

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

- 11 Teaching is good. It was good in four out of ten lessons and very good or excellent in two. Very good and excellent teaching was seen in English, science, history, geography, modern foreign language, physical education, personal and social education and vocational studies. Inspection findings support parents' views that teaching is good. The school has maintained the good standards of teaching identified at the time of the last inspection. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons in English, mathematics, geography and religious education. In these lessons pupils of different abilities were not always fully involved in learning for the whole lesson because some of the activities were not suitable for them. In a small number of lessons there was insufficient emphasis on the subject identified on the timetable and when staffing levels were low teachers were not able to effectively manage learning opportunities. On occasions teaching for older pupils at Key Stage 4 is less successful because of low expectations and ineffective planning. For example, in mathematics records indicate that not all aspects of the curriculum are covered in sufficient depth and the work does not always challenge the higher attaining pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively taught across the different subject areas. Teachers identify opportunities to reinforce pupils' basic skills in their planning and they are particularly effective at focusing on the development of pupils' vocabulary both verbally and in written and symbol form. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning across the subject of the curriculum. Numeracy skills are well promoted in a range of subjects enabling pupils to have knowledge of size and for most pupils the ability to count and recognise numbers.
- 12 Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and of pupils special needs. This enables them to plan interesting activities that encourage pupils to participate and provide

opportunities for them to make progress. In the majority of lessons pupils are well motivated by the opportunities and experiences they are offered. They are interested in what they are doing and concentrate well, persevering when they find the work challenging. Teachers usually plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs enabling them to make progress and providing appropriate opportunities for them to practice their skills. However, in a small number of lessons higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged, and levels of academic work are not always matched to the ability levels or needs of pupils with more complex learning difficulties. The use of signing by teachers during lessons is very limited and sometimes this excludes pupils with hearing impairment or weak alternative communication skills from fully accessing the curriculum.

- 13 Lessons are well organised and there is an appropriate balance between whole class teaching, group activities and individual learning. Teachers explain things well, particularly new learning and new activities enabling pupils to understand what they are doing and helping them to be independent. Pupils listen carefully to the instructions they are given and those capable of higher attainment are able to organise themselves for tasks, getting into groups for activities or putting away resources at the end of the lesson. Learning objectives are clearly indicated in lesson planning and teachers effectively identify and plan to reinforce basic skills across all subjects of the curriculum. This is generally successful, particularly in developing pupils' vocabulary but on occasions it restricts their opportunities. For example, during an art lesson about creating patterns using lines almost half of the lesson was spent reinforcing pupils' understanding of shapes. There was insufficient emphasis on the skills needed to make pictures and limited opportunities for pupils to explore or experiment with art materials.
- 14 Teachers use questioning carefully to check pupils' learning and extend their participation in activities. This use of questioning helps pupils to develop their ideas and increase their understanding. Teachers' interventions are positive, they respond sensitively to pupils encouraging them to be actively involved in their learning and pupils are confident to try new activities and ask questions. Pupils capable of higher attainment often ask appropriate questions about their work, which helps to clarify their thinking. Lessons are usually paced well so that teaching is matched to pupils' abilities and their levels of concentration but when teaching and activities are slow pupils' lose interest in what they are doing, they do not make progress and sometimes they behave in an inappropriate way. Informed by the outcomes of assessment and their good knowledge of individuals, teachers have realistically high expectations of pupils learning, behaviour and participation. Pupils understand the teachers' expectations and respond positively, trying hard with their work and clearly understanding what is acceptable behaviour.
- 15 Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good. This contributes to the motivating atmosphere in the classroom and helps pupils to settle to work quickly, they are polite and courteous and pupils capable of higher attainment often help others without being prompted. For example, during an art lesson a pupil helped another to get into the right group for the activity. There is a consistent approach to discipline and pupils develop a clear understanding of how their behaviour affects others, behaviour in the classroom is good and this enables pupils to concentrate effectively on their work. Teachers use praise and encouragement well and pupils are helped to identify their achievements because of this pupils capable of higher attainment are sometimes able to identify their own mistakes and ask for help to correct them. During one lesson a student filled in a work sheet incorrectly but with sensitive support and guidance from the teacher the student was able to correct the error with a good degree of independence.
- 16 Resources are well selected and often very effectively used to reinforce learning and gain pupils' attention and interest. Pupils are taught how to handle them with care and they use them with confidence. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to meet pupils' needs. Assistants help with activities and support pupils' learning and participation, they understand their roles and responsibilities and generally take a very active part in lessons, making a positive contribution to the progress pupils make. When the level of planned classroom support is reduced either through ill health or staff training, teachers are not always able to teach the lesson effectively and the management of pupils' behaviour and maintaining their levels of participation becomes difficult.
- 17 Teachers effectively use assessment and recording to inform their planning and to ensure that the work

they prepare for pupils is appropriate. They use questioning well to test pupils understanding and there are good formal procedures for assessing achievement. These are implemented consistently and the outcomes are appropriately used to establish targets for pupils' individual education plans. Careful monitoring of pupils' responses helps teachers to identify achievements and plan work that builds on pupils' skills.

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

- 18 The school provides pupils with good opportunities to experience the full range of National Curriculum subjects and a programme of personal and social education. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been established in nearly all subjects and this together with effective planning ensures that pupils' learning builds progressively as they get older. The introduction of a modern foreign language now ensures that statutory requirements are fully met. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 19 For children under five the curriculum is appropriately developed from the areas of learning recommended and children have good opportunities to develop the foundation skills they need to build on as they mature through the school. For pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in post 16 there is a clear focus on preparing them for when they leave school. This is particularly evident for the students in post 16 who have a very relevant curriculum, which is both broad and balanced. The opportunities for work experience and support in careers education are very good and the school works hard to ensure that students get an appropriate range of experiences to help them make choices for when they leave school.
- 20 The opportunities and experiences offered to pupils through the physical education curriculum are a strength of the school. Activities such as swimming are well promoted and encourage pupils' independence and their interest in keeping fit. The limited time over the lunch break and the transport arrangements made for pupils by the local education authority reduces opportunities for extra curricular activities. However pupils have participated in weekend activities such as walking for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 21 For all pupils including those with profound and multiple difficulties the school's provision enables them to have equal access to the curriculum both socially and academically. These pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers and effective planning ensures that there is an appropriate range of sensory experiences to support their work in the class. The school has recently focused on providing appropriate training for staff to support them in ensuring equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for the different groups of pupils according to their needs. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have appropriate opportunities to take part in the dance element of the physical education programme of study through wheelchair dance.
- 22 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted throughout the school. Assemblies are very effective in encouraging pupils to reflect on a variety of aspects. They are of good quality and well prepared. They provide good opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other religions, beliefs and festivals. For example, during the inspection pupils were able to experience aspects of celebrating Eid including trying on clothes and tasting food. Teachers provide very good role models and pupils' moral development is very well promoted, pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and show considerable concern for each other. This is also reflected in the very good opportunities for pupils' social development and the personal and social education programme supports this well. Registration and greetings sessions are effective in encouraging pupils to become independent and to socialise with each other. The cultural development of pupils is well supported in many aspects of the curriculum, subjects such as literacy, music and art ensure pupils receive a good range of cultural experiences.
- 23 The school has very good links with the local community, which it uses very effectively to enrich pupils' experiences. The school invites a wide range of visitors into the school. In addition to visitors such as the RSPCA, the school takes advantage of any personal connections that might be useful, for example, a parent governor who is a fingerprint expert was invited to talk to the pupils. The school uses the local

community well as a resource. The post 16 and secondary age pupils use local facilities effectively to address some of the restrictions imposed by the shortage of space in the school.

- 24 The school is outward looking and has very good links with mainstream primary and secondary schools. These links are well used to provide a good range of integration opportunities and extend the specialist facilities available to pupils. There are many good examples of pupils integrating into mainstream primary classes. These opportunities allow pupils to mix with their peers and they effectively support their social development. For higher attaining pupils it raises expectations. Close links with primary and secondary schools have led to benefits, such as sharing resources and ideas, and they help the school to keep abreast of current developments and standards.

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

- 25 The school takes good care of its pupils effectively ensuring their welfare, health and safety. All classrooms have easily accessible copies of care and emergency plans for those pupils who require medical attention. These have been prepared in great detail by the part-time school nurse in consultation with parents and relevant medical personnel. They give clear guidelines to staff on how to deal with emergencies and these plans contribute positively to pupils' well being. There are further plans for those pupils who need lifting or handling, they have a clear emphasis on the pupils' comfort and safety and the guidance is consistently followed by staff when transferring pupils to and from wheelchairs. Child protection issues are well covered and staff are very clear about the necessary steps to take. Staff are very committed to the pupils' welfare and have a very good knowledge of individual needs.
- 26 The school has very good links with external agencies and specialists for the hearing impaired visit weekly and specialists for the visually impaired visit fortnightly. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for the care of their spectacles or hearing aids and this promotes their personal development and independence skills. The speech therapist provides a good support programme and there is a speech therapy assistant who is in school every morning. The physiotherapist is in school for four days of the week and the occupational therapist for two. Therapists and visiting medical consultants who visit pupils regularly effectively liaise with the school nurse. The nurse provides sensitive support to pupils who need special feeding arrangements and regular medication. The school has an open door policy for parents, who are encouraged to contribute to care management plans.
- 27 Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and appropriate policies are in place for dealing with all forms of harassment or bullying. Pupils are appropriately encouraged to contact staff if they are anxious about any aspect of school life. One of the school's aims is to create a safe and relaxed learning environment and in conversations with pupils it is clear that they are happy and confident at school.
- 28 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance and their personal development are good. Arrangements for the annual review of pupils' progress and needs are also good and annual review reports and school reports provide good summaries of pupils' achievements. The majority of parents attend annual review meetings to share information about their child's progress and there is good consultation in drawing up new targets for the coming year. The school has recently focussed on developing pupils' individual education plans to provide more precise and measurable targets, building on the already good standard evident at the previous inspection.
- 29 There are a number of effective systems in place to monitor pupils' progress. The school has implemented good quality baseline assessments when pupils start school and this enables teachers to plan suitable learning targets in literacy and numeracy. Teachers know pupils well and lesson plans contain targets for individual pupils in almost all subjects, teachers monitor pupils' achievement in the majority lesson and use this information effectively to plan further work. Procedures are also good for monitoring pupils' attainment in relation to national expectations. The National Curriculum teacher assessments are used and procedures for moderating results are good, effective liaison with other schools ensures that results show an accurate picture of pupils' academic performance. There is increasing, and effective use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities 'P' level assessment to measure pupils' gains in understanding as they work towards national expectations in literacy and numeracy. Teachers assess pupils' achievement each term and the information is used effectively to inform the end of year report.

There are good quality and informative end of key stage profiles for each subject, these collections of pupils' assessed work provide particularly good information about the progress of higher and lower attaining pupils and they are used effectively to plan work so that pupils build upon what they already know. The assessment co-ordinator monitors procedures and outcomes very well and effectively supports colleagues ensuring that practice is consistent.

- 30 Records of achievement provide good additional information about pupils' achievements as they progress through the school. They are used to inform parents, providing a good record to celebrate pupils' efforts and form a good basis for the accredited record of achievement when pupils leave school. The teacher responsible manages the system well and monitors records effectively to ensure consistent good quality.
- 31 The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good and enables them to have equal access to the curriculum. There is good specialist support for pupils who have visual and hearing impairment and the needs of pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are met in most lessons. The number of support staff has been improved significantly since the last inspection and this ensures that pupils with more complex needs now receive sufficient support.

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

- 32 There are effective links with parents and the quality of the school's work in this area has been sustained since the last inspection. The majority of parents feel the school works closely with them and they are comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or problems. The school recognises the importance of working with parents to ensure that children make progress and it is aware that a small number of parents feel that the school could improve its response to them. The school is working hard to improve the quality of its links. As part of this effort it has started to develop a programme of parents' workshops. There has already been a literacy workshop for parents of primary age pupils and a careers event for parents of older pupils. The majority of parents are very supportive of their children's work at school and these workshops allow parents further opportunities to help their children improve. Most parents attend annual reviews and their comments are noted and followed up when necessary. There is frequent contact by phone or through home school diaries and this provides an effective mechanism for exchanging information.
- 33 The school provides parents with very good quality information on their children's progress. Parents are supplied with written copies of all the evidence that is considered at the annual review including the school's extensive contribution. In addition to this parents are also supplied with an annual report which describes what areas of the national curriculum their child has studied and the progress that has been made. These reports are of good quality and communicate well what pupils know, understand and can do, or where appropriate what the pupil has experienced and the response they have made. Parents are also informed which topics will be taught during the term. Additional information on the work of the school is supplied in regular school newsletters and a newsletter produced by post 16 pupils.

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

- 34 The leadership and management of the school are good, teaching and curriculum developments are effectively monitored and evaluated. Weaknesses in the teaching of information communication technology and religious education have been effectively identified and appropriate plans have been put in place to address these areas. The school has a sense of purpose that is evident in the commitment of staff, and in the aims, values and policies that are reflected through its work. Inspection findings support parents' views that the school is well led and managed. Through development planning the school identifies relevant priorities and takes appropriate action to address them, effectively monitoring its progress. There is a positive ethos that reflects the schools' commitment to providing an effective learning environment. Staff and the governing body have high expectations and shared values and understanding about learning, behaviour and relationships.
- 35 Good procedures have been established to ensure that the school is effective and that it promotes and



sustains improvement. All pupils have been assessed using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities 'P' levels and these have been appropriately used to set targets for the improvement in standards. To monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning the school is planning to reassess pupils using these criteria at the end of the year. Management and leadership responsibilities are clearly defined and there is very effective delegation. All staff understand the roles they are expected to play and staff with management responsibilities are effectively supported to develop expertise and they are given time to carry out their management tasks. Through a wide range of meetings there are good opportunities for all staff to play a part in the development of the school. Contributions are valued and decisions are taken following proper consultation ensuring a shared commitment to improving the provision.

- 36 The governing body is appropriately acting as a critical friend by holding the school to account for standards and the quality of education. It has effectively developed its role in the monitoring and management of the school since the last inspection and the procedures that have been implemented enable it to effectively fulfil its responsibilities for strategic planning. The governing body has an appropriate long-term view of where the school should be heading and this is shared with staff.
- 37 The school development plan reflects the findings of a whole school audit clearly indicating the current situation and identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school appreciates its strengths and effectively plans to sustain them. It is aware of its weaknesses and has put good plans in place to overcome them. The priorities identified appropriately reflect the central aims of the school and the requirements of national and local education authority initiatives. There are effective systems for monitoring and reporting on progress towards the targets and there is sufficient flexibility to enable the school to introduce new initiatives or reduce the amount of work planned. The school development plan is an effective management tool for guiding and monitoring the work of the school. It provides a clear programme of action to meet the priorities and it effectively targets the schools' resources particularly staff time and funding to meet them.
- 38 Financial planning is very good. There are clear links between the school development plan and the management of the budget. An appropriate focus on improving educational outcomes ensures that expenditure is appropriately allocated to support priorities. The school is providing good value for money by making effective use of the resources available to it to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. The school can account for the expenditure to which it is committed and it budgets systematically for new expenditure. For example, there was a planned underspend on the budget for 1998 – 1999 and one is also planned for the current financial year. This money has been effectively allocated to finance the significant improvements that have already been undertaken and are planned for the accommodation. The completed building work has already had a positive impact on the environment and on teaching and learning. There are good internal financial controls to ensure the reliability and accuracy of financial transactions and the budget is subject to regular and effective monitoring by the headteacher and the governing body who use the outcomes of monitoring to inform their decision making.
- 39 The school regularly monitors the use of resources through good procedures such as subject audits and is beginning to effectively evaluate its spending decisions in terms of the impact they have on standards. The school ensures that its purchasing arrangements achieve the best value for money by regularly reviewing contracts and the service level agreements it has with the local education authority. It only buys into these agreements at the level needed to sustain the work of the school. The school involves all staff with management responsibilities in financial planning. Co-ordinators are all budget holders and plan spending in line with the outcomes of their subject audit. Staff are also kept informed about financial planning issues through regular monitoring of the school development plan. The school's administrative procedures are very good, they are unobtrusive and result in efficient daily organisation. There is excellent use of information and communication technology in the school to support the administration procedures and this is being extended to include access to the Internet for all pupils as soon as the lines and the access software can be organised.
- 40 There are good links between job descriptions, staff appraisal, staff development and the school's decision making structure. Teachers are actively involved in the formulation of aims, policies and procedures and the school takes effective steps to ensure that everyone, particularly new staff, understand

them. An induction programme for new staff is now fully in place, it was in draft form at the time of the last inspection. It very effectively ensures a good introduction to the school's routines and to the pupils. Staff who have recently begun at the school say that the scheme works very well. There is also a good system of staff appraisal that the school has been carrying out for some considerable time. It was praised in the last inspection, and it continues to be good. Professional development is closely linked to the priorities in the school development plan and this enables the school to implement new initiatives effectively. Many appraisal targets are focussed on classroom practice, and the monitoring of progress towards them is often appropriately centred on observations of teaching. This monitoring is effectively linked to the overall monitoring of teaching and learning. Teaching, including the planning of lessons, is monitored by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. The governing body is also becoming involved in monitoring by visiting lessons. Monitoring is well focussed and leads to the identification of individual and whole school targets for improvement. Teachers have clear job descriptions, particularly for their roles as subject co-ordinators and this helps them to know exactly what is expected of them, and gives them appropriate guidance for managing their subjects.

- 41 There are now a good number of teaching and classroom support staff in the school. The school has done well to increase staffing levels since the last inspection. Teachers are well qualified, and they have a good range of expertise, and length of experience. Teachers and classroom support staff are well deployed and form effective teams in running each class. Teachers who do not have class responsibilities are used effectively to take specialist subjects such as physical education or to give other teachers time away from the classrooms in order to develop their subject responsibilities. All staff take good advantage of the professional training and development that is planned. Staff take part in training for their own professional development and whole-school issues such as the moving and handling of children and child protection procedures. The headteacher and secretary have undertaken considerable training to develop financial and administrative skills. This has given them the expertise needed to very effectively run the administrative work of the school. The school nurse, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists provide good support for pupils and teachers.
- 42 The accommodation is unsatisfactory. This is despite a number of significant improvements since the last inspection when it was very cramped and lacking in basic facilities. Toilets have been improved and refurbished and classrooms have been extended. They have been refurbished to a high standard and now have ramp access. The staffroom and administration office has been extended and more storage facilities have been created. As a result of the classroom extension work the school has managed to create very pleasant sensory garden. The school is very aware of the deficiencies that still exist, and is doing all it can to rectify them. Accommodation is a high priority in the school development plan because of the impact it has on teaching and learning. The shared room for pupils at Key Stage 4 and students post 16, results in constant interruptions and distractions and provides very small teaching areas that are difficult to manage. There is a lack of good specialist facilities, particularly for the older pupils; the school has no specialist teaching areas for subjects such as science or design and technology and activities have to take place in the classrooms. The hall is unsuitable for physical education because there are constant disruptions as staff, pupils and visitors cross through it to get to other areas of the school. There is currently a lack of therapy and nursing space and a continuing lack of appropriate storage space for wheelchairs, standing frames and other bulky equipment. Some of these problems will be overcome as the school's accommodation plans reach maturity in the near future. The provision of an area for the nurse and some extra storage space will be a welcome addition to the school.
- 43 The resources that the school has at its disposal are satisfactory. Mathematics, science, history, art, music and physical education have a good selection of resources and the resources available for English and communication are particularly good. There are a good range of books and communication resources such as visual and tactile timetables, single switch communication aids and worksheets. Some subjects, such as information technology and religious education could use a wider range of resources, but there are sufficient for the moment. Resources are being developed constantly as a result of annual subject audits. Resources are deployed to each subject appropriately according to the bids that are made for them by the co-ordinator and the subject's priority in the school's development plan. Teachers use the resources available to them effectively to enhance pupils' learning.

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

In order to continue improving and to raise standards, the governing body, the headteacher and senior management team along with staff should consider the following points as the basis for an action plan:

- Improve standards of achievement in information technology and religious education. (This has already been started by the school) (Paragraphs 79,80,81,82,94,95,96 )

This will include:

Continuing with the planned programme of staff development for information technology.

Ensuring consistent implementation of the scheme of work for information technology.

Establishing learning targets for each pupil in information technology.

Reviewing the scheme of work for religious education.

Developing teachers' expertise in teaching religious education.

- Ensure that the wide range of different ability needs within each class is met more consistently. (Paragraphs 7,11 )

This will include:

Monitoring how effectively teaching and learning meets the needs of the different ability groups in each class.

- Improve the accommodation particularly for pupils at Key Stage 4 and students at post 16. (This has already been started by the school) (Paragraphs 42, 63)

This will include:

Completing the existing plans for the accommodation.

Investigating additional accommodation for older pupils.

*The numbers in brackets identify the paragraphs where the issue is discussed.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	19	44	23	10		

*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

	No of pupils
<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	
Number of pupils on the school's roll	57
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	20

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	6.4	School data	0.3

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	38
Any other minority ethnic group	

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y N– 16+**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6..3
Average class size	8

#### **Education support staff: Y N – 16+**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	470

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

The budget carried forward from 98/99 to 99/00 has been allocated to finance improvements to the accommodation. Plans have already been approved and building work is due to begin during the spring term.

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1998 – 1999
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	£
Total income	512968
Total expenditure	512533
Expenditure per pupil	10460
Balance brought forward from previous year	104902
Balance carried forward to next year	105337

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
Number of questionnaires returned	39

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	11	3		
My child is making good progress in school.	49	17		5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	44	8		8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	31	15	5	8
The teaching is good.	64	26	5		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	33	8		3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	20	5	3	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	23	5		5
The school works closely with parents.	64	20	10	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	72	15	3	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	31	5	3	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	23	18	3	

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

### **ENGLISH**

- 44 Overall pupils at all key stages achieve well meeting and sometimes exceeding the targets that have been set for them. In communication (speaking and listening) the majority of pupils make good progress. The progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 lower attaining pupils and those with additional special needs use eye contact, vocalisation, pictures and symbols to express their meaning. The recent introduction of a commercial picture - symbol communication scheme is used well to reinforce learning on topics, such as self and pupils make good progress in developing their vocabulary. During integration sessions, pupils with verbal skills effectively join in conversations with visiting mainstream children and in class discussions pupils at Key Stage 2 are able to talk about events in their personal lives. Pupils listen attentively to stories and poems, putting sensible questions to adults and each other. Those with non-verbal skills listen well and participate in role-play situations, using facial expressions and body movements. Pupils develop their phonetic skills through structured literacy sessions, building effectively on their earlier learning, recalling words and phonetic sounds from previous lessons. They are beginning to develop a sense of letter awareness and alphabetic sequence.
- 45 Pupils at Key Stage 3 listen attentively to instructions, and correctly choose objects beginning with initial letters such as R for rabbit or ruler, repeating the sounds and words whenever possible. They join in plenary sessions well, talking about what they have learned. Higher attaining pupils explain what they have achieved using a computer, while pupils with more complex learning difficulties demonstrate their knowledge by linking letters to relevant pictures. Pupils develop their vocabulary to include words relevant to other subject areas, for example, in science and personal and social education. Pupils match words connected to body parts or healthy eating against relevant pictures. A small number of pupils can discuss their current reading book and talk about the other stories they have read. Pupils of all abilities participate in drama and this makes a positive contribution towards increasing their confidence and ability to communicating. At Key Stage 4, pupils' verbal skills are more highly developed. They show increasing confidence in group discussions and ask each other questions or make comparisons between their lives; for example, when discussing the names and colours of their pets, or their likes and dislikes of various foods. Through discussion they plan lunch menus, which they later cook in food technology. Pupils also participate in role-play situations, developing their knowledge of Shakespeare by enacting parts from Romeo and Juliet. During lessons pupils' with profound and multiple learning difficulties track sounds and vocalise appropriately, responding to a range of stimuli with smiles and obvious enjoyment. The school provides an intensive interaction programme for pupils with complex learning difficulties that is planned and resourced by teachers and delivered by teachers and speech therapists. This programme makes an outstanding contribution to the development of communication skills.
- 46 Pupils' make steady progress in reading at Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils are able to match letters to objects, and can identify and repeat letter sounds with the aid of flash cards. Writing skills are focussed on hand-eye co-ordination exercises and pencil control. At Key Stage 2, there is a marked improvement in reading and writing skills. Higher attaining pupils read simple texts aloud, recognising a range of single syllable words. They use their improved writing skills to copy or trace sentences in other subject areas. The majority of pupils begin to develop a bank of words they can read. Pupils develop letter formation tracing over letters and words. They make small but significant gains in their reading and writing skills, and begin to use worksheets connected to poetry and class topics, which they complete with varying degrees of support.
- 47 At Key Stage 3, pupils develop their reading skills, moving on to a more advanced reading scheme. They complete sets of worksheets associated with their stories, and develop their learning further through word banks. They begin to study simplified Shakespearean texts such as Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet, consolidating their understanding of the characters and plot through role-play and drama sessions. Their handwriting skills begin to improve, and although several pupils still use tracing as a means to writing,

their work presentation improves considerably. Higher attaining pupils begin to write in freehand, concentrating on accurate letter formation. At Key Stage 4 pupils have significantly improved their reading and writing skills. They read aloud in class from simplified classical literature or poetry, and demonstrate their comprehension of the text through discussion and role-play. The clarity and legibility of their handwriting improves as they write simple and complex sentences about themselves or in completing lesson worksheets. Higher attaining pupils use word processors to answer comprehension questions. Some pupils copy letters requesting work experience placements, and are able to read the written replies with varying degrees of support. Whenever possible, the pupils are encouraged towards national accreditation through certificates of achievement, and a number of pupils have already been awarded these in specific areas of the subject.

- 48 When mainstream pupils visit the school as part of a lesson, pupil interaction is very good. Younger pupils with verbal skills share conversations with their mainstream peers about pantomime noises, and older visiting pupils' assist with hearing reading and giving general support. In terms of personal development all pupils benefit from this opportunity.
- 49 Since the previous inspection the school has improved its provision of English by introducing the National Literacy Strategy to all year groups. This contributes strongly towards improving pupils' English skills. Drama is now used at all key stages to encourage speaking and listening skills and the consolidating of reading comprehension. At Key Stage 4, pupils continue to use their English skills to help them in practical everyday situations. They are well motivated, contributing their own ideas to class discussions.
- 50 The quality of teaching, which at the time of the last inspection was satisfactory and often good, is now good overall. However, some activities are not appropriate to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. Sometimes those with complex learning difficulties or those capable of higher attainment are not adequately catered for in mixed ability class groups. The good standards of assessing and recording of pupils' progress have been enhanced through the use of individual education plans as working documents. At the time of the last inspection, pupils at all key stages were working within the first level of attainment of the National Curriculum targets in English. The introduction of pre-National Curriculum levels now permits the school to define and record pupils' progress with greater accuracy.
- 51 Well-planned lessons are structured and appropriately paced to capture pupil interest and promote good levels of concentration. Most teachers set high but realistic expectations, although there is sometimes a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, and the academic needs of pupils with complex difficulties are not always adequately addressed. Across all key stages, very few members of staff use signing to communicate, which restricts full access to the curriculum by pupils with hearing loss or complex learning difficulties. In the best teaching, the imaginative use of resources such as acting and dressing up, or using Italian background music for Romeo and Juliet gives pupils a feel for the setting of the play. This helps consolidate their knowledge of the plot and its characters. The National Literacy books spring to life with the addition of good quality and imaginative artefacts such as tea bags, sugar and teapots. This is particularly beneficial to pupils with complex learning difficulties. There is a multi-sensory approach in a number of lessons and with the aid of computers, pupils experience the sounds of thunder, rain falling, and familiar household noises this enhances their topic studies, helping them to link noises with words. Where learning assistants are effectively deployed, they give good individual and group support, which allows pupils to work at appropriate levels.
- 52 In most lessons pupils are encouraged towards independence by taking responsibility for organising their books and writing materials. Higher attaining pupils use computers with minimal supervision, and this promotes their personal development and self esteem. Lessons are less successful when planning is not followed, and the teacher digresses into unrelated topics, causing pupils to become restless. Relationships between pupils and staff are good, and pupils are expected to work hard, there is very little poor behaviour. Recording procedures are good and there is efficient daily monitoring of progress and achievement that is used effectively to inform subsequent lesson planning. Pupils' individual education plans are appropriately used as working documents, but are not always fully implemented, particularly in following the recommendations for using Makaton signing. All teachers have a good knowledge of their



pupils and this helps them to reinforce their literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their reading skills to find information in subjects such as science and to read instructions and recipes in design technology and food technology. They record their work taking notes in subjects such as geography, answering questions about what they have read or labelling their work. They complete extended pieces of writing in subjects such as history.

- 53 Policies and schemes of work are well considered and informed through subject monitoring by the co-ordinator, this also highlights appropriate areas for staff development and these are linked to the school development plan. The English curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and is good overall.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 54 Pupils' at all key stages acquire satisfactory numeracy skills. They make steady progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced last term and has been appropriately adapted in all classes. Where teachers are confident in using the strategy pupils make good progress. However, some teachers are less confident and as result pupils' learning is not as secure.
- 55 Reception age pupils develop an understanding of number order with higher attaining pupils collecting cards between 1 and 5 in the right order. Pupils with more complex difficulties benefit from good range of tactile experiences, they are encouraged to reach out and touch the number cards. For these pupils the teacher ensures that there are a good variety of objects to reinforce understanding. At Key Stage 1 pupils learn to match colours. They develop an understanding of number order through a range of songs. An early understanding of shape is encouraged through copying patterns and cutting out shapes. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand fractions when cutting an object in half. All pupils enjoy the opportunities provided for practical activities and take great pleasure in participating. They work well with support staff particularly where they have difficulties, such as using scissors to cut out shapes.
- 56 At Key Stage 2 pupils' learning is supported through a well planned range of experiences that enables them to develop an understanding about all aspects of mathematics. Pupils balance objects using scales and add objects to a "see saw" to get it to move up or down. Higher attaining pupils can, with support, identify different shapes including a cube, a sphere and a cone. One very high attaining pupil is developing an understanding of angles and the idea of how many faces a shape has. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties respond to various stimuli and will move their head in response, some making eye contact. At Key Stage 3 pupils' skills have developed further, they can work independently on worksheets, for example when completing addition sums up to 10. They concentrate well, remaining on task and finishing work, taking care over the presentation. Lower attaining pupils match patterns when threading different shaped beads to make the same pattern as on the card. Those pupils with more complex difficulties follow objects and some identify where an object is when the teachers hides it under a cloth. Information technology is used well to support learning; pupils use computers to establish simple timetables and record data in the form of a graph. They have an understanding of money and add and sort coins.
- 57 At Key Stage 4 pupils use their mathematical skills with confidence. They identify complex shapes such as a pyramid and can discuss its properties. Their understanding of money is good; they use a variety of coins to make up sums of fifty pence. Pupils estimate length and accurately use a variety of resources when measuring their height and waist. Where progress is less evident it is because teachers' planning is not clearly linked to developing skills in numeracy or ensuring that pupils' past learning is built upon. For example, when mathematics is taught through food technology pupils do not always have the opportunity to weigh the ingredients and they are not sufficiently involved in other aspects of the activity where number skills could be reinforced. Teaching does not always ensure that learning is new or progressive and pupils are often asked to use skills that they have already mastered well. In these lessons because they are not always challenged higher attaining pupils sometimes become restless or simply make no effort to complete the work they are given.

- 58 Numeracy is well promoted throughout the school with teachers encouraging pupils to count at every opportunity whether this is in registration or counting the cakes that have been made or the number of buttons on a coat. There is a good focus on reinforcing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum particularly in subjects such as design and technology, food technology, geography and science.
- 59 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good for younger pupils at Key Stage 4 because teachers have a good understanding of the concepts outlined in the numeracy strategy and they have adapted these well to meet the needs of pupils in their classes. For these pupils and for pupils in the reception class resources are used very well to support learning and ensure pupils have a good range of experiences. As a result pupils remain on task, are interested throughout the lesson and their learning is good. At Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate confident numeracy skills during a lesson on fractions. The lesson started with a recap on number and counting before pupils moved different groups according to their ability. Support staff were very clear about their roles and worked well with each group. Resources enabled teachers to cut pretend cakes and pizzas in half and higher attaining pupils were encouraged to think about quarters. Information communication technology was used well to support learning through a game that involved making a whole out of halves and quarters.
- 60 Teaching is less effective for older pupils at Key Stage 4 where there are sometimes low expectations and ineffective planning. For younger pupils at Key Stage 2 there is a clear understanding of the management of pupils and the need for grouping however some teaching approaches are not appropriate or challenging. For example there is a limited range of songs used and very little visual support for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. For older pupils at Key Stage 4 evidence suggests that pupils are not covering all aspects of the curriculum and the work set does not challenge some pupils and is too hard for others. For example, in a shop game the initial tasks were too easy and pupils lost interest very quickly. When the task was extended one pupil found the task straightforward and the other struggled and became demoralised.
- 61 The subject is managed well. There has been good progress in adapting the concepts and methods outlined in the national numeracy strategy and the standards of achievement identified in the last inspection report have been maintained. The mathematics policy is currently being re-written to reflect revised planning and teaching methods that have resulted from the implementation of elements of the national numeracy strategy. Teachers' planning, until this work is completed, is well supported by a curriculum map. It is recognised that teachers would benefit from the support of the subject specialist and there are appropriate plans in place to start monitoring and evaluating numeracy lessons across the school. Resources are good and used well by staff. There is a very high standard of teacher-produced resources evident throughout the school and these support pupils' learning well.

## SCIENCE

- 62 At all key stages pupils make good progress in science. They frequently achieve the targets that are set for them in their individual education plans and in teachers lesson planning. Pupils show a high level of interest and enthusiasm at Key Stages 1 and 2, which enables them to achieve well during investigations and experiments. For example, when investigating vibrations, pupils have consistent opportunities to reinforce their learning. They carry out a number of experiments using vibrating objects and musical instruments and they are beginning to understand the connection between vibration and sound. Pupils at Key Stage 2 undertake practical tasks and learn how to divide a plant to make more. Their progress would be better if they had more opportunities to record their work when their ideas are fresh. On a small number of occasions, higher attaining pupils receive insufficient opportunities to investigate at greater depth and there is little use of information technology to extend their learning. At Key Stage 3, pupils show increasing understanding of the structure of the human body. Most pupils identify the ribs and higher attaining pupils identify the heart and other major organs. The teachers questions help pupils to deepen their knowledge about healthy eating and they are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy life-style on the heart and blood. Pupils make good gains in skills and knowledge, for example, at Key Stage 4 they answer questions accurately about the reproduction of plants and animals. The majority of the pupils know that plants need water, sun and soil to grow. Higher attaining pupils remember the

number of days that eggs take to hatch. They ask appropriate questions about their work, for example, 'Why do bees carry pollen?'. However, pupils' gains in knowledge are not always as high as they could be because their interest is not sustained for the whole lesson. On occasions resources are not readily available and time is lost in providing and organising them. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are not involved consistently in the lesson because some activities are not suitable for them.

- 63 Teaching is good overall. Pupils make good progress because teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and provide stimulating work that engages their interest. This is evident in the range of tasks provided for pupils throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the challenges and have high levels of motivation particularly when teachers are enthusiastic and carry them along with the brisk pace. In these lessons pupils complete a significant amount of work. Pupils behave well because they are interested, concentrating hard because they want to learn more. They understand what they have to do because teachers provide clear lesson introductions, using visual aids particularly effectively. This is evident when pupils follow the analogy of a body without a skeleton being like a piece of jelly. The teacher effectively using actions and mime to show pupils what they mean. Lesson plans contain targets for each pupil to achieve and this ensures that they make progress and ensures that the level of challenge is often high, for instance pupils at Key Stage 2 understand at the beginning of an experiment on sound that they will learn the word 'vibration'. This reflects the teachers high expectations for pupils to understand scientific concepts and use appropriate vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 ask questions about why light is reflected and they question how light travels. These questions help them to make very good gains in understanding. Teachers' planning is most effective when it provides pupils with good opportunities to discuss their ideas.
- 64 In some lessons there is a lack of balance particularly when pupils are actively involved in investigations but do not have sufficient opportunities to record their findings. In these lessons pupils only make satisfactory progress. There are a small number of occasions when the timing of lessons has an adverse effect on pupils' learning. For example, during a short lesson at Key Stage 2 one teacher completes the recording of a practical activity to divide plants that has been carried out by another teacher at an earlier date; pupils cannot clearly remember the work and the plants used in the previous lesson are not available to help them to remember.
- 65 There is a good scheme of work and comprehensive assessment ensures that teachers know how pupils are progressing. Assessment information is used effectively to plan further work. The shortcomings identified in the previous report in relation to the full involvement of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are less evident because now there are usually sufficient staff to help them participate. There are a small minority of lessons where the provision of support staff is insufficient and on these occasions pupils, particularly those with more complex needs, do not make enough progress. The co-ordinator effectively monitors teaching and learning. This together with a suitable increase in time allocation has ensured good improvement in the provision since the last inspection.

## **ART**

- 66 Only two art lessons were seen during the inspection and these were at Key Stages 2 and 3. In these pupils made satisfactory progress during these lessons and their achievement was appropriate. It is clear from looking at the displays of pupils' work around the school and looking at examples of work in the subject portfolio that pupils' at all key stages achieve at satisfactory levels. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In the lesson seen at Key Stage 2 pupils used string, art straws, cord and wool to create a pattern based on 'line'. With support and encouragement from the teacher and classroom assistants pupils were able to form recognisable shapes such as a triangle and a square and also curl the string to make spirals and coils. Pupils were able to suggest glue when the teacher asked them how they thought they could fix the string to the paper. Pupils at Key Stage 3 effectively used a computer programme to create a random pattern of lines on the screen. They used a simple mouse, to choose the colours from the palette given, clicking on the one selected and dragging it across the screen to create a line. Others masked off areas of paper with masking tape to create areas and lines. They confidently selected colours to fill in the different areas carefully copying the demonstration given by the

classroom assistant. Higher attaining pupils understood that the masking tape would be removed to create a pattern when the paint had dried. A small group of pupils watched carefully as the classroom assistant showed them how to make marbled patterns on paper. Higher attaining pupils helped to squeeze the dye into the 'fix', selecting the colours and showing surprise as the dye spread creating patterns. They were able to say which of the colour combinations they preferred.

- 67 Teaching is satisfactory. The scheme of work is good, it closely reflects the content of the National Curriculum programmes of study and ensures that teachers' planning provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop skills and acquire knowledge. Teachers make sure that pupils take part in activities that use a wide range of media and techniques and that they have appropriate opportunities to look at the work of famous artists. Teachers deploy classroom assistant well and this enables pupils of all abilities to participate fully in the activities. Sensitive suggestions are offered that encourage pupils to improve their work and try different techniques with confidence. Teachers make sure that they reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible, paying specific attention to the development of their vocabulary and during the current topic on 'line' reinforcing their understanding of shape. Sometimes there is an over-emphasis on this reinforcement at the cost of pupils' art experiences. Art is used effectively by teachers to develop pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils have good opportunities to look at the art of the different countries they study in geography and to look at art from the periods they study in history. The subject is well led and managed. The procedures that have been developed to monitor and manage the subject have enabled the co-ordinator to identify that pupils need more opportunities to take part in three-dimensional work. Subject development planning will address this area effectively. A good subject portfolio containing examples of pupils' work has been compiled. It provides the co-ordinator with evidence of pupils' progress and a record of the experiences they have had over the year. It is used effectively along with the monitoring of teaching and an annual subject audit to inform subject development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 68 Pupils make satisfactory progress the majority achieve the learning targets that are set in teachers lesson planning. They have appropriate skills and use a range of tools and utensils appropriately. They work confidently with a variety of materials such as paper and card, wood, clay and with a selection of different construction kits from simple blocks to sophisticated kits with electrical motors. Pupils learn to handle scissors, hammers and saws well and learn about cogwheels and gears in theory and in everyday equipment such bikes and food whisks. They weigh and mix ingredients for recipes and use kitchen equipment appropriately. Throughout the school, pupils are developing increasingly accurate and competent skills in handling things safely. As they get older, there is increasing purpose in what they do and more thought is given to the design process by looking at what has been made and considering how it could be done better next time.
- 69 Teaching is generally good. Teachers often organise group activities during a lesson so that pupils are doing a range of different activities such as weaving or making chocolate biscuits. Sometimes these groups rotate so that everyone has the opportunity to experience the activities, and sometimes they are for pupils of different levels of ability. Lessons are well planned and organised and pupils are well managed, they behave well, and enjoy the activities, especially the practical ones. Teaching is often enthusiastic and very well informed. Good relationships motivate pupils, and a high level of challenge spurs them on to think and try harder. Generally teachers use support staff very well to help individuals or small groups. Teachers use a wide range of resources imaginatively and this encourages good pupil involvement in lessons. There are some good examples of project work particularly in the upper school, such as making castles in a range of sizes, designs and materials, or the organisation of a party, from the invitations to the food. As part of a personal and social development project pupils have made a beautiful quilt with the help of an outside organisation and recently puppet-makers have run a whole-school workshop.
- 70 In some lessons there is an over-emphasis on food-related activities that involve "experiencing" food (eating it). At best, pupils put bread in a toaster and then spread butter and jam on it. Sometimes

teachers' planning places too much emphasis on *making* things, there is an inappropriate focus on producing a finished item at the end of the lesson or series of lessons, insufficient thought is given to the *design* element. This focus on *making* sometimes encourages staff to "help" children too readily.

- 71 Standards have been maintained since the last report. Resources are satisfactory but there is no separate accommodation for teaching design and technology. The subject is managed appropriately, there is a satisfactory scheme of work and the co-ordinator has monitored teaching across the school. Areas for development are appropriately identified through the subject audit and addressed through the subject development plan.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 72 Pupils' progress and their achievements are satisfactory. They are learning the basic skills and concepts of geography through a series of themes, centring on the local area and the weather. Pupils have made visits to the nearby town centre and looked at the kinds of shops and other facilities there are, identifying what they sell or do, and where they are. Much of this work is practical, and involves maps and model making. This motivates and interests the pupils, as well as giving them an appropriate challenge. They have begun to compare their own locality with other environments such as farms, the riverside, and the seaside. Pupils are learning about the different kinds of rocks and fossils that are found, and how the rocks alter the landscape. In good cross-curricular projects pupils have also looked at distant places such as the world's rainforests, India and Kenya. In these studies, they learn about the land and the people as well as the culture and the animals and plants. However, too few of these cross-curricular projects are planned; pupils' horizons are not sufficiently broadened by looking at geographical areas and features such as volcanoes, deserts and the Polar Regions.
- 73 Teaching is good overall although there was one unsatisfactory lesson during the inspection as well as an excellent one. Both of these lessons were at the same key stage. In the very effective lesson pupils looked at different rocks, their properties and their uses as building materials. The teacher ensured that there was a good balance between learning in geography and science, the lesson was investigative and busy, and all pupils were involved very well. The pupils were interested throughout, their vocabulary was effectively increased, and they learned how to use magnifying glasses to look at specimens. Pupils do not learn effectively when there is insufficient emphasis on teaching geography. Sometimes teachers spend too much time reinforcing other skills, for example, in one lesson there was too much focus on 'money' during a shopping game about the shops in the local town.
- 74 The school has divided geography from history since the last inspection, and the time allocated to it has been increased. There is a satisfactory policy and a scheme of work that is currently being re-written. The co-ordinator has undertaken some monitoring of lesson planning and teaching and this information is appropriately used to inform subject development. The school has adequate resources and good use is made of the local environment. These are all improvements since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

- 75 Pupils progress well in their learning and achieve good standards. At Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to understand how things are different between now and the past. For example, by looking at clothes and listening to music. Higher attaining pupils identify and describe some events that happened in the past. At Key Stage 2 they demonstrate good understanding when they discuss holiday photographs, and they know that the holiday is over. Higher attaining pupils recognise features in photographs such as the sunshine and relate this to their own recollections. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties receive good support and they are beginning to link photographs taken on holiday with the past event. At Key Stage 3 pupils continue to achieve very well. Higher attaining pupils remember that people used to spin wool in their own houses and they make good efforts to write down important words. Lower attaining pupils make connections with the materials used in the past and their own clothes. At Key Stage 4, pupils develop good understanding of the Saxon period when they compare the conditions in Saxon

houses with their own. They deepen their knowledge of life in the past and express their opinion when they are given the opportunity to experience the unpleasant smells of a Saxon village. Their gains in knowledge are not always as high as they could be because they do not have enough opportunities to record their response or their good ideas.

- 76 Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and demonstrate their enthusiasm for history through effective lesson preparation. This has a significant impact on promoting pupils' learning. Pupils are highly motivated because staff provide exciting and interesting resources such as spinning wheels and 'smells of life in the past'. Teachers constantly relate learning to pupils' own experience and this ensures that they remain inquisitive and keen to learn; pupils draw inferences from artefacts such as photographs because they relate them to their own photographs, taken in the past. Pupils behave well and have a positive attitude to work, responding to high staff expectations. This is exceptional at Key Stage 3, where pupils start the lesson independently, writing their names on worksheets without prompting. Teachers' high expectations ensure a good level of participation and pupils remember significant facts from previous lessons, relating them appropriately to new learning. As lessons progress pupils are given good information that satisfies their curiosity about history. This is because staff work well together to share their knowledge and understanding of the lesson topic. Pupils make the greatest gains in knowledge when the pace of the lesson is brisk and they benefit from good staff support and encouragement. The provision for pupils with more complex needs is good, they are effectively involved in lessons because teachers provide good support and give them opportunities to respond in their own way to the opportunities they have. This enables them to make good progress.
- 77 The school has addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection report well. The subject co-ordinator now monitors teaching and learning and this ensures that pupils make good gains in knowledge as they progress through the school. Work is now matched more closely to pupils' attainment and planning is more effectively focused to include pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- 78 Teachers' planning is good and provides pupils with an interesting range of topics across different periods in history. The '*History Weeks*' provide excellent opportunities for pupils to study a period in depth and effectively enhances their understanding, for instance when pupils wear Roman costume and use the school hydrotherapy pool as the setting for a role-play about the Roman baths. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' knowledge about their own culture in the present and in the past. Resources are good and the artefacts obtained from local sources are particularly good, for instance, the ballroom dresses borrowed to promote pupils' learning of the time when the waltz was more popular.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 79 Pupils' progress in information and communication technology is still unsatisfactory. Even so, there has been considerable improvement in their levels of achievement since the last inspection, when the subject was poor in its provision and learning. The school has made good progress in raising pupils' skills and in using technology to support learning in other subjects, but it still has some way to go.
- 80 Across the school pupils are acquiring skills in operating single-touch switches to control computer screen displays and sounds. As their skills increase, higher attaining pupils sometimes learn to use a concept keyboard (with simplified keys), and use a rollerball switch to control images or text. Over-time pupils are acquiring increasingly complex skills and greater understanding of the relationship between the keyboard or switch and the result or reward produced. Higher attaining pupils learn to use a mouse and some of the keys on the main keyboard. The most able pupils can enter or re-arrange text such as their own names and addresses, but generally they need considerable help. A small number of pupils have produced basic pictures using computer software, and some have made simple graphs from data they have collected. A number of pupils have programmed a model to move around the classroom and pupils can switch on the television, video and tape recorder. Pupils' skills at each key stage are variable. Currently there is no planned and systematic learning as pupils' progress through the school. The range of skills taught and learned is adequate but progress is too slow.

- 81 Information technology is not taught as a separate subject, and no lessons were seen in which it was the main focus for teaching. Pupils generally use the computer one at a time, appropriately supported by a member of staff. They generally work with programmes that are linked to the lesson, this is good practice and provides appropriate opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding. Pupils receive good encouragement to press switches or to move the mouse, they enjoy these activities, and there is no doubt that their opportunities to use the computers enhance their learning. However, there are few, if any, specific targets aimed at raising pupils' skills in using the switches or other input devices. Pupils often pick up skills themselves, instead of having them specifically planned for and taught. In one typical lesson with mixed group activities, pupils were going to the computer in turn, and all were using the same switch to operate the same screen display. One pupil clearly understood the use the switch and was not interested by the screen display. The opportunities provided for this pupil were uninteresting and insufficiently challenging leading to boredom and lack of concentration.
- 82 There is very little on-going assessment of how pupils are making progress. The school has an appropriate pre-requisite list of skills, but teachers do not use it as guide for planning learning or assessing achievement. This situation remains similar to that identified at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is still inconsistent and unstructured. The planning for information technology in a lesson is often the word "computer" on the lesson plan. The co-ordinator has undertaken some monitoring of lesson planning and teaching, and has developed a scheme of work, but it is unclear if teachers are expected to cover all the elements outlined in the scheme at each key stage. Pupils are not well challenged by the expectations outlined within the overall scheme, or in the planning of lessons in which information technology is an element. There has been some recent training in the use of information technology, and the use of the equipment has improved since the last inspection. However, teachers still lack confidence in how to target and teach skills.
- 83 The resources that the school has developed since the last inspection are satisfactory. There are new computers, including a laptop and every class has one or two different types of switches. There are also concept keyboards and roller-ball switches for pupils who need them. The range of software available in the school is suitable to support the development of pupils' skills and enhance their learning across the subjects of the curriculum. The range of switches and rewards available for pupils with more complex learning difficulties are limited particularly for those who need lever switches, wobble sticks, pressure or mercury switches to operate screen displays and toys. The school does have some examples of these switches in the very good light-sensory room, however, there are too few in classrooms where pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties can use them readily.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

- 84 At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make good progress and achieve high standards in speaking and listening. Higher attaining pupils are taught as a combined group and pupils with more complex learning difficulties are taught French as part of a rolling programme of topics built into the curriculum.
- 85 Pupils enter the classroom saying 'bonjour' to each other and staff. They begin their lesson with a simple hello song in French, introducing themselves to each other. They respond well to simple questions and commands, such as 'levez le main' and 'aux magasins'. They demonstrate the ability to read and match words correctly to pictures, and participate in role-play situations such as purchasing everyday items from shops. They draw on earlier learning, requesting their items, counting out the money and accepting change in French francs. Sometimes pupils are heard quietly singing the 'bonjour' song or trying to pronounce word such as 'l'epicerie' to themselves. An examination of pupils' work and photographic records show that pupils have a simple knowledge of French culture, effectively reinforced when they cook and eat croissants to represent French daily life.
- 86 At the time of the last inspection the provision of a modern language was limited. There was no policy or scheme of work and it was only taught to pupils capable of higher attainment. The school has

significantly improved its provision of French, which is now taught to all pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers have attended appropriate courses for the teaching of French to children with special needs.

- 87 Teaching is very good and an excellent lesson was seen during the inspection. Lessons are conducted almost entirely in the target language. Teachers and assistants are competent and confident in their delivery of the subject, and this encourages pupils to work hard. Lively lessons are challenging and there are very good levels of interaction by the teacher. This ensures that pupils are interested and motivated. The constant use of the target language encourages pupils, giving them the confidence to try for themselves. They make real efforts to imitate good pronunciation, and work hard to get their accents right. Pupils show pleasure when they use the correct vocabulary. They are praised appropriately and this promotes their personal esteem and confidence. For example, one pupil tried very hard several times to pronounce 'épicerie'; eventual success brought a real glow of pleasure and achievement. Teachers' planning and preparation is very good, and resources are very well used to enhance learning. Role-play as purchasers and shopkeepers greatly supports learning through the repetition of vocabulary. An excellent plenary session provides pupils with an opportunity to examine what they have learned, and to discuss in French the shops where they might purchase soft drinks or biscuits. All pupils are fully absorbed by the lesson.
- 88 Appropriate policy documentation is in place and schemes of work are closely linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. French is well established and is a successful addition to the school's curriculum.

## MUSIC

- 89 Only two music lessons were seen and these were at Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils made good progress in both lessons and achieved good standards of listening and attending. It is clear from looking at teachers' planning, their records of pupils' responses to activities and photographic evidence that at all key stages pupils make steady progress and their achievement is at least satisfactory and at times good. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. At Key Stage 2 pupils clap rhythms and chant simple phrases; they know which phrases match with which clapping patterns. Pupils understand about taking turns and are keen to have a 'go'. Higher attaining pupils lead part of the lesson by suggesting patterns and rhymes for the others to copy. Classroom assistants effectively help pupils with more complex learning difficulties and those who find the rhythms difficult to participate fully. The teacher provides a clear explanation of the activities and pupils understand what they have to do. They follow instructions carefully and successfully chant and clap in a 'round'. A few of the pupils recognise that this is a difficult activity but remember that they have done it before with one of the songs they know. Higher attaining pupils maintain their 'part' effectively. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to perform in front of the class and they do so with confidence. Pupils are developing good attention and listening skills. They stop and start on cue showing that they have paid attention and listened hard. At Key Stage 3 pupils know what sounds are produced by a wide range of percussion instruments. They are not always able to name them but effectively mime how they are played demonstrating their knowledge. Pupils use their initiative and their knowledge and understanding of the instruments when they are asked by the teacher to find different ways to play them. Pupils at both key stages sing familiar song accurately. They are confident to use their voices. In the whole school assembly pupils of all ages sing well. Many of them know the signs for the songs and use them spontaneously. Teachers sign the words for songs consistently and this is reflected in the confidence and accuracy that pupils use signing to accompany their singing.
- 90 Teaching is at least satisfactory; it was good in the two lessons seen. Teachers' planning is guided by a good scheme of work that closely reflects the content of the National Curriculum programmes of study. This ensures that pupils have appropriate opportunities to make progress. The school has a good range of musical resources and teachers use them effectively to support pupils' learning and encourage them to take part in activities. Classroom assistants are well deployed and effectively help pupils to take a full part in the activities that the teacher provides. Teachers make sure that there is a good balance to activities and that pupils have appropriate opportunities to perform and compose, listen and appraise. Music is used well to support the development of pupils' attention and listening skills and reinforce their



learning in other subject areas, such as literacy and numeracy and in subjects such as history and geography. On occasions an over-emphasis on the reinforcement of skills in other subject areas detracts from pupils' opportunities to 'make music'. Music makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' cultural awareness. During the inspection two classes were learning a song for 'Eid'. Teachers make sure that pupils experience the music that comes from the countries they are studying in geography and in history pupils have opportunities to listen to the music of the period they are studying. The subject is well led and managed. Good procedures have been developed that help the co-ordinator to effectively plan for subject development and enable effective monitoring of what is happening across the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 91 Across the school pupils make very good progress, they work hard and achieve the targets set for them. In swimming at Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils gain confidence in the water by playing exciting games and this helps them to develop their swimming skills. At Key Stage 4, pupils make excellent progress developing further confidence in the water, higher attaining pupils can jump into the water and swim with confidence. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 make very good gains in skill when they play games in the hall. They develop the techniques of passing and shooting in basketball, taking effective part in small team games. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties make the same progress as other pupils because they receive a very high level of support. Some pupils receive individual instruction by the teacher, support staff and therapists to promote their independence and they receive very good support to mobilise hands, wrists and fingers by gentle massage with oil. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they engage in a good level of physical activity when they visit a local soft-play room, they follow instructions to move around the room and press special switches to operate a fibre optic display. Pupils of all abilities develop good skills in playing 'Boccia'. They send a ball over a given distance with increasing accuracy. Pupils with more complex needs achieve very good standards in wheelchair dancing because volunteers from a local secondary school support them well. Pupils show growing understanding of the dance routines and make good attempts to respond to the rhythm.
- 92 Teaching was very good and excellent teaching was seen when pupils attended the local leisure pool. The teacher and swimming instructors have a very high level of expertise and this ensures that pupils receive very good support, effectively promoting their progress. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this is reflected in the high standard of behaviour in lessons and exemplary behaviour when pupils are out of school. Relationships are excellent and this enables pupils to collaborate well with each other and staff during team activities. Pupils are highly motivated by the high standard of instruction and concentrate hard on their tasks, constantly trying to improve their skills. Planning for lessons is effective, it makes full use of time and resources and this ensures that pupils engage in a significant level of physical activity. The teacher knows pupils well, work is very well matched to their needs and provides them with good levels of challenge. Behaviour is often excellent because pupils are interested in the activities and intent on learning.
- 93 The school has continued to improve standards in physical education since the last inspection and pupils with more complex learning difficulties now make the same progress as others. The provision for physical education is very good and there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of physical activities. This includes opportunities to undertake outdoor adventurous activities and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils also play competitive games against other schools, this promotes their social skills very well. The planning for physical education provides good opportunities to promote pupils' confidence and independence, for example, an important focus for lessons is that pupils become more independent in moving or dressing. The co-ordinator is a physical education specialist and this is a significant factor in the very high standard of the provision. Collaboration with therapists and instructors is effective in promoting pupils' physical development and welfare. The school has an excellent hydrotherapy pool but the hall and grassed area are unsatisfactory. The school makes very good use of swimming and sports facilities in the community to provide a rich curriculum for pupils and promote their physical development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 94 Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. They do not achieve as well as they could. There has been a decline in standards since the last inspection. At this time religious education was taught to all classes by one teacher who was an enthusiast. This teacher has now left the school. The school is aware that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach religious education successfully and the development of this subject is a priority in this year's school development plan. The co-ordinator has watched several lessons and examined teachers' planning. Appropriate development priorities have been identified and these include a review of the curriculum. A subject audit has also identified the need for more resources, particularly artefacts from different religions so that teachers can bring more life and interest to the subject.
- 95 Pupils' learning about Christian and other religions is slow and patchy. Pupils are not taught sufficient about different beliefs, ceremonies, dress, buildings, and symbols. However, teachers have given sufficient focus to developing pupils' understanding of the moral lessons from different religions and how these can be applied to their own lives at school and home and their progress in this narrow area of religious education is satisfactory.
- 96 Teaching is satisfactory but lesson planning is sometimes unclear, the content of lessons unimaginative and insufficiently related to religious education. The pace of teaching and learning is too slow and on occasions pupils are not actively involved in lessons. When there are insufficient staff little is learned because teachers cannot effectively manage pupils or support them to participate. It is to their credit that at these times pupils behave well and try to concentrate on what was being taught. In a lesson that involved role-play about the Good Samaritan pupils with more complex needs could not participate effectively because there was little signing to support their understanding. However, the majority of pupils enjoy role-play and are attentive and interested throughout. School assemblies provide a valuable addition to the teaching of religious education and also make a positive contribution to the development of pupils' cultural awareness. During the inspection pupils had good opportunities to learn about the festival of Eid.

## POST 16 PROVISION

- 97 Students have good opportunities for learning and as a result of this they make good progress and achieve well. Their learning is enhanced by the high expectations of staff and their work is well supported by careful planning. Although the provision has only been in place for 18 months much has been done to establish an appropriate curriculum. This has been successfully achieved and the basic skills of numeracy and literacy are well promoted, together with encouraging students to become more independent.
- 98 The National Literacy Strategy has been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of students. When they have read or listened to a class book students will be involved in shared reading and building their skills in letter recognition. There are a range of activities which ensure that the needs of all students are met and there is a clear focus on ensuring that the tasks are age appropriate. Students learn to recognise everyday signs and opportunities are given to ensure they recognise these in context. This is effectively done through visits to the local high street and time is well used when students are out of school.
- 99 Numeracy is promoted well and students develop their basic skills in counting, telling the time and recognition of coins. Higher attaining students collate information to make graphs and are encouraged to use calculators when adding a shopping list. One of the strong features of learning is the focus placed on *actual* situations. For example, when shopping pupils are encouraged to check till receipts and on their return they add up the amounts they have spent.
- 100 All students have a good range of experiences that prepare them well for leaving school. They develop skills in preparing meals and in general home management such as danger signs. Their social skills are well developed through visits to other schools and their trips around the local community. As a result they are aware of how to treat visitors and are confident communicators. The curriculum also ensures that students have an understanding of how to look after themselves. This includes an appropriate focus

on sex and drugs education as well as aspects of keeping fit such as circuit training. Leisure activities are well promoted and students are encouraged to look at developing different activities that interest them such as painting and reading or keeping a diary.

- 101 Students benefit from good teaching. The work is challenging and effective in providing them with as wide a range of experiences as possible. There are high expectations of what students can learn and very good use is made of resources both in and out of school. This is particularly evident in the use of technology both in terms of computers and equipment such as videos and dictaphones. Students are confident to use this equipment and enjoy seeing the results of their work. There are very good relationships between the staff and students, which gives students the confidence to try out new ideas and to experiment. This was evident in an art lesson where students were given opportunities to imitate the work of well known painters. One student was keen to try a different idea and was encouraged to do so. Other students were keen to try different textures and a good variety of resources enabled them to do so with some very pleasing results. There is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff who have a clear understanding of their role and work effectively with all students. There is a positive ethos within the post 16 provision, which is both supportive and encouraging, it enables students to make good progress in their learning.
- 102 Management of the provision is good and there is sufficient flexibility in planning to enable the curriculum to be adapted to meet the needs of the students. This is appropriate considering the diversity of needs within the class. The school appropriately aims to develop the post 16 curriculum to ensure a greater breadth for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The consistent review of the curriculum and provision is a credit to the teacher and reflects the high expectations that exist.
- 103 Much has been done to make the accommodation appropriate however it is not adequate to meet the needs of the students. The class is a thoroughfare, there is no door between the two classes which results in a lot of background noise. This is unsatisfactory particularly as two students have profound hearing loss. There is also insufficient space and when students with more complex needs are in standing equipment there is little room to manoeuvre. Students do not have the separate and discrete provision, which is recommended for this age group.

#### **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION.**

- 104 Pupils at all key stages make good progress and their achievements are reflected in their positive attitudes to learning, their personal development and their maturity. Through the school's personal and social education programme pupils are taught to be caring towards each other, they are often seen assisting others in a variety of ways, even quite young pupils may be seen helping each other with tying shoelaces or buttoning coats. Older pupils and students assist in serving each other with lunch. There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching pupils the differences between right and wrong, and there is evidence of their social development in the polite welcome of visitors to the classroom. Pupils are taught to share equipment, and organise themselves for work. For example, at Key Stage 3 pupils were observed waiting patiently for their turn when playing a board game.
- 105 Personal and social education is effectively supported by the school's very positive ethos. It is also taught as discrete lessons within the school's curriculum. The schools provision for sex education and drugs awareness meet statutory requirements, and parents are invited into the school to judge how this is being taught. They are given the option to withdraw their children if they wish. The subject policy and planning is satisfactory overall but there is a lack of consistency and cohesion to timetabled sessions. Often the time allocated is too short to be of real value, being squeezed in at the end of the morning or afternoon when the pupils are being prepared for lunch or home transport. Teaching is often good, lessons are well constructed and imaginative, and they are appropriately aimed at developing the pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and basic living skills. However, these lessons do not always allow sufficient time to complete planned activities and this detracts from their value.
- 106 The school has one week of the spring term dedicated to the development of pupils' personal and social

education. This annual event promotes pupils' awareness of the local environment, and includes off-site trips as well as visits from community concerns such as the police. In 1998 the theme for the personal and social skills week was 'citizenship' and the school was able to link with a Durham University manufacturing project. This initiative resulted in a beautiful patchwork quilt designed and made by the pupils. The last inspection described the school as happy and caring, offering an appropriate supportive approach to pupils' development through personal and social education. These standards have been maintained, and the pupils' personal and social education is an integral part of each school day.