

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGWATER SCHOOL

Harrogate

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121776

Headteacher: Mrs G Cook

Reporting inspector: R B Thompson
10781

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 7th April 2000

Inspection number: 190371

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Severe learning difficulties

School category: Community Special

Age range of pupils: 2 - 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Street
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr James Tinline

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Modern Foreign Language; Music; Religious education.	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? School data.
C Ames	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
A Hill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Physical education; Equal opportunities; Personal, social and health education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
P Hall	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Design and technology; Information communications technology.	School's results and pupils achievements.
April Dakin	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
C Emerson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Humanities; Special educational need.	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springwater School caters for 44 pupils between the ages of four and nineteen years with severe learning difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational needs, except for two who are being assessed. There are six pupils with autistic disorder syndrome. At secondary school age, pupils are disapplied from French. There have been no exclusions from school. The pupil-teacher ratio is about average for this type of school. The ratio of support staff is good. Income per pupil is above average for a school of this type. Attendance is very good, with no unauthorised absences and an authorised absence of 7.4 per cent, which is below average for this type of school. No pupils have English as an additional language, and seven pupils are entitled to free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Springwater school provides good quality educational opportunities for its pupils, helping them to achieve a good standard. Teaching is consistently at least good, and very good or better in almost half lessons seen. Teamwork between teachers and non-teaching staff is a strength of the school. As a consequence, pupils have positive attitudes and are learning well. The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant in most subjects, with provision for extra-curricular activities, careers and personal, social and health education. Overall, there are satisfactory care arrangements for pupils. The school keeps each parent well informed about their child's progress, and tries hard to involve them in the work of the school. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and has the capacity to make further progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching is consistently good and often very good. It is very well supported by the special support assistants, and has a significant effect on pupils' and students' progress and development.
- Relationships in school are very good.
- Pupils' and students' behaviour, attitudes and attendance are very good.
- Overall, provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The community's contribution to school life is very good.
- Literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well.
- The school provides very good quality information to parents on pupils' and students' progress.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The school development plan needs to be made more formal, explicit and coherent.
- All guidelines and training relating to risk, health and safety and challenging behaviour need to be completed.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum in design and technology, information technology, art and writing need to be improved.
- Accredited courses are needed for pupils at Key Stage 4 and a wider range is needed for students at Post 16.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1996, the school has made good improvement. Teaching has improved considerably and is now a strength of the school. The quality of the curriculum has improved and now reflects the National Curriculum. Improvements have been more modest in design and technology, information and communication technology and art. Implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has improved standards. The quality of pupils' individual education plans has improved; they have fewer targets and are more specific. Pupils make good progress in academic and personal development. Pupils' attitudes and personal development have improved. Very good behaviour has been maintained. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching has improved and is strong. The quality of information to parents has improved. Toilet provision has been refurbished and improved. There has been limited improvement in strategic planning. The quality of strategic planning is not yet secure.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school sets targets for English, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSE) for all pupils and students in their individual education plans. Overall pupils' and students' achievements are good in mathematics and English. They are very good at Key Stage 1 and 2 in English, and very good in personal and social education. Pupils and students achieve well in all other subjects, except in art where achievement is satisfactory. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils and students are a strength of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and students are eager to attend and proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' and students' behaviour is very good. They are attentive and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils and students relate well to each other and staff. They demonstrate good motivation and concentrate well.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, with no unauthorised absence.

Pupils and students concentrate well, collaborate and persevere until tasks are completed. They settle quickly in lessons. The atmosphere in classroom is purposeful and contributes significantly to pupils' and students' achievements. Relationships in classes are very good, and pupils and students are very friendly and helpful to visitors. There are clear expectations for work and behaviour, and those pupils and students with additional special educational needs are appropriately supported.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching of English, mathematics, science and personal and social education is consistently good across all key stages. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been effective. Teaching of communication skills is good. Teaching is 100 per cent satisfactory or better. Ninety two per cent of teaching is good or better, and 49 per cent is very good or better. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in personal and social education, music and physical education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils and students. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares satisfactorily for its pupils and students.

Good opportunities are made for parents to visit the school, such as two formal parents' evenings each year, and additional coffee mornings to cement relationships. Home-school agreements have been well received by parents, of whom 94 per cent have responded positively. Home-school diaries are used well, particularly in the sensory classes. Literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well and are having a positive effect on progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, key staff and governors provide satisfactory leadership of the school. However, the school development plan is not yet sufficiently formalised, explicit and coherent.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body are actively involved in the development of the school. They do not yet provide sufficient strategic direction for the long-term development of the school. There are some minor aspects of requirements that are not fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is in its early stages of development. Academic performance is monitored, but as yet it is not evaluated against standards.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively and efficiently.

There is an adequate number of staff for the number of pupils and students on roll, and a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The shared commitment of staff and governors to school improvement is strong. The school understands the principles of 'best value' and applies them effectively. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, with some strong points such as the hydrotherapy pool, the class gardens and walkways. The school is well maintained and clean. Attractive displays of pupils' work make a significant contribution to the learning environment and the positive ethos of the school, and encourage learning and personal development. However, there is a lack of specific accommodation for science, design and technology and art. Learning resources are satisfactory. A good feature of provision is the way in which appliances are adapted to meet pupils' special physical needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents say their children like coming to school.• Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school.• They feel the school is well led and managed.• They feel well informed about their child's progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a homework policy.

Partnership with parents is generally good, and the information available to parents, such as reports, reviews and records of achievement, is very good. Home-school dairies are used to good effect, particularly in the sensory classes. Most of the questionnaires completed by 36 parents showed good support for the school. The inspection team agree with parents that a homework policy should be formally implemented.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils with additional special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils with visual impairment respond well to sensitive management and good teaching that maximises the use of other senses. This results in good progress. There is good provision for pupils with additional physical disabilities, which is promoted by good support from outside specialists. This enables pupils to feel comfortable and progress well. The recent implementation of the 'Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications Handicapped Children' programme in some classes enables pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to make satisfactory progress. Progress will continue to improve if the methodology is consistently applied throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

2. This aspect was judged to be of a high standard at the last inspection and remains a strength of the school. Pupils arrive on time and are eager to begin work, often leading their escort into class. On arrival, the behaviour of pupils is very good. Behaviour in class is also consistently very good. Only rare, isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour were observed, and the staff are united and consistent in their approach to behavioural issues. High standards of politeness and courtesy are expected and obtained. Several good examples were observed during lessons and in the playground of pupils sharing equipment, playing well together and relating well to the staff. One support assistant was seen, on more than one occasion, cycling around the playground with a pupil aboard and both enjoying it immensely.

3. No instances of bullying or sexism were observed, and it is clear from the remarks of the pupils, parents and staff that any such activity would be treated promptly and effectively. Pupils and students hold each other in great respect. At a Post 16 class, the students listened intently to their peers during an English lesson when a group session was organised. Later in the session, many students were able to accurately recall the statements made by their peers, and make reasoned judgements about them, demonstrating that they had concentrated well and made best use of the learning opportunities. Similar examples were observed in other parts of the school. In a personal and social education lesson, pupils contributed well to the theme of citizenship, recognising the differences between rights and responsibilities.

4. Opportunities to take responsibility exist for pupils, especially the older ones. This aspect of their personal development is not so well structured as the other aspects. Pupils are expected to collect and return registers. Older ones assist the younger or less able pupils in the playground and in class and pupils and students take an active part in their assemblies. Younger pupils are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and, as they grow through the school, their behaviour shows that they have understood the difference and strive to behave well. Older pupils and students show initiative and take responsibility for serving and clearing up in the dining room. The more able pupils and students are often seen to support those in wheelchairs, or those who seem to need an encouraging or friendly word.

5. Because of appropriate levels of support, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders mostly participate in lessons and join in with the life of the school. However, they do not always respond well to strategies for managing their behaviour and, on occasions, this can impede their learning. Pupils with more profound and complex needs are happy and settled in school.

6. Attendance remains consistently very good, with no unauthorised absences. Very few pupils miss school for anything other than sickness or hospital appointments.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

7. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. All teaching is at least satisfactory. It is good or better in 88 per cent of lessons seen, with 49 per cent of lessons being very good or better. It is very good in religious education, music, physical education and personal, social and health education. It is good in all other subjects, except for art where it is satisfactory overall. Teaching is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2. It is good, and often very good, at Key stages 3 and 4 and at Post 16.

8. The strengths are in the teachers' knowledge and experience of working with pupils with learning difficulties. This enables them to successfully use a range of appropriate methods and resources to get the best out of pupils. Sensory approaches are used well with pupils with more profound and complex difficulties. Teachers are good at revisiting what pupils have learned previously, and reinforcing their learning to ensure that they remember facts and skills. As a result of the lively and enthusiastic manner in which teachers present a range of stimulating activities, pupils are very responsive and well motivated to learn.

9. In the most successful lessons, very good planning produces a well-structured and varied educational programme. This gives pupils a very rich range of learning experiences. The majority of lessons have clear learning objectives, which are well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Careful evaluation of pupils' success in meeting these targets enables teachers to measure progress and plan future work effectively. However, pupils' targets are insufficiently clear in a small number of lessons, with the result that they make less evident progress.

10. Subject knowledge is a particular strength in music, religious education and physical education, and this results in very good learning. For example, in a physical education lesson, teachers understood how to extend pupils' range of movements despite their physical limitations. Teachers are skilled in using questioning to develop pupils' language skills, and to check that they have understood and remembered what has been taught.

11. The teaching of English is good overall and very good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers are skilled in developing communication skills. They use objects of reference, visual symbols and Makaton signing as well as spoken language. However, symbols are currently not used sufficiently for recording or to label displays of work around the school. Opportunities for pupils to develop a range of writing and recording skills are rather limited in some classes.

12. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been effective, and has increased teachers' confidence in a range of class, small group and individual teaching methods. This has resulted in successful and well-targeted lessons where pupils often achieve very well in mathematics. Teaching of science is good overall. High quality support from learning support assistants enables teachers to deliver a rich sensory science curriculum.

13. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They know them very well and have high expectations for their learning and behaviour. Praise is used well to reward effort and to encourage pupils to persevere. This results in most pupils being productive, attentive and involved in lessons. However, incidents of challenging behaviour could be managed more successfully if individual behaviour plans were consistently adhered to and monitored.

14. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with visual impairments, and good support enables them to learn well. A strength of the teaching is the detailed and careful planning for pupils with additional physical disabilities. They are regularly repositioned using a range of equipment. This helps them to feel comfortable and make good progress. Provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is satisfactory. Teachers have recently introduced into some classrooms the 'Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communications Handicapped Children' programme. This forms a sound basis for further developments.

15. Learning support assistants are well deployed to work very effectively alongside teachers, and they provide very high quality support to pupils. This enables all pupils to participate fully in lessons and enhances their learning. Visiting professional staff also make very positive contributions to some lessons. For instance, the physiotherapist and occupational therapist provide good advice and support to the physical education programme.

16. Reading books are sent home regularly in the junior class. Home-school books are used effectively to develop pupils' communication skills.

17. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and the quality of teaching is now a strength of the school.

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

18. The school has effectively addressed the curriculum issues raised in the last report, and now meets the statutory requirement to provide a satisfactorily broad, balanced and relevant curriculum across all key stages. An additional inspection report of March 1998 confirms and endorses the improvements made to the curriculum since the last inspection. Curriculum planning has been undertaken by the deputy head teacher, in consultation with the subject teachers, and is now strong. Teachers work from good medium term plans, linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. Appropriate subject schemes of work are now in place. The overall improvement is most noticeable in the sensory development department, where the weakness in tracking the progress of lower attaining pupils and students has been addressed effectively. Here the adaptation of a commercial 'small steps' curriculum is enabling teachers to plan for appropriate learning steps, and to measure more accurately the progress of pupils and students with profound and complex educational needs.

The broad personal and social education curriculum is a strength of the school curriculum. It is very effective in raising pupils' and students' awareness of themselves as social beings in a difficult and complex world. It covers sex education and drugs awareness at appropriate stages of learning, aspects of which are discussed with parents beforehand. Through this well embedded programme, the pupils learn to respect and be tolerant of one another. The very good behaviour found during the inspection amply illustrates the strength of this provision. There are many opportunities for the social integration of pupils and students; classes are sufficiently flexible to enable some pupils and students to integrate with appropriate classes in some subjects.

19. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has enabled pupils to gain more ready access to the National Curriculum. Together, they offer good curriculum provision for pupils at all key stages and across the range of special educational needs. The development of communication skills in the sensory development department is a high quality input. It requires imagination, skill and dedication, from teachers and support staff who work with pupils and students with profound and complex learning needs. Most teachers and support staff make good use of signing, symbols and objects of reference, as supporting methods for developing communication skills. The good programmes of study in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science ensure that pupils make good progress in these subjects. Strategies for teaching writing to higher attainers are satisfactory, but they have too few opportunities to write for different purposes. Symbols are not used to sufficient effect in recording attainment on wall displays and in some lessons. Information and communications technology is not yet fully effective across the curriculum, but there are plans to upgrade and network the school computers.

20. The integration of students into mainstream further education and work experience is well planned and managed, although the link with a local further education college is currently being re-negotiated, because of integration difficulties encountered by Springwater students. The school makes good use of a local Barnardos resource, which enables students to learn to cater and serve, and to develop advanced social skills as they grow towards independent living. Links with other schools have also improved. Springwater now has dialogue and pupil exchange with four primary schools in the area as well as linking with three secondary schools. Students from other secondary schools visit Springwater for work experience, whilst students from Springwater are able to make use of other schools' facilities. The system works well to mutual benefit.

21. Careers opportunities are satisfactory. The Careers Skills Award, accredited by the local Careers Guidance Service, is a very effective learning support that requires students to negotiate tasks and evaluate them with the tutor on completion. Work experience is planned in three stages, commencing in Year 12 with the 'personal safety' module from the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course. Pupils then go on to the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network careers programme, 'Work Awareness', in Year 13. This is combined with a work experience programme that uses four sheltered work placements and a local supermarket. Nevertheless, there is a need to broaden the range of work experience placements available to students. For Post 16 students, there

are links to a special residential further education college and to the adult social education centre next to the school, where there is a day-care facility. The Post 16 programme is weakened by the unsatisfactory accommodation on the school site. There are no facilities for a social and recreational area for the students, and there is no independent living resource that can effectively support their growth towards independence. The lack of any accredited courses available at the end of Key Stage 4 weakens the link between the school and the Post 16 unit.

22. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities are difficult to organise because all pupils and students are transported to and from school. However, there is a very good archaeology club on a weekday lunchtime, and the school offers the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme outside of the school curriculum. Opportunities for social and health education are offered at lunch and break times, organised by support staff. The well-planned 'drinks time' for pupils with profound and complex needs is managed well by teachers and support staff. It offers a personal and social education input, which is strengthened effectively through the development of communication skills. The social services department organises respite and overnight care, which includes teatime activities at the local resource centre.

23. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and students is very good overall. Provision for their spiritual development is good, whilst provision for their moral, social and cultural development is very good. Grace is sung and signed before lunch, and there is a time for reflection or prayer given during daily assemblies. In one assembly seen during the inspection, there was time given for reflection that ended with a North American Indian sacred spirit song. Educational visits to museums and theatres add to these opportunities to explore their own and others' values, as well as contributing to their social and cultural experience. Post 16 students sensibly discuss important issues of moral and social concern. Pupils and students care for each other, take turns and help each other. This is well supported by the very good example shown by adults throughout the school. Most subjects plan for group work, which encourages personal and social development. For example, a lesson in food preparation enabled pupils to select menus, shop and prepare meals to eat with a guest. There are mathematical games on the curriculum that provide well for social development.

24. The contribution to cultural provision from the humanities department is good. Pupils are encouraged to tolerate and understand the differing cultures found in societies other than their own. In an assembly, pupils and students learned about the North American Indian culture through 'creation' stories. The lunchtime archaeology club makes a good contribution, through discussions about life in early Africa, compared to life in this country now.

25. Most subjects plan well for group work, which encourages personal and social development. For example, a lesson in food preparation enabled pupils to select menus, shop and prepare meals to eat with a guest. There are mathematical games on the curriculum that provide well for social development.

Equal Opportunities

26. The school provides for a range of special educational needs, including pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and sensory impairments. The students and pupils share playtimes, lunchtimes and assemblies together, and evidence shows that they are supportive, caring and understanding of each other's needs. Many of the higher attaining students and pupils help their peers. Teachers and support staff are trained in lifting and handling procedures, and are able to meet pupils' routine medical requirements. The toileting arrangements for those with additional and complex special needs are satisfactory, and these procedures safeguard the respect and dignity of pupils and students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school cares for its pupils satisfactorily. However, the procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are unsatisfactory. Guidelines that are laid down for child protection are not clear, and this has led to support staff not knowing who to report concerns to. Both designated persons for child protection have not received up-to-date training. In addition, the governing body have not ratified a policy for restraint of pupils, or trained the teachers in restraint procedures. There is effective liaison with outside agencies. The therapists provide good advice, which has a good effect on the provision of additional communication and ensures pupils make at least good progress in their physical development. The nurse, although not permanently in the school, offers regular health advice and training. There are enough staff trained in first aid and members of support staff have been given additional training about more specific health needs. The head teacher satisfactorily monitors health and safety, although this is not regularly reported to the governing body. The minor health and safety concerns raised at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. There are good guidelines for pool safety, and regular checks are carried out on all electrical and fire equipment. Fire drills are carried out regularly and recorded. However, there are no risk assessments of school educational visits or other subjects on the curriculum, such as science or design technology. Arrangements for arrivals and departures of pupils are unsatisfactory. Pupils are left too long exposed to the weather while entering or leaving their transport.

28. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. There are daily checks of registers, and unexplained absences are quickly followed up. The services of the educational welfare officer are used appropriately. Procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective for the majority of pupils. There is a positively written behaviour and discipline policy that clearly identifies rewards and sanctions. These are well understood by members of staff, pupils and parents. The behaviour plans for pupils with more challenging behaviour give advice to staff, but their format is not easily monitored and evaluated to identify what strategies work. There is no bound incident book, and incidents that occur are sometimes recorded inappropriately within the accident book. Teachers keep a daily event diary in order to monitor behaviour and record significant events that may affect learning. The bullying policy and good supervision are effective in eliminating oppressive conduct.

29. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development. These are now at least sound. Teachers know their pupils well, and now set work to meet individual needs in the majority of subjects. There has been a reduction in the number of targets set within individual educational plans. These are now of good quality, and most targets are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time related. Targets have been set as a result of baseline assessment of all pupils using a commercial scheme, which is linked to desirable outcomes for learning, and has been specially designed to meet the needs of pupils with severe and profound difficulties. This provides a useful starting point for the setting of priority targets in English, mathematics and personal and social education. National Curriculum teacher assessments and performance in accredited courses also provide information about how well pupils are doing. However, accreditation could be further extended to meet the needs of students of differing abilities in Post 16 and Key Stage 4.

30. At present, all information is not collated to illustrate attainment by key stage, class, individual and gender. Therefore, the school does not have a firm basis for setting whole school targets. However, it is ensuring that learning is now more purposeful, and should make the evaluation of progress at the annual review more focused. Targets are to be set and reviewed every term, and will be valuable in assessing how well pupils are achieving. Progress towards targets in other subjects is satisfactorily recorded on medium term planning, although this is not always consistently implemented to show individual progress. The quality of assessment information on which individual education plans are based depends on the detail in teachers' medium and short-term plans. The information is less effective in design technology, information technology and in art for higher attaining pupils, where teacher expertise is variable and there is insufficient guidance for writing suitable targets. Where targets are detailed and related to specific skills and techniques, they are beginning to be monitored and evaluated well.

31. The school has also set up a moderating system that enables co-ordinators to track the progress of a sample of pupils of differing abilities. This is working well and could be usefully extended to track the progress of pupils on the autistic spectrum, for example. This would enable governors to be more informed on the progress of pupils with additional needs. The progress of pupils with additional special needs is well monitored by the therapists. However, targets for these pupils could be more usefully integrated into their individual educational plans if the targets were better negotiated at the annual review.

32. Records of pupils' achievements are well maintained, and show a considerable effort on the part of the school to keep them easily accessible and up-to-date. However, not all achievements are dated and annotated to show the context and degree of support given during the assessments. Symbols could be used more effectively to make them more accessible to the pupils.

33. The school meets the statutory requirements for day provision as outlined in Statements of Special Educational Needs. Individual plans to manage and monitor challenging behaviour are not always consistently implemented and evaluated. Although the school has adopted the local education authority policy on the use of force to control or restrain pupils, there has been no specialised recent training in this area.

34. Pupils' personal development is supported by class teachers' good knowledge of pupils. Where appropriate, there is effective collaboration of other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Pupils' self esteem and confidence is built up by regular praise, not only in lessons, but also by having a 'pupil of the week' system for each class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Partnership with parents is generally good with some very good elements. The information provided to parents has improved since the last inspection. The prospectus gives most of the information required, whilst supporting documents offer good, clear, additional data. Two formal meetings a year give parents the opportunity to see their children's work and discuss their progress, whilst additional coffee mornings provide further good opportunities for informal dialogue with the staff.

36. A yearly report is prepared for each pupil, which is detailed with strengths and weaknesses and gives clear direction on future targets. In addition, each pupil who has a statement of special need receives a comprehensive, annual review with the parents present. Every pupil has a record of achievement that covers most aspects of their school career well, such as progress in class, successes, assessments and certificates obtained. Photographic evidence of achievement plays an important and significant role in this work.

37. Only a few parents are able to help in school, due mainly to the distances that many have to travel. However, parents contribute well in other ways by supporting functions and fundraising activities. For example, the Friends of Springwater School have raised £10,000 over the last few years, which has greatly enhanced the life of the school in a number of effective ways.

38. The home-school agreement is now in place and has been agreed with 94 per cent of parents. Parents are generally very happy with the information provided and the quality of liaison with the staff. Home-school diaries are used effectively by many families, as a way of communicating with the teacher over a variety of personal and academic issues. The use of the home-school links, and the quality of information provided to parents, makes a significant contribution to the learning opportunities of the pupils. However, a small number of parents did express disappointment that they did not know how much work their children should do at home, and a school homework policy would be helpful.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The school is satisfactorily led on a day-to-day basis. Since the last inspection, the senior management team has been increased to three. The arrival of the third member has helped establish clearer roles for the subject co-ordinators in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching. Routines and roles are clear, and the school is an orderly community where teaching and learning are positive. The school has developed appropriate aims and values directly related to the special educational needs of the pupils and students. Their education takes place within a supportive ethos where relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils and students enjoy coming to school and generally make good progress. There is a positive atmosphere, conducive to learning. All staff are committed to providing good educational standards for pupils and students.

40. All key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. After consultations with the local education authority and advice from an external independent educational consultant, the school development plan has been extended to run until September 2000, when a new three-year plan will be implemented. A draft of this plan was presented to the inspection team during the week of the inspection. This plan is at an early stage of development and is not yet sufficiently formal, explicit and coherent.

41. The governing body is very committed to the development of the school and is very supportive. All appropriate committees are in place, and the governing body fulfils its responsibilities in all respects. Since the last inspection, it has become more involved in and knowledgeable about the daily life of the school. Members attach themselves to aspects of school life, visiting and reporting back on their designated areas to the full governing body. Literacy and numeracy aspects are particularly well monitored by the governors. Teachers welcome this involvement by the governors, and are pleased to discuss developments with them.

42. There are sufficient staff, both teaching and support staff, in relation to the number of pupils on roll. They are well experienced in teaching pupils and students with special educational needs. All staff have clear job descriptions. Subject co-ordinators have clear roles. They effectively monitor and evaluate their subject, and the quality of teaching within their subject. This works well. The quality of teaching across the school has greatly improved since the last inspection. All staff have been appraised, and since September 1999, all teachers have negotiated a series of objectives to achieve. Each has a whole school target, a class target and an individual personal target. Progress of these targets is monitored and evaluated by the senior management team.

43. There is an appropriate induction process in place for new teachers. The teacher who has most recently undergone induction, even though she is only on a temporary contract, reported that she was very pleased with the mentoring and support from staff and colleagues in her department.

44. Routine financial management is very good. It is both prudent and efficient, and linked well to the school's priorities. Information technology is used very effectively to monitor budgets. Very careful oversight of expenditure is maintained. The part-time bursar reports on a very regular basis to the headteacher and the governing body, who are appreciative of the way in which reports are presented in an understandable form. Day-to-day administration is very good. Information technology systems are used effectively by the

part-time bursar to produce budget information for the headteacher and the governing body, who appreciate the easy to understand way in which the figures are presented. The school demonstrates vigour in its application of best value principles. However, the school has not benefited from a thorough audit of its financial procedures by the local education authority since 1997.

45. The fabric of the building is generally in good condition, and the school is well maintained and clean. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, with some strong points such as the hydrotherapy pool, class gardens, the sensory room and sensory walkways. However, accommodation for Post 16 students is unsatisfactory, because there is a lack of specific accommodation for science, art and design and technology. Attractive displays of pupils' work make a significant contribution to the learning environment and the positive ethos of the school, while they encourage learning and personal development. Learning resources are generally satisfactory. In humanities, religious education and music they are good. Resources for physical education are very good, but those for art and science are unsatisfactory, limiting the range of work which can be taught. All classes now have computers and the school is to be fully networked and linked to the Internet after Easter.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The school and the governing body should:

- improve the breadth and balance of the curriculum in design and technology, information communication technology, art and writing;
(*Paragraphs: 11, 19, 30, 53, 54, 86*)
- ensure that the school development plan is more formal, explicit and coherent;
(*Paragraph: 40*)
- complete all related guidelines and training relating to risk, health and safety and challenging behaviour;
(*Paragraphs: 27, 28, 33, 55*)
- ensure that accreditation courses are offered to pupils at Key Stage 4 and extended for students at Post 16.
(*Paragraphs: 21, 29, 59, 75*)

47. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- the school should ensure pupils are not exposed to inclement weather during arrival and departure procedures;
(*Paragraph: 27*)
- accommodation for Post 16 students should be improved;
(*Paragraphs: 21, 45, 108*)
- design and technology accommodation should be upgraded to ensure full programmes of study are taught;
(*Paragraphs: 45, 75*)
- resources for art and science should be improved.
(*Paragraphs: 45, 64, 69*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	43	43	8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	44
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

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ASDAN 'TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE' UNITS:

MODULE	NUMBER OF PASSES
Recognising and using every day signs	6
Meal preparation and cooking	6
Knowing about myself	6
Work awareness	4
Current affairs	4
Initial keyboard skills	1
Personal safety	1

YORK and NORTH YORKSHIRE GUIDANCE SERVICES

MODULE	LEVEL	NUMBER OF PASSES
Careers Award	Bronze level	8

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.1
Average class size	7.6

Education support staff:

YR – Y13

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	512476.00
Total expenditure	481384.00
Expenditure per pupil	10698.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	35500.00
* Balance carried forward to next year	66592.00

* This balance contains monies to maintain present staffing levels 2000/2001

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	44
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	42	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	27	7	13	20
The teaching is good.	50	46	0	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	33	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	33	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	50	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	52	39	4	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	25	0	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	39	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	48	0	0	4

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

ENGLISH

48. Overall, the achievement of pupils in English is now good. The co-ordinator and class teams have worked hard to make good improvements since the last inspection, and to implement a modified literacy strategy well. Pupils now make similar progress whatever their degree of difficulty. Progress is now good in speaking and listening and reading, and satisfactory in writing. The modified literacy hour is well linked to individual educational plans, which are based on assessment through a commercial scheme written specially for pupils with both severe and profound learning difficulties. Mixed key stage groupings of similar levels of skills and ability assist teachers to plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils within each group across the school.

49. Teaching is good overall. Teachers use a range of additional methods for communication, and are very well supported by the advice and teaching of the speech and language therapist who monitors individual progress. As a result, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 with profound and multiple learning difficulties use a range of switches to make choices, and are beginning to show an understanding of the objects used to signal a change of activity. For example, the teacher of older pupils with more complex needs wears a brightly coloured, story-time jacket, hung with bells. This signals to pupils that they are to be told a story. Stories are told enthusiastically, using a range of sensory materials to involve and stimulate pupils. Other objects, such as cups and towels, are consistently used throughout the school to signal drinks time or hydrotherapy. This allows pupils to gain a good understanding of what is to happen to them next.

50. Coactive signing (hand over hand) is used well with pupils, and helps them to understand the key words used in lessons, or to learn signs for activities. Symbols are also used. Consequently, average attaining pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 learn the meaning of symbols and signs, so that, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils listen well, construct simple phrases with symbols and sign them in response to questions. The classroom assistants who help in lessons give them very good support. However, there is little evidence of symbol use in Post 16. Symbols or photographs are also beginning to be used for pupils who are on the autistic spectrum, to communicate what they have to do at different times in the day. This is helping them to cope with the classroom situation, so that they know when it is time for work and time for play.

51. Objects are also used well in lessons to reference pupils to the key words or characters in stories. As a result, pupils give good attention to the teacher and learn the object's name or its function or properties through this method. This works well. For example, when telling the story of the Three Little Pigs, the early years' teacher had soft pigs of different sizes, and the sticks, bricks and straw. All pupils had time to feel and hold the objects and gained an understanding of the story and the materials. Older pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 make good gains in understanding elements of stories through the same methods. In addition, teachers recap previous work well, ask a range of questions to meet individual needs, and, as a result, pupils show a good understanding of the stories and texts they study.

52. Big books and story sacks are used well in lessons. However, the co-ordinator has not yet planned in sufficient detail which texts will be used and when, and this could result in some texts being repeated too often. There are some shortfalls in age-appropriate resources for older pupils, although the Post 16 teacher adapts more age-appropriate texts well to meet a range of needs. Reading strategies are generally taught well to higher attaining pupils. Guided reading takes place at the beginning of each day on an individual basis, or as a group as pupils get older. Work set is well linked to individual educational plans. Pupils are encouraged to look at the picture to help make sense of the sentence they are reading. Phonics sounds and blends are taught well to higher attaining pupils through visual and sensory methods. As a result most know their letter sounds and some consonant blends by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 use some phonic strategies to read new words, and spell simple words using the letters and blends they know. The highest attaining pupils use a range of strategies to read new words in Post 16. Average attaining pupils gain a good understanding of the words they will find in the community, and gain accreditation awards for this.

53. The weaker part of the implementation of the literacy hour is in the opportunities presented for writing. The school has not planned how much time will be spent on this element, either in the literacy hour or in other subjects. There is little evidence of planning how pupils will learn to write in a range of forms. As a result, there was only limited evidence of independent writing in the sample provided. This was extended to some extent in Post 16, where students write profiles, simple sentences to record work in humanities, and fill in forms. There is still too much emphasis placed on copy writing, although pupils who write independently make good progress in the writing of sentences, formation of letters and in the length of writing they achieve.

54. Information technology, although used well to support reading and language work, is rarely used to support independent writing tasks set for a purpose and audience. Nevertheless, there was a good example of a higher attaining pupil in Key Stage 3 using technology to generate questions, and to practise using question marks and capital letters. Punctuation is well addressed in the text level work in the literacy hour, and, as result, higher attaining pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have a growing awareness of capital letters and full stops. Older higher attaining pupils show a greater understanding of the use of question marks and speech marks in the texts they read. However, pupils have few opportunities to use this knowledge in their own writing. Average attaining pupils learn to generate simple phrases using symbols, but there is little evidence of the use of symbols for writing and reading in other subjects, or for exemplifying language on display. This limits opportunities for average attaining pupils to read and write independently.

55. Behaviour is generally well managed, including, occasionally, the more challenging behaviour of some pupils. There are strategies in place to manage behaviour, but these are not always formally monitored to see what works. Praise is used effectively in most lessons, to promote good standards in looking and listening, for example. Teachers celebrate and value pupils' work and this is raising self-esteem. Pupils generally work productively in lessons; have a love of stories and books. Most pay good attention to the teacher and work hard.

MATHEMATICS

56. Achievements in numeracy are good, with occasionally very good achievements by individual higher attaining pupils. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Progress is particularly good in the junior part of the school, where strong gains are made in developing the early concepts of number and the associated vocabulary. These gains in numeracy are linked to the recent introduction of a modified numeracy framework across the school. Both high and low attaining pupils are making progress within the class-taught parts of the lessons, as well as when working in small differentiated groups or as individuals. Younger pupils learn that the day is divided into parts and that events happen in a planned sequence. By the end of junior department, higher attaining pupils share objects around a group of friends fairly, recognise numbers from one to nine, and are building a useful mathematical vocabulary, understanding concepts such as 'more, less, big, little, share'. Pupils with more complex needs sustain involvement for a long time, react well to story and sensory stimulus, and link switching and use of a touch screen to changes. A Key Stage 2 pupil, with visual impairment, is able to achieve well in her mathematics lesson, counting the beanbags that hit or miss the target by concentrated listening. Other pupils in the senior part of the school make good gains in learning about equivalence up to 5p as a result of patient and persevering teaching, but they find it harder going when dealing with 10p. Senior higher attaining pupils work well in a class activity, counting on in odd or even numbers to twenty. In small group work, pupils select the right number of items of cutlery to complete place settings for two people. A small group of Post 16 pupils work hard and achieve well in an exercise to move time on by half hours, though they find it difficult to identify mistakes without prompts. They enjoy dice games to practice equivalence to 10, and extend that to 20 by the end of the lesson.

57. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. It is slightly stronger in Key Stages 1 and 2, and in the Post 16 unit where examples of very good teaching are seen. The strength is the consistent quality across the school where the range of methods introduced or reinforced as part of the numeracy strategy are having a positive effect. Class and mental mathematics activities are well paced to motivate pupils, enabling those who are less secure to build confidence through such methods as whole class chants or games. Medium term plans show clearly differentiated work designed to meet the needs of smaller groups and individuals. These activities often show clear links to pupils' individual education targets. Resources are appropriate and, though not always exciting, they are fit for the purpose and familiar to pupils. Teachers and support staff miss very few opportunities to introduce numeracy activities across the curriculum, whether it is 'catching fish' in the hydrotherapy pool, measuring ingredients for cooking, or planning to spend money in the local shops. Staff teams use their knowledge of pupils well when tenaciously pushing for the next gain in knowledge and understanding. They are rewarded by pupils' growth in confidence and pleasure in success.

58. The school has recently introduced a modified numeracy strategy. It is clearly in place in all classrooms and offers pupils in each year a well-balanced programme of study. The scheme of work provides for a carefully graduated range of small steps in each aspect of the curriculum, with the opportunities for working through seven levels before entering National Curriculum level one work. This framework is being trialed by staff at present, in preparation for the proposed introduction of similar schemes in other subjects. The school has applied a useful baseline assessment programme to all pupils so as to ensure they enter the programme at the appropriate level.

59. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress in mathematics have undergone a period of rapid development and are now good in Key Stages 1 to 4. They are satisfactory at Post 16 in relation to number and measure, both against the pupils' individual education plan targets and as part of an award scheme, but there is no specific external accreditation. Across the school, baseline assessments and moderated samples of pupils' work are providing a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do in most classes, both against the scheme of work and against individual targets.

60. The deputy head has recently taken over leadership of this subject in order to provide a whole school and strategic overview during the implementation period of the Numeracy Strategy. The successful approach taken in this subject is seen in many ways as a pilot for other subject development planned to take place. New curriculum policy documents and schemes of work contain finely graded steps to enable all pupils to identify gains in learning and achievement. Clear strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching have been established. These result in written commentaries on the agreed focus for observation for all teachers.

SCIENCE

61. In lessons and work seen, the achievements and progress of pupils are good overall. They are slightly better at Key Stages 3 and 4. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when progress was deemed satisfactory. Pupils and students with profound and complex special educational needs make very good progress in lessons, through the very good teaching and support of a sensory programme of science activities. Higher attaining Post 16 students are not offered discrete lessons of science, although some human biology is taught in personal, social and health education lessons. Topical discussions on issues such as environmental pollution help to raise students' awareness of issues that challenge the scientific community, as well as the community at large.

62. The very well planned lessons of sensory science broaden and enrich the experience of pupils and students with profound and complex needs, at all key stages. The very good teaching and support maintain a very good focus to the lessons, enabling good progress to be made. The pupils and students explore materials such as paper, dough, textiles, rice and flour, communicating their reactions through facial and bodily gesture, eye pointing and vocalisation. Some are able to anticipate the next stage of an experiment. A small minority are signing with minimal support, and one pupil is beginning to verbalise her responses. One student showed very good sound tracking when an electric whisk was used to mix different liquids, and there was a good pre-verbal response from a pupil who was fascinated and enthused by the lesson. Very good class management, which uses the very good

understanding that support staff have of the pupils and students, ensures a good, fluent pace to lessons, and effective learning. Opportunities to develop basic communication skills, through the use of symbols and word or picture cards, are less effective in these lessons, although co-active signing by the support staff is a strength. The predictive skills of higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are effectively challenged by the use of simplified language, which retains some subject specific terminology. The fine motor skills of these pupils were developed well, through the demand on their pouring and mixing skills, in a well planned materials lesson. There was a very good check on their learning through a question and answer session at the end of the lesson. Pupils recalled terms such as ‘experiment’, ‘liquid’ and ‘separation’ and could describe their meaning. They recalled that oil can be recovered from an oil and water mix, by pouring off. The pupils plant seeds and observe their growth, knowing that they need water and light to grow to maturity.

63. Higher attaining pupils work well together, taking turns to investigate materials and supporting each through the experiments. Pupils and students with profound and complex special needs respond positively to sensory science lessons. They show interest and enjoyment in handling different textures and communicate their choice of materials effectively.

64. The recently appointed co-ordinator has had training and good experience in teaching the subject. She is keen to develop the subject further, using the innovative ‘small steps’ curriculum that has just been introduced into the school. The three-year rolling programme of science covers the National Curriculum programmes of study well, ensuring continuity and progression through the key stages. However, there is a need to build up investigational resources for science and to bring information communications technology fully into the programmes of study.

65. The department has made a good response to issues raised in the last inspection report. Teaching and learning have improved, curriculum planning is good, and there is a good scheme of work for teachers to plan from. The subject is now led effectively, and is monitored and evaluated through the routine sampling of the work of pupils and students.

ART

66. Pupils’ achievements in art are satisfactory overall. Learning is good for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and satisfactory within a limited range of work for pupils who are average or higher attaining. Higher attaining pupils make the best progress in the early years. Most pupils enter the school with very limited experience in art and underdeveloped manipulative skills. As higher attaining pupils move up through the school, sound teaching and the exposure to art enable them to make satisfactory gains in observational drawing, painting skills and knowledge of artists. However, pupils make relatively slower gains in three-dimensional work and printing techniques. As pupils with additional physical needs move through the school, their progress is well monitored and evaluated. They are offered a wide range of appropriate tools and materials, and good teaching enables them to make good progress. The subject co-ordinator is monitoring the

approaches used in art lessons and pupils' performance generally, but has not yet focussed on particular skills and techniques. As a result, the quality of medium term planning is still variable and does not show a progressive structure for learning skills and techniques for pupils of differing abilities and ages. The subject has made little improvement since the last inspection.

67. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection, therefore judgements are made on these lessons, taking into account teachers' planning and analysis of pupils' work. The subject knowledge of staff concerned is variable and this affects the quality of teaching. Where subject knowledge is good, learning is good. A significant strength of the teaching of pupils with additional physical needs is that a subject specialist, whose enthusiasm and confidence inspire pupils, teaches or has supported the lessons through the induction system. The art co-ordinator, who has an enthusiasm for the subject, teaches the youngest pupils. These lessons are very well organised to meet the differing complex needs of pupils. These teachers demonstrate skills and techniques well, and provide a range of interesting and colourful tools and materials. As a result, younger pupils and pupils with additional physical needs use a range of resources effectively. For example, they use fruit and vegetables, rolling marbles, feathers, pan scrubbers and mops, pipe cleaners, scrubbing brushes, bubble wrap, combs, scrunched paper, and bricks to apply paint and, with hand-over-hand support where necessary, they make marks or print on paper. They investigate rubbings using silver paper and smoothing techniques. Teachers demonstrate the mixing of paints, and pupils are encouraged to watch the effects or are helped to mix the paint with support. Younger pupils know the names of primary colours and begin to make their colour choices carefully. A few younger higher attaining pupils know how to group their prints, for example when making Easter cards.

68. Teachers of older higher attaining pupils give satisfactory opportunities to learn about the work of other artists and use more traditional tools and materials. As a result, higher attaining pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 produce well-executed paint studies of varying shades in the style of Kandinsky. Older pupils make good use of sketchbooks to try out new ideas and to improve their observational drawings, such as charcoal still life drawings, and pencil drawings of packages and cans in the style of Andy Warhol. Pupils develop their knowledge of colour mixing, although they are not always encouraged to mix their own paint. There are sometimes lost opportunities for links with numeracy when talking about shape and form.

69. Support assistants give good support to pupils, keeping them on task and encouraging them to look carefully, which improves their drawing skills well. Topic-based work and the use of literacy texts give pupils opportunities to draw from memory and imagination. Consequently, the oldest pupils copy drawings of Columbus's ships, and characters from Shakespearean plays. Portrait drawing and drawings of characters from texts show improvement as pupils get older, though skills and techniques are not always fully developed. For instance, there is little evidence of progression in printing, by learning about how to make polystyrene print blocks or screen-printing, or of work in more than one dimension on display or in photographs in folders. There are shortfalls in the provision of a range of resources for older pupils, and there is no art room or kiln facilities for finishing clay work.

70. Behaviour is always well managed. Teachers provide good role models, and have high expectations of how pupils should behave and of what they can achieve. As a result, all pupils are very well behaved and productive. They are respectful to each other and their teachers. Pupils with additional physical needs celebrate their own and others' successes very well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

71. Pupils' achievements in design technology are satisfactory within the narrow range of curriculum activity seen or recorded. Examples of pupils achieving well within individual lessons are seen in all phases of the school.

72. Pupils with profound and complex learning needs enjoy experiences of the textures, tastes and smells of food, and enjoy mixing activities, contributing to their ability to hold and manipulate simple tools. Higher attaining pupils use a range of papers, cards, fixing materials and paints when making a troll as part of their response to the story of Billy Goat Gruff. There is recorded evidence of a group working well together on a large-scale construction kit to make a model of a human figure, and of an aeroplane, following a plan. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, as part of a project on Native Americans, designed, made and decorated model tepees, moccasins and bowls, drawing on a useful collection of artefacts.

73. Students at Post 16 work hard when stencilling and painting pre-formed wooden pencil boxes, but their achievements are limited by the narrow scope of the task. A group of pupils showed a good degree of independence in selecting a group menu, purchasing and preparing the foods and serving it well, as part of independent living training.

74. The teaching of design and technology is good in Key Stages 1 to 4, and satisfactory in Post 16. However, this is across a limited and narrow curriculum, particularly beyond Key Stage 2. In a junior lesson with higher attaining pupils, the teacher provided careful input on skills development when helping pupils with the making of a card tepee. Demonstrations are supported by reinforcement of the vocabulary needed, enabling pupils to work with confidence, selecting materials and tools appropriately. Questioning is used well to assess gains in knowledge and understanding. In the junior sensory lesson seen, an exciting range of materials had been selected so that pupils could explore the taste, smells and textures associated with the colour yellow, and the staff team worked well together to ensure all participated. Pupils' enjoyment was evident as they learned to tolerate new experiences. Teaching in the senior sensory department is enthusiastically led, and uses a good range of adapted equipment to ensure pupils' full participation. Sometimes it is over-directed or all staff talk at once, both to pupils and on their behalf, making pupils' responses difficult to detect. In a Post 16 lesson, while the tasks went well and resulted in pupils working hard, important steps in the design process were missed out, making the lesson undemanding for pupils with higher attainment.

75. Pupils are offered an appropriate range of design technology activities in Key Stages 1 and 2. Much of the work is linked to the use of construction kits, and the sensory exploration of materials and foodstuffs, their tastes and smells, and what happens to them when they are mixed or heated. For pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students Post 16, the range of curriculum opportunities is under-developed and limited by the lack of specialist accommodation. There are no opportunities for accreditation, though some aspects of work with food and understanding of other technologies are developed within the Youth Award scheme for older pupils and students.

76. Assessment for design and technology is unsatisfactory at present, although practice is developing in some classes where it links with pupils' individual targets. While good photographic records are kept of completed work, the quality of annotation varies from good to absent. Until a clearer focus is given to the scheme of work across the school, to ensure a broad range of experience and materials, assessment can only be a partial activity, often recording pupils' response to what they have done rather than assessing their new achievements in skills and understanding.

77. The subject co-ordinator for design technology is a part-time member of staff, present in the school for one and a half days a week. The school has no specialist accommodation for design and technology at present, nor links with local colleges of further education. These are significant factors for the slow pace of development of the subject. There is no strategic plan for the development of design and technology across the school, and little evidence of positive change at whole school level since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES

78. The school has made good improvement in the teaching of this subject since the last inspection. This is largely due to the considerable subject expertise, commitment and enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator and the good teaching pupils receive. Only two lessons were observed, both in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, evidence of pupils' work indicates that their achievements in humanities are good throughout the school, with some very good learning particularly by the younger pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and students at Post 16. By the age of 11, a higher achieving pupil knows some facts about the lives of Native American Indians. For example, she completes a piece of written work to demonstrate that they live in Tepees. By the age of 16, higher achieving pupils can use simple maps and identify several symbols used in Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils with more profound and complex needs participate in a range of sensory experiences linked to the story of Hiawatha. They listen to North American Indian music, and select materials for an Indian collage through eye pointing and gesture. As a result of a stimulating project, which included using wooden beams to build a Cruck house at the Ryedale folk museum, students at Post 16 demonstrate a good understanding of the differences between medieval and new houses. Pupils with additional special needs, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders, make at least satisfactory progress. They make good progress when teaching strategies and behavioural management techniques are properly modified to meet their particular needs.

79. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Scrutiny of the medium term planning records exemplifies good planning and strategies for evaluation that characterise teaching in humanities. Work is carefully planned to meet individual needs and to be accessible to all pupils. Assessment informs future planning. A very strong feature of the teaching throughout the school is the lively and imaginative way in which the subject is presented. This is enhanced by the rich range of resources that the school is able to draw on to support project work through good links with parents and the community. Very good input from visiting historians, for example during the Viking topic, enhances pupils' understanding and increases their enjoyment and interest in the subject. Pupils throughout the school are provided with a good range of experiential learning experiences in both the local and wider community.

80. Pupils and students follow a broad and balanced curriculum that is well linked to the targets of the National Curriculum. The three-year rolling programme of curriculum delivery ensures continuity of learning and progress. The planned introduction of curriculum materials will further promote pupils' learning. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' and students' knowledge of local and national culture, and the culture of other peoples and times.

81. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. There is a wealth of good photographic evidence showing them enthusiastically participating in a range of lessons and enjoying activities out of school, such as visits to museums of living history. In lessons, pupils try hard and work to the best of their ability. Students at Post 16 and some senior pupils demonstrate good motivation and maturity when they choose to attend the weekly 'Archaeology Club' during the lunchtime break. Relationships with staff and other pupils are generally very good. Pupils with more profound and complex needs respond well to their sensory curriculum.

82. The subject is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator, who has a very strong background in both history and geography. He promotes the subject very well throughout the school and is constantly introducing new developments to extend pupils' learning. For instance, he is currently planning two Saturday trips for the Archaeology Club to experience practical archaeology. He has begun to moderate teachers' assessments by developing a portfolio of examples of pupils' work. Collating and reviewing teachers' evaluations of work that has been completed could develop this aspect further. A clear system has been established for monitoring the quality of teaching in the subject.

83. The subject has developed well since the last inspection, and the co-ordinator has established a very good base for further developments.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

84. Achievement in information communications technology over time remains unsatisfactory. However, achievements are good in lessons where individual pupils use computers as part of their work in literacy or numeracy. A pupil in Key Stage 4 uses a computer and mouse to support number recognition, and to practice linking the word or figure with a set of objects, improving both his concentration and skills. As yet, the school has not fully implemented its plans for the teaching of information technology, and as a result there are only a limited records of pupils' achievements. There are a few examples of pupils using word-processing skills or using digital images successfully to enhance their recordings for Records of Achievements or as part of the award schemes in the Post 16 phase of the school. Individual pupils with complex and profound learning difficulties achieve well using technology to access or control other resources, or parts of the sensory curriculum. For example, a senior pupil is able to activate a food blender using a specially adapted switch, and a pupil in Key Stage 3 spends an extended period of time working very hard on her hand/eye co-ordination, adding the eye to a fish. She is very pleased when she achieves success. Pupils show very good attitudes towards computer-based work wherever seen in the school. They are keen to take their turn, and show increased confidence in working independently as they progress through the school.

85. Information communications technology is not taught as a discrete subject except to small groups at Post 16. The few lessons observed during the inspection were taught by support staff to individual pupils in literacy and numeracy activities or as part of the sensory curriculum. Judgements about the teaching of information communications technology in Key Stages 1 to 4 are therefore insecure. However, the individual activities led by support staff under the direction of teachers were well done, demonstrating sound knowledge of the software and very good knowledge of the pupils. This combination leads to well-motivated pupils who work hard and achieve success. Good examples were seen where teachers used technology to increase the access and experience of pupils with profound and complex needs to either sensory stimuli or control of devices such as electric mixers during sensory cooking.

86. The school is in the process of redefining at a strategic level how and in what way it will offer information technology experience to all its pupils. This is in preparation for going "on-line" as part of a major national initiative. With the planned purchase of the additional hardware and software, pupils will be able to experience a wider range of applications than at present. No teaching space is available for whole group teaching. Systems are not currently networked, which limits the use of available expertise. Nevertheless, staff, and in particular some support staff, are making good gains in expertise. However pupils' experience is substantially limited to the contribution information technology can make to numeracy and literacy, and, where there are special control applications, to enable pupils with physical difficulties to access other resources.

87. Assessment procedures and practice are overall unsatisfactory as the full scheme and how it is to be taught are awaiting implementation. The information communications technology development plan recognises there is much that remains to be done. However, elements of good practice are seen where targets are clearly articulated and made specific, via individual education plans or medium term plans. This is especially true where the targets are linked to access technology for pupils with profound and complex needs, and where classroom and external specialist staff make close, regular and accurate observations of pupils' increased confidence and skills.

88. The senior management team has a recently assumed responsibility for the development of information technology across the school at a more strategic level. There is now a clearer strategy for the development of the subject as the school goes "on-line" as part of a national initiative. The appointment of a specialist technician is already having a very beneficial effect on staff confidence and on the reliability of resources currently available.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

89. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are not taught a modern foreign language. Pupils are appropriately individually disapplied through their annual reviews when they reach secondary age.

MUSIC

90. Since the last report, provision for music has maintained its high profile throughout the school. Music continues to permeate the school in all subjects. Music has a positive effect on the ethos of the school and the enjoyment it brings to pupils and students. Most pupils and students achieve well in music.

91. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils participate fully in lessons. Lower attaining pupils search for sounds, track the sound by eye-tracking, and respond positively when an instrument is given to them. Pupil use instruments to explore sounds, match pictures to the actual instruments, and try to match sound to instruments. They vocalise when music is played. Higher attaining pupils identify instruments by their sound, anticipate musical sounds, make choices from two or more instruments, and hold shake and play instruments on request. Many pupils match body movements to music, moving forwards, backwards, sideways. They move and sway their body and use their body parts to make music, such as beating a tambourine on their hand or leg.

92. During Key Stages 3 and 4, higher attaining pupils say whether music is fast or slow, and if sounds are long or short. They sing to staff, to each other, individually and in groups. They move to the rhythm of music, fast and slow, loud and quiet. In departmental interactive music sessions, pupils successfully take turns to conduct each other. Lower attaining pupils benefit from musical cues. Staff continually talk and sing to pupils as they move them onto their next task. Music permeates most lessons and many activities throughout the school; for instance staff sing to pupils as they move from the classroom to the hall. While pupils are in the hydrotherapy pool, music is played to promote a relaxing atmosphere. Pupils respond well to this approach, which enhances their achievement and the progress they make.

93. Overall teaching of music is very good. There is much in lessons to stimulate and challenge pupils. Teachers possess a keen awareness of the importance of musical activities in relation to the specific learning difficulties of pupils and of its links with other curriculum areas. Lessons are very well planned in great detail, enthusiastically taught, with a brisk pace and a challenge to all pupils to participate fully. As a result of high quality teaching, pupils respond well. They are keen to participate, proud of their work, sing willingly to each other, and celebrate their own and others' successes. The outcome is that pupils achieve well and make good progress.

94. The subject is well led and co-ordinated. Planning is monitored, lessons observed and discussed with staff. Assemblies are monitored and recorded. Visitors and musical groups are invited into school to give performances. Within school, pupils have opportunities to perform to each other and in public. These opportunities build up pupils' self-esteem and confidence, enhancing the progress that pupils make. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Physical education is a strength of the curriculum. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. The needs of pupils and students with profound and complex special needs are met very effectively in a high quality and varied programme of activities, supported by very good, and on occasions excellent, teaching. The support assistants know the pupils and students well, are experienced and well trained, and offer very good support to the teachers. Qualified and experienced therapists add to the programme with their own expertly targeted inputs. Higher attaining pupils and students benefit from the programme and are challenged effectively to push the limits of their physical effort to improve their health and well-being.

96. Pupils and students at all key stages make very good progress towards the targets set for them. Through much of the programme, those with profound and complex needs extend their communication skills through the use of signing, vocalisation and gesture. They clearly enjoy physical education lessons and work very hard to move and stretch their limbs. The excellent use of singing games in the hydrotherapy pool and the well structured programme of rebound therapy challenge them to maximise their efforts. One pupil was able to hold onto the side of the pool and propel himself backwards, supported by the physiotherapist. Pupils respond very well and make very good progress in extending their range of movements. One student was able to leave his wheelchair and, using leg splints, was able to walk around the hall with the support of two assistants. At one point, he let go of one of the assistants and

took a few steps towards the other. His vocalisations and expressions of pleasure were moving to watch. A more mobile pupil was able to ride a steered tricycle, moving it forwards and backwards at will. One pupil, who had just returned to school from a spell in hospital, was able to bounce and roll on the trampoline, with minimal support from the therapist. She made excellent progress over the inspection week. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 remember movement sequences with three or more parts and can demonstrate them to the class. The teachers' planning, with clear individual targets for undressing and preparing for the lesson, ensures that time is well used to extend pupils' efforts and stimulate their enjoyment of physical activity. The very good knowledge that teaching and support staff have of the individual strengths and weaknesses of pupils and students enables them to extend them to their physical limits. Pupils make very good progress in their body awareness, because staff sing songs that use the names of body parts to accompany the movements.

97. Pupils and students show a very good awareness of each other in lessons. They take turns and are patient in preparation for physical effort. They clearly enjoy the lessons and applaud their own and each other's efforts. Their response to the challenge of the physical education programme is best measured by the self-confidence they display in lessons.

98. The subject is led and co-ordinated very effectively, with a clear sense of direction in which to address the particular needs of the pupils and students. The use of curriculum time and the management of pupils and students are excellent, leading to excellent physical effort from them, and ensuring their very good progress overall. Although the higher attaining Post 16 students enjoy leisure activities that promote healthy living, they do not have a structure of lessons that could track their progress and ensure that they are effectively challenged.

99. The school has made a very good response to the last inspection. Teaching and learning are now very good, and pupils and students benefit from the very good programme of mobility therapy and physical education. This includes specialised activities, such as horse riding, aroma-therapy, rebound and hydro-therapy, to ensure full access to the curriculum for pupils and students with profound and complex special needs. There is evidence of some excellent individual progress in mobility. The subject makes very good provision for the development of communication skills. The curriculum covers all appropriate areas, including dance and gymnastics. Wheelchair dancing is a recent innovation that is broadening the experience and enjoyment of those pupils with profound and complex special needs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100. The school has made a significant improvement in the quality of religious education since the last inspection. At that time, it was found to be insecure to make a judgement on the quality of religious education, but the subject is now strong throughout the school.

101. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils use musical instruments to make sound effects, while following the story of Noah. They were really excited while making sounds to match the storm that brought the floods. After the storm, they tracked the dove when it flew off to find land and sang about the rainbow. This lesson successfully developed a theme of 'togetherness', of working co-operatively and helping each other.

102. During Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils further develop the theme of ‘helping’ by finding out who helps us, who can we help and how. They work together, using listening and speaking and signing skills as part of their total communication. They understand that we work hard at school and rest at home. Higher attaining pupils drew a picture of what they had built together, as a record of their work.

103. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned in great detail, matched to the needs of pupils and linked to the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus. The subject knowledge of the co-ordinator is very strong and positively influences the teaching of religious education. Questioning is highly skilled, with pupils given time to reflect before answering. Teachers use questioning well as a means of checking for understanding. As a result of high quality teaching, pupils’ responses and attitudes are very good. They concentrate for long periods of time, persevere to complete work, and often celebrate each other’s successes. Learning resources are good. They are well organised in advance, appropriate to the needs of pupils, and used well. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independent skills by helping to put away resources after they have been used. Pupils’ and students’ response to religious education is always good, and more often very good. They participate fully, concentrate, persevere and work hard to complete tasks they are given.

104. Visitors from other faiths come into school to take part in assemblies and talk to pupils. Photographic evidence and wall displays demonstrate the wide-ranging experiences offered to pupils, showing celebrations from other faiths and religions.

105. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator monitors planning and teaching in lessons. Assemblies are recorded and monitored. Assemblies positively support religious education within the school and contribute very well to pupils’ knowledge of themselves and their spiritual development. Religious education makes a very positive contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

106. Personal and social education is at the heart of the school curriculum, contributing through planned lessons as well as through meal and break-time activities. These effectively aim to teach pupils and students a range of self-help and care skills in a planned and targeted way. The communication skills of literacy and numeracy are well supported through these activities, using songs, number games, signing, picture exchanges and rebus symbols to stimulate learning. Pupils and students with profound and complex special needs at all key stages show good anticipation when talking about the days of the week. They show very good listening and eye-tracking when listening to greeting and departing songs. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 learn to wash their hands before meals. They behave very well in the dining room and learn to eat in a sociable way, to ensure that all enjoy their meal. During a wet-weather lunchtime, pupils and students helped to clear the dining hall and set up a disco; they showed appropriate behaviour during this enjoyable session. Pupils and students with profound and complex special needs extend their communication skills through well planned eating programmes, delivered by experienced support assistants. They show their enjoyment of food through vocalisation and facial expression, and a few sign or gesture preferences. In lessons, they work hard to reinforce their skills through co-active signing with experienced and knowledgeable teaching and support staff. Higher attaining Post 16 students make very good progress in learning, through discussions that bring out their

awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities they will carry in their adult lives. They show a good understanding of the difference between rights and responsibilities, contributing well to the topic of 'citizenship' and to personal and social development. They listen well and respect each other's viewpoints in discussion. They show useful insight into jobs linked with office work, factories, shops and care and advisory work. They are able to open a careers software programme and access the alphabetical list of occupations, and to recall some of the highlights from recent work experience.

107. The quality of teaching is very good overall and often excellent. Teachers and support staff make very good use of recorded greeting songs; they circulate around the class, greeting each pupil or student individually, so that all are greeted in turn, using independent or co-active signing to accompany the words of the songs. The excellent planning for one lesson provided a rich communication and sensory experience for the pupils and students; it challenged them to work hard to reinforce their signing skills and, thereby, their personal and social communication skills. The very good behaviour in and around the school reflects the very good teaching of personal and social education that permeates all curriculum subjects. Pupils and students are helpful and supportive in the dining hall and the classrooms. They are sensitive to each other's needs, often going out of their way to greet and say a good word to those who have profound and complex special needs. This is a gesture they learn from the very good example of adults in the school.

108. The school has made a very good response to the last inspection report. The standards of teaching and the quality of learning are now both very good. There is good planned provision for sex education and for learning about the abuse of drugs and medication. This is delivered at appropriate points through the key stages, as pupils and students mature; it enables older pupils and students to be well informed as they develop towards independence. The subject is led and managed effectively, so that all teaching and non-teaching staff make a full contribution to the provision for personal and social education. The needs of the higher attaining Post 16 students are not sufficiently well met, because of the restrictions on accommodation in their unit. There is no independent and private area for students to socialise, and no resource for training for independent living.