

INSPECTION REPORT

RED MARSH SCHOOL

Thornton Cleveleys

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119897

Headteacher: Miss D. Halpin

Reporting inspector: V. Wilkinson
18461

Dates of inspection: 3.7.2000 – 5.7.2000

Inspection number: 191137

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special School
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 years – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Holly Road Thornton Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body.
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. A. Goldberg.
Date of previous inspection:	6 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
V. Wilkinson	Registered inspector	Art, Music, Modern Foreign Language. Personal and Social Education. Under-fives.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? Special educational needs.
S. Walsh	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents The school's links with the community. The school's relationship with partner institutions.
A. Tattersall	Team inspector	Science, Physical Education. Provision for students post 16.	
M. Holohan	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
J. Pearson	Team inspector	Design and technology, History, Geography.	How well is the school led and managed?
M. Bonathan	Team inspector	English, Religious education, Integration.	How good are curricular and other opportunities. Equal opportunities.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Red Marsh School provides education for pupils between the ages of 2 and 19 years who have severe and profound learning difficulties. There is a small but increasing number of pupils who have complex medical needs and the school has a full time nurse funded by the Health Authority. A significant number of pupils (34%) have visual impairment as part of their special needs. Red Marsh School mainly serves the Wyre area and a small number of pupils come from Fylde and Blackpool. The majority travel to school by Local Education Authority transport. The school's allocated number is 50 and over the past three years the number of pupils has remained steady at around 40 – 42. Numbers have increased recently and there are currently 47 pupils on roll. There are no pupils in year 5 and each of the six classes within the school contains pupils from at least two year groups. Six pupils attend mainstream primary and secondary schools for different periods of time as part of the school's inclusive practice. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are currently only 3 children under five in the nursery and it is inappropriate to comment on their achievements. The report does however refer to the quality of the provision made for these children. The school has a clear set of aims -

- To encourage all children to become as independent as possible to maximise opportunities in adult life.
- To develop moral, spiritual and cultural values.
- To develop a positive self-image and self-confidence.
- To encourage positive interaction between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves in order to promote co-operation and other inter-personal skills.
- To encourage home - school links.
- To develop links with other schools and the wider community in order to encourage and extend opportunities for the pupils at the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Red Marsh is a good school, with many very good features. Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. Priorities for future development are clearly identified and well supported by careful financial planning. This ensures that the available resources are used efficiently and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children under five, pupils at all key stages and students who are over sixteen make good progress in relation to their past learning and the targets set for them.
- The quality of teaching is good – it is very good in a significant number of lessons. There were no lessons where teaching was less than satisfactory.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They make very good progress in their personal development because relationships across the school are excellent.
- The curriculum is good and the school uses the community very well to enhance pupils' experiences. There are very good relationships with partner institutions and these include chances for pupils to attend mainstream schools.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership for the school. Very careful financial planning ensures that the priorities identified for development are supported effectively.
- Pupils' health and safety are looked after very well.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents and carers.

What could be improved.

- There are no significant areas for improvement

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in January 1997. Since then it has maintained its areas of strength and has made good progress. Pupils with more complex needs now make better progress because the quality of teaching has improved and there have been improvements to the curriculum and the school's assessment procedures. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and a greater proportion of high quality teaching. Teaching and the curriculum are being monitored effectively and this has had a positive impact on the quality of education. Development of the role of the subject co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching and learning are already planned.

The length of the school day has been increased and the provision for spiritual and cultural development has been improved. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are now very good and the provision for cultural development is good. The school has implemented good schemes of work for each subject and these provide good support for teachers when they plan work. An appropriate programme of drugs awareness and education has been developed and implemented. In 1997 the school provided satisfactory value for money. It now provides good value.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By age 5	by age 11	By age 16	By age 19	Key
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	very good A
Reading	B	B	B	B	Good B
Writing	B	B	B	B	Satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	Unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	Poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

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

Children under five, pupils at all key stages and students over 16 make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils also achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography, history and physical education. Pupils' progress in personal and social development is very good and is a strength of the school.

Pupils are consistently supported to be independent to develop constructive relationships and to consider and appreciate the needs of others. It was not possible to judge progress in music and French. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. Pupils' progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy are enhanced by the school's use of the National Strategies and the opportunities teachers provide for them to practise these skills across the other subjects of the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to participate in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in school and when they are on visits in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Their confidence and enjoyment in learning are supported by the excellent relationships within the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils only miss school if they are unwell.

Pupils of all ages develop an increasingly independent attitude to their learning and older pupils become mature young adults by the time they leave school. Because behaviour is very good and lessons are rarely disrupted, pupils are able to concentrate well on their work. Pupils take an active role in the day to day running of the school by undertaking errands and putting out or tidying away resources.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and frequently very good. This applies to the majority of subjects in which inspectors were able to see enough lessons to make judgements. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection particularly for pupils with more complex difficulties. There is now a good focus on developing pupils' basic communication skills and teachers have become competent in the use of a good range of strategies such as the use of symbols, to ensure that this happens. However, they do not use signing as consistently or widely as they could. The good quality teaching of personal, social and health education is supported by the school's ethos, which successfully promotes pupils' independence, their social skills and the development of mature attitudes. A particular strength of the teaching is the teamwork between teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants. Pupils' learning is effectively supported because classroom support staff have a good understanding of what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of pupils' special educational needs. This enables them to plan work that challenges pupils and enables them to make good progress. During the inspection teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good in almost 7 out of 10 lessons. It was very good in just over 2 out

of 10 Because of the high standards of teaching pupils remain busy and interested throughout lessons. They are confident learners and try hard to participate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It enables pupils to take part in a wide range of relevant educational activities. Opportunities for a significant number of pupils to spend time being educated in mainstream schools are very good.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Pupils respond well to the expectations of staff, they know right from wrong and benefit socially from the good range of opportunities they are offered. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development have been improved since the last inspection and are now good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for caring for pupils' wellbeing and their health and safety. The targets set in pupils' individual education plans are good. They provide sufficient challenge but are realistic. The monitoring of pupils academic and personal development is good.

The school has very effective links with parents. It maintains regular contact with them through the effective use of home-school diaries. Parents support the school and their children's learning very well. There are very effective links with the community and these enrich the curriculum and provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. Very good links with other schools enables a small number of pupils to take part in well planned inclusion opportunities. There are effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and the school takes every opportunity to recognise and celebrate pupils' success.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong leadership and a clear vision for improving the quality of the school's provision. Staff with management responsibilities make a significant contribution to the development of the school; however, it would be helpful if they had opportunities to monitor other staff teaching the subjects they are responsible for.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its role appropriately. It is very supportive of the school but has not yet established sufficient procedures to monitor the work of the school and provide it with an independent view of the school's strengths and areas for development. It relies too heavily on information provided by the school.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully evaluates its progress towards targets in the school development plan and has developed good strategies to evaluate pupils' progress. The school has recently started to gather assessment information that will enable it to establish targets for the improvement of standards in subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans the use of its budget very well and uses resources effectively to promote good standards of achievement and good progress.

The school's accommodation is satisfactory but is cramped for the number of pupils on roll and the needs of the curriculum, particularly the curricular needs of students over 16. Recent developments have enhanced the building and the grounds provide good opportunities for play and the opportunity for pupils to mix with pupils from the neighbouring school. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and are being developed further. The school has appropriate plans to resource each subject as the schemes of work are reviewed and developed to meet the requirements of the Curriculum 2000. There are good numbers of teachers and support staff for the number and type of pupils in the school. The headteacher, governors and all staff share a commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve well. The principles of best value are effectively applied to priorities identified for development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The school works closely in partnership with them. • The school is well led and managed and teaching is good. • The school responds positively to their queries and concerns. • The school encourages children to become mature and responsible. • The school encourages children to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework.

The inspectors agree with the parents' very positive views about the school but feel that homework is provided at an appropriate level.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with very low levels of ability. Scrutiny of teachers' records indicate that children make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and this prepares them well for the National Curriculum learning opportunities they have in Key Stage 1. Children achieve well because of effective teaching which is well supported by a good quality, relevant curriculum and because assessment is used well to plan work that is closely matched to individual needs.
2. Pupils with more complex needs make good progress for similar reasons. Good teaching and a curriculum that is modified well by teachers to meet their specific needs ensures that the basic skills of communication are appropriately emphasised. Pupils achieve well because they learn how to interact with others and how to focus on specific aspects of their environment. These basic skills enable pupils at all key stages to make good progress across the subjects of the curriculum and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
3. By the ages of 7, 11, 16 and 19 pupils' achievements are very good in personal and social education and they are good in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography and physical education. During the inspection examples of very good achievement were seen in science and information and communication technology at Key Stage 1; in physical education at Key Stage 2 and history and personal and social education at Key Stage 3. There was very good achievement by older pupils in physical education and excellent achievement by students in history. There is consistently more good achievement in subjects than at the time of the last inspection. In music and in French (for pupils in Key Stage 3 and students over sixteen) it was not possible to make firm judgements about achievement or progress because insufficient lessons were seen. Scrutiny of pupils' records and work indicates the good standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
4. Pupils' progress is particularly significant in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Pupils' achievements in English are now consistently good or very good and achievements in numeracy have improved. They were judged to be broadly satisfactory at the time of the last inspection and are now good. These improvements are the result of the school's effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which have been modified appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. The timetable for each class includes daily focused literacy and numeracy sessions and the guidance provided by the strategies has developed teachers' knowledge and skills effectively. Because of this pupils are making more rapid progress. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects, giving them opportunities to practise, improve further and achieve well across the curriculum.
5. Pupils' achievements are also effectively supported by good schemes of work, which have been implemented for each subject since the last inspection. These provide clear guidance for teachers when they plan work. This enables them to focus more effectively on what they want pupils to learn, improving pupils' opportunities to succeed. Assessment procedures have also been improved and

teachers have become more skilled in writing targets for learning. This enables them to set challenging but realistic targets for each pupil and helps them to monitor more effectively what pupils are being taught. These improvements have helped to raise standards across the school, particularly for pupils with more complex learning difficulties.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. This view is supported by parents who comment on children's enthusiasm for school. Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is evident in the pleasure demonstrated when they meet staff in the morning and in the keen attitudes they demonstrate when they take part in activities. Their attitudes to school enable them to participate in a wide range of learning opportunities with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils maintain their interest and concentration in a range of demanding situations, such as role playing scenes from the Second World War in history, creating number and shape patterns in mathematics or playing tennis at the local courts. Pupils also take a pride in their work and are keen to discuss what they are learning about with visitors. Examples of this were seen in mathematics, where a group of year 11 pupils were keen to discuss and demonstrate their practical work on volume, and a Year 8 pupil was evidently proud of her ability to load and operate the computer.
7. Pupils' positive attitudes to school are further reflected in their very good behaviour both around the school, on visits and when undertaking lessons in other schools and at college. Parents report a noticeable improvement in their children's behaviour during their time at Red Marsh. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Pupils' very good behaviour and the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and staff contribute to the very positive atmosphere in the school. There is clear evidence of mutual regard and friendship and pupils show a warmth and compassion for each other which is a reflection of the role models provided by staff. A specific example of this was seen during an assembly where pupils were keen to ensure that those with more complex learning difficulties participated and enjoyed the activities. Pupils' behaviour reflects a genuine sense of community. The benefit that pupils gain from these positive relationships is also evident in the confident way students progress to college and, for some pupils, the way they join in with lessons in mainstream schools.
8. Pupils' personal development is very good; they acquire a range of appropriate social and personal skills as they progress through the school. They clearly enjoy the structured opportunities provided for them to take responsibility for elements of the school day such as taking registers and altering the daily diary. Routine tasks within the classrooms are done sensibly and older pupils show an increasing ability to behave responsibly and independently in a range of social activities, such as making toast for others, putting brakes on wheel chairs and politely introducing themselves to visitors.
9. Attendance is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The majority of pupils are happy to attend on a very regular basis, only missing school when they are ill. Punctuality was criticised in the previous report but pupils now arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. Overall the quality of teaching is good. It was very good in a significant proportion of lessons and one excellent lesson was seen. During the inspection teaching was good in almost 7 out of 10 lessons and very good or excellent in just over 2. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in all classes receive high quality teaching. Very good teaching was seen in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology at Key Stage 1; English and physical education at Key Stage 2; history and personal and social education at Key Stage 3 and physical education at post sixteen. An excellent history lesson was seen, which involved students in a role-play activity about the Second World War.
11. A small number of lessons were judged to be satisfactory because the subject learning was not always identified clearly in teachers' planning. The aims for the lesson were identified as the targets in pupils' individual education plans and this resulted in lessons where it was unclear what pupils were expected to gain in terms of subject knowledge and understanding.
12. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because there have been helpful changes to the curriculum and assessment practice. Schemes of work have been the focus for ongoing development and they provide good guidance for teachers when they plan lessons. The school has also implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy effectively and teachers are more knowledgeable about what pupils need to learn. This ensures that the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Since the last inspection the school has appropriately focused on developing teachers' skills in monitoring and measuring pupils' progress and it has implemented comprehensive procedures for assessment and recording. These are being used effectively by teachers to help them match work more closely to the needs of individuals. These developments have been particularly effective in improving teaching and learning for pupils with more complex difficulties. Teachers have good subject knowledge and all subjects are taught equally well across all the key stages. Pupils are busy and interested during lessons and this enables them to make good progress.
13. The partnership between teachers, Nursery Nurses and classroom assistants is a particular strength of the teaching. Support staff are always fully aware of the role they are to play in lessons and what the pupils are expected to learn. This means that they effectively lead small groups and provide pupils with good support. They are aware of any significant achievements or contributions that pupils make and this helps to inform the teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. For example, during an art lesson for younger pupils the classroom assistant recorded that a pupil held a paintbrush independently for a few seconds. The teacher planned appropriate opportunities for the pupil to build on this achievement during other activities.
14. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers provide a good range of interesting activities and pupils are keen to participate. For example the use of music and puppets during a literacy session encouraged pupils to listen and to take an active interest in the story. Because of activities like this pupils maintain their concentration and are fully involved in lessons, responding well and making good progress. Most lessons include appropriate time set aside at the end for pupils to share what they have been doing and this provides good opportunities for teachers to check pupils understanding. For example, with staff support and

guidance, pupils in Key Stage 3 explain that the light from the sun is not the same as the light from electricity.

15. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils are treated with respect and consideration and this provides them with good models for their own behaviour. The quality of these relationships is demonstrated in pupils' confidence to ask questions and for support, and in their attempts to complete tasks they find difficult. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very successfully. The strategies they use are unobtrusive; pupils' behaviour is not allowed to restrict learning opportunities for themselves or other members of the class.
16. Teaching for pupils with more complex difficulties is sensitive. Teachers and classroom support staff explain carefully to pupils what is happening and pay close attention to their physical needs. Because pupils are secure and confident they co-operate well in activities, for example, they make decisions when they investigate fruit in science, expressing preferences by using facial expression and body movements. Because pupils are confident and keen to participate teachers can gradually make tasks more challenging. Because they find learning challenging pupils respond positively and make good progress particularly in their ability to communicate with others and interact with the environment. Teaching for these pupils has improved because the school has implemented a good policy for communication. Teachers have developed their skills in using a wide range of communication strategies and symbols are used well to help pupils take part in activities. Signing skills are being developed; teachers are confident with a small number of key signs. These are used with targeted pupils and during activities such as assembly. However, they need to be used in a wider context to ensure that pupils with more complex needs are fully supported across the daily life of the school.
17. Overall teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they have particularly good skills in English and Mathematics, including literacy and numeracy and a good understanding of the needs of children under 5 and students over 16. Teachers have improved their understanding of how pupils with more complex difficulties learn and this has resulted in improved levels of achievement for these pupils.
18. Teachers effectively use the information they collect from assessment in order to plan work. Because new learning takes good account of pupils' achievements and what they have experienced in the past, work provides the right amount of challenge to help them move forward, for example, in mathematics pupils are encouraged to use their understanding of money in a range of problem solving activities. These develop from recognising coins to calculating the cost of a number of different fruits and calculating the change.

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

19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at all key stages and provides good opportunities for pupils to become increasingly independent as they move through the school. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good and pupils are able to develop their communication and social skills through a variety of creative subjects as well as topics such as the Second World War in history and geography. Art and drama activities are used effectively to provide stimulus and enjoyment and to reinforce learning in other subjects. The curriculum for children under five is good. It has been appropriately developed from the areas of

learning recommended for young children and the early learning goals have been effectively incorporated into teachers' planning.

20. The provision for students over 16 is good. Although there are currently only a small number of students, the school makes every effort to ensure that they have a distinct curricular experience. The careers education programme and the work experience placements for these students are good and prepare them well for life beyond school. College links are very good for pupils in Key Stage 4 and students over 16 and are successful in promoting very good social development.
21. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced into the school. They now provide a very secure framework for teaching basic skills to pupils and have been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with more complex difficulties. English and mathematics are taught through the literacy and numeracy hour and there is a good balance of activities within these lessons involving whole class, group and individual work.
22. The school makes good use of the local area to enhance the curriculum and pupils have very good opportunities to take part in projects that involve activities such as photography and sketching. There are also visits to local places of interest, such as the rock factory during history projects. Local sports facilities are used effectively and the curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of visitors to the school including groups such as theatre companies and local school bands. Although there are limited opportunities for extra curricular activities, the school has organised successful lunchtime sports sessions, which are run effectively by classroom support staff.
23. A small number of pupils are included into local mainstream schools on a part-time basis. The school plans these placements carefully and for these pupils the links provide a real extension and enrichment to their school experience. One pupil has successfully been integrated throughout his school life and is now on a work experience placement with the host school. There is a good partnership established with the Local Education Authority's outreach service and with other schools to ensure that placements are well co-ordinated and information about pupils is passed on regularly.
24. Since the last inspection the school has developed a useful policy on total communication and has provided training for all members of staff. Communication profiles have been established for targeted pupils and these are helpful in ensuring that they have better access to the curriculum. Pupils with more complex needs are now included successfully within their mixed groups through the use of a wide range of communication methods and signals. However, the use of signing is not yet consistent across the school.
25. The curriculum for personal and social development including sex education and drugs awareness provides a very good framework for teachers' planning. As a result pupils learn about themselves, relationships and environmental issues, from different perspectives as they progress through the key stages. As well as these formal opportunities, pupils' personal and social education is continuously developed as appropriate opportunities arise during the school day. For example, during drinks time pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible by making choices, counting the number who want tea and toast and spreading their own butter.

26. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has been improved since the last inspection. There are now regular opportunities for quiet reflection during whole school and class assemblies and in the context of religious education lessons pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about world religions. The school recognises and celebrates special events in the Christian faith and many of the festivals of other religions. Pupils are taught about moral values and as they grow older they develop a good understanding of right and wrong. They have very good opportunities to consider moral values in a wider context through the study of topics such as The Diary of Ann Frank. Pupils' social skills are very well developed and they show genuine concern and support for each other. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves within the daily school routines and through the vocational courses for older students. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Since the last inspection the school has made active efforts to promote and develop a wide range of cultural experiences for pupils, through topics about foods from around the world and also through music and drama from different ethnic and cultural groups. There is also an increasing and appropriate focus on other cultures through the materials and books that are available in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school has continued to provide a very safe and caring environment for its pupils. Pupils are very well supported by all staff and their dignity is always respected. There is a cheerful welcoming atmosphere and the relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Very good regard is paid to pupils' medical and physical needs, consequently pupils are happy, comfortable and ready to learn. The school's arrangements for child protection, health and safety are very good. They are implemented consistently and effectively but staff have not benefited from recent opportunities to refresh and update their training. A day is planned for the autumn term. To ensure that such good practice is sustained the school needs to ensure that a programme of regular training in child protection is implemented.
28. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in the organisation of the various therapy services including changes in personnel. Through this the school and the services have maintained good relationships and have ensured that the pupils' needs are met. However, there has been less time for teachers and therapy staff to work together with pupils. Parents are appreciative of the support they receive from the school nurse. There is very good contact between the school and the social workers involved in the care of looked after children and good contact with the respite care providers.
29. The school has very good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour. There is a very good quality policy for care and control which is consistently implemented. All staff and many of the older pupils provide very good role models and pupils learn to behave in a responsible manner from examples they see. The ethos of respect and very good relationships, together with the calm atmosphere in school, results in the high standards of behaviour seen. There are a small number of pupils with difficult and challenging behaviour. These pupils have individual behaviour plans and the school works closely with parents and outside agencies, such as the Educational Psychology Service, to help these children learn to control their actions and sustain concentration in order to learn effectively.

30. The attendance of pupils is well monitored. Parents always inform the school about the reasons for their children's absence. If the school feels that there is a problem with pupils' attendance they are well supported by the Education Welfare Service.
31. Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress are good. The procedures for the assessment of children's attainment when they reach statutory school age and the annual review of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need are carried out effectively. Teachers have a good knowledge of each pupil which is based upon their good assessment and recording methods. These procedures enable them to plan and teach lessons that are well matched to pupils' individual needs. Very good monitoring by the deputy headteacher ensures that teachers use assessment arrangements consistently. The targets established for pupils are appropriate. They are well written and clearly indicate what pupils will learn. Success criteria are included for the majority of targets and these enable teachers to monitor and measure progress effectively.
32. Assessment arrangements have improved since the previous inspection and the school is continuing to improve its procedures further. Through monitoring, teachers are being helped to set consistently precise targets for pupils and this is particularly evident for pupils with more complex difficulties. The development of teachers' skills in assessment has improved the learning opportunities offered to these pupils. There are good links between the targets established at the annual review and those in pupils' individual education plans; however, annual review targets need to become more focused so that they reflect pupils' learning needs more closely and can realistically be achieved over the year.
33. The school makes good use of assessment information to guide improvements to its curriculum. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' attainments to plan activities and provide tasks that are suited to the abilities of each pupil or group of pupils in their lesson. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils with more complex needs were not always provided with work at an appropriate level.
34. The school has a very clear commitment to recognising and celebrating pupils' achievements. This makes a significant contribution to the confidence of pupils and motivates them to succeed further. Pupils are given immediate praise and encouragement and are awarded with certificates to mark significant progress and achievement. These are included in the end of key stage records of achievement, which provide good evidence and records of pupils' school lives.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The school has very effective links with parents and this helps pupils make good progress. Parents are very appreciative of the good quality education provided by the school and feel that pupils are encouraged to work hard and do their best. They are especially pleased with how well the school is led and managed and they appreciate that teaching is good. Any concerns or problems they have are quickly addressed. Parents are confident that their children like school and recognise the contribution that the school makes to children's personal development by helping them to grow up and become mature and responsible. Parents show their appreciation by their very active participation in fund raising events.

36. Parents receive very good quality information about the work of the school and about their children's progress. The written annual report clearly tells parents what their children know, understand and can do and they are kept well informed about the targets in their children's individual education plans. Home-school diaries are used very well used to provide parents with regular information about their children's welfare and what they have been doing at school, and newsletters tell them about important curriculum developments such as the implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies as well as school events.
37. The school has responded very well to criticisms about homework made in the previous report. For example, in Class 1 parents are invited to come into the school to discuss their children's assessment and targets with the class teacher and also have the opportunity to come and take part in demonstration lessons. This enables them to share the teaching methods used by the school to help support their children to make progress. There have recently been a number of numeracy workshops for parents. Regular letters about aspects of learning, such as numeracy include some very useful hints on how parents can help their children to understand numbers. For older children, homework is set on an individual basis and the quality and range of this homework is satisfactory. The school has worked very hard to actively involve parents in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher a clear educational direction for the school has been established. This has enabled staff to successfully address areas for improvement and maintain and build on the school's strengths. Because staff have a shared vision for the school and are committed to its continued improvement there has been good progress since the last inspection.
39. The school development plan is a reflection of the headteacher's effective leadership. It very clearly describes what needs to be done over the next three years to improve the standard of education it provides. A number of clear educational priorities have been established by the head teacher and deputy head teacher, who form the school's senior management team. By involving all members of staff in preparing this development plan and by consulting with governors and parents, a shared agreement about the school's purpose and how it should progress has been achieved.
40. The aims of the school place great emphasis on developing pupils' individual abilities while enabling them to be as independent as possible in a range of social settings. These aims are evident in lessons where tasks are planned for individual pupils and this enables them to be fully included in the class groups. They are also evident in the school's efforts to provide its pupils with experience of other schools and the local community, and in the high quality of personal development and social relationships demonstrated by the pupils.
41. Responsibilities for the operation and development of the school, such as the management of curriculum subjects, are delegated appropriately to teachers and classroom support assistants. Their responsibilities are appropriately clarified through job descriptions. These are effective in ensuring that routine responsibilities are carried out and there are good arrangements to enable staff to achieve their delegated tasks by providing them with time out of lessons.

42. The governing body meets and carries out its business according to statutory requirements. Some decision-making responsibilities are delegated appropriately to committees that specialise in particular areas of the school's work. Governors are beginning to monitor the work of the school appropriately through the reports they receive at their meetings and through their visits to school activities and events. However, they have not established their own independent strategies to gather information about the work of the school so that they can identify strengths and weaknesses. Some governors have begun to monitor aspects such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs but these arrangements require a more structured approach and further governor training.
43. The senior management team has introduced some good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. They look at teachers' lesson plans, examine pupil records, and directly observe lessons. This monitoring has made a significant contribution to the improvement of standards in teaching since the previous inspection, and there is general agreement that further development of classroom observation by subject co-ordinators will help to improve it further.
44. The appraisal of teachers has been carried out this year and a group of governors has appropriately reviewed the performance of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The training and development that staff need in order to carry out the tasks assigned to them are clearly identified by a training and development steering group. The school is well placed to develop its appraisal and professional development systems into a performance management process.
45. The school has not yet established whole school targets for the improvement of standards but good preparations are in hand to remedy this. Pupils' achievements have recently been measured against new national assessment scales. With this information the school will be well placed to measure how much progress has been made by its pupils each year and to set itself appropriate targets for the improvement of standards across the subjects of the curriculum. It will also have enough accurate information about the achievement of its pupils to enable it to compare itself with other similar schools.
46. The money the school receives through its delegated budget is managed very well. Every effort is made to spend money wisely. Everything the school spends money on is very accurately costed and entered in the school's annual budget plan, including resources and services that the school wishes to buy to improve its provision. Planned saving has enabled substantial funds to be reserved towards the cost of a hydrotherapy pool, which the school intends to fund primarily from charitable donations. The office manager, with support purchased from the local authority's financial services, very efficiently carries out the day-to-day management of the school's money. The specific grants allocated to the school to promote development in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and sport have been put to effective use.
47. The school has a good number of teachers, Nursery Nurses and non-teaching support staff. The numbers and quality of the support staff are a significant factor in the progress made by pupils. All staff have job descriptions which closely match their responsibilities. The system of teacher appraisal and professional development plans for Nursery Nurses is effective in ensuring the continued professional development of staff. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the training of staff in the literacy and numeracy strategies. The training they have received has played an important role in improving learning opportunities in

these subjects. Similarly, the provision of curriculum training for Nursery Nurses has enhanced their role within the school and the support they can provide in the classroom. The use of a member of the support staff as a computer technician has been very effective in developing the use of information technology throughout the school. Effective induction procedures are in place for staff.

48. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory. Recent developments, such as the provision of a computer suite, have enhanced the building. Classrooms are used well and provide a pleasant learning environment and the grounds provide very good opportunities for creative play and for pupils' interaction with pupils from a neighbouring school. The school has a library area but this is small and requires further development. A noteworthy feature of the accommodation is the provision of interactive and problem solving displays such as the "sound of the sea". These displays often use simple single switches and are of particular benefit to pupils with visual impairment. The school makes very good use of the accommodation available. However, it does not fully meet the needs of pupils or the curriculum, particularly the curricular needs of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students who are over 16 who do not have access to specialised teaching areas for subjects such as science, art and design and technology.
49. Teaching resources are satisfactory overall and are currently being developed further as the school's schemes of work are reviewed and redeveloped to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The number of books has been increased and there is now effective provision of tactile teaching resources for pupils with visual impairment. The stock of computers has been improved and the school is building up an interesting range of software to support work across the curriculum. Whilst the recently introduced Internet connection is not fully utilised for either teaching or administrative purposes, the school has plans to develop its use further. The use of the wider community, such as visits to churches and other sites is a well-established part of the curriculum and the sporting needs of older pupils are effectively addressed through the use of local sports facilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no key issues for the school to address but in the context of its strengths the following points for improvement should be considered for the basis of an action plan:

- To further develop the role of the co-ordinators so that they monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. (paragraphs 43,61,72)
- For the governors to develop strategies that will provide them with a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching and learning. (paragraph 42)
- To use the information gained from assessing pupils' attainment to establish whole school targets for the improvement of standards in subjects. (paragraph 45)
- To extend the use of signing for those pupils with communication difficulties. (paragraphs 16,24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	23	66	9	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	47
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1%

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	47
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: Y N–13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.2
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y N – Y 13

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	321

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99 / 00
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	£
Total income	496410
Total expenditure	489603
Expenditure per pupil	11658
Balance brought forward from previous year	76913
Balance carried forward to next year	83720

The school currently has a substantial underspend. This has been carefully planned to support the uncompleted priorities identified in the school development plan, to provide a 5% carry-forward as recommended by the Local Education Authority and to support the school's project to build a hydrotherapy pool.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	47
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	18	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	61	29	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	4	7	7
The teaching is good.	68	25	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	25	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	0	4	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	25	4	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	21	4	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	7	4	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	14	7	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	29	4	7	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. The provision for children under five is good. The curriculum has been appropriately developed from the areas of learning recommended for young children and the recently published early learning goals have been effectively incorporated into teachers' planning. They provide an appropriate focus for achievement. Assessment is good and children's individual education plans clearly reflect their learning needs. Achievable targets are identified and these are used effectively to plan learning experiences through which children make good progress. Success criteria are clearly identified for each target and these enable the teacher to effectively monitor children's progress. Any significant responses children make to the learning experiences they have are recorded and these enable the teacher to plan work that is well matched to their needs.
51. Teaching is good. The teacher has good knowledge and understanding of young children and of their special educational needs. Lessons are well planned and expectations are realistically high. Activities are interesting and children pay attention and participate well. The teacher, Nursery Nurse and classroom assistants work well together supporting children's learning and effectively extending their participation in activities. Children are well settled and familiar with the nursery routines. They are confident and keen to take part in the learning opportunities they are offered. A good programme of induction has been implemented and there are very good opportunities for parents to visit the nursery on consultation mornings when they have the opportunity to watch and take part in demonstration lessons. The nursery environment is bright and lively.

THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS POST 16

52. Students achieve well. They make good and occasionally very good and excellent progress in lessons and this reflects the high quality of teaching. Because there are only a few students over 16 this year they have the majority of their lessons alongside pupils who are in Key Stage 4. The school has made sure that student' learning needs are met well and they have sufficient distinct and different opportunities to the other members of the class. This is evident in the way that pupils who are about to leave school eagerly anticipate joining students next year. Students understand that because they are the oldest they have special responsibilities and because of this they act in a more mature way, for instance, offering to 'work' with younger children, helping them in class. Students have a very positive attitude to school, are attentive and willing to join in with discussions. They have an exceptional understanding of the needs of others, for example, being patient when younger pupils give their news.
53. Developing effective communication skills is a major focus of students' work and teachers' planning is effective in developing opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills in most subjects. Lessons in personal and social education provide very good opportunities for students to discuss current issues, and debate topics that interest them. Teachers know students well, planning effectively to meet individual needs and encouraging them to set their own targets, for example, to listen more during discussions. Teachers effectively remind students of their targets and this make a significant contribution to improving their performance. Students make good progress in developing their

reading skills. They share the text 'The Diary of Anne Frank' on an overhead projection and read some of the words. Students are pleased with each other's effort, applauding success. They answer questions about the text, following good clues from staff that enable them to be successful.

54. The teacher provides exciting opportunities for students to take part in drama and role-play and this helps them to gain a greater understanding of events in the past, such as the Second World War. Students act their parts very well, pretending to be members of a family sheltering from bombs. They gain a good understanding of this time in history and the activity provides an excellent opportunity to share feelings, effectively promoting communication skills. Students develop a good level of independence, creating recipes for favourite meals. These activities are also used effectively to promote students' numeracy. They effectively apply skills learnt in weighing and measuring to food preparation and their understanding of money to the purchase of foodstuffs. Teachers also effectively encourage the use of literacy skills through interesting tasks such as creating shopping lists. Students choose and purchase the ingredients to make meals with increasing independence, developing confidence in handling money. These activities are good preparation for using numeracy beyond the school. Lessons in life skills provide good opportunities for students to develop knowledge of safety in the home and care for others and they are keen to learn first aid techniques.
55. Students act in a very mature way when they play a range of games at local sports facilities. They become interested in a range of sports and develop this further by taking an interest in sporting activities during their leisure time. Students attend tennis coaching and they have developed an excellent relationship with staff. This enables them to make the most of the training opportunity. During these coaching session students make very good progress and they develop good social skills that enable them to mix well in the wider community. Students receive good careers guidance and there is good planning for students to take part in assisted work experience next year. These opportunities prepare them well for life beyond school. The link course at a local college, where students study animal care and horticulture, provides students with a good insight into college life. The teacher provides good opportunities to link the experiences students have at college with lessons in science, particularly to build upon the lessons in sex education, drawing effectively on students' experiences of reproduction in animals and plants.
56. The recently appointed department leader has established good plans to promote more autonomy for the increased number of students next year. These include building upon the success of college links to provide a wider range of vocational studies. The recently introduced external accreditation is beginning to provide a good basis to record students' achievements. Although there is no separate accommodation for students, staff ensure that the learning environment reflects the freedom and responsibility required by young people of this age.

ENGLISH

57. Throughout their time at the school pupils make consistently good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1 those capable of higher attainment identify letters and words and those with more complex difficulties follow and anticipate the movement of objects, such as puppets and toys. Some pupils are learning to use signs and gestures to communicate and they follow stories, anticipating events and recognising characters. A small number of pupils learn to hold a pencil and

demonstrate early writing skills by making marks on paper. As they reach the end of Key Stage 2 a small number of pupils read their own name and use two or three word sentences to communicate with others. Many pupils recognise pictures in books and listen attentively to stories. A few pupils talk with enjoyment about the books they have read or that have been read to them. Pupils write their own name and copy words and simple sentences. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have become confident in their communication with each other and adults. They use a wide and appropriate range of vocabulary in their conversations and understand instructions that have three or four pieces of information. Pupils' reading has become more fluent and many show an obvious enjoyment of books and reading. Their writing skills have developed well and some pupils produce clear and recognisable letters and words to illustrate pictures and convey meaning. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have extended their language and literacy skills and are familiar with a range of social signs used in everyday life, such as 'entrance' and 'exit'. They talk well about their experiences and listen carefully to each other's contributions. Pupils read a range of different texts and a few fluent readers demonstrate a good understanding of the content.

58. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve standards particularly in reading. There is now an appropriate range of reading schemes which are used effectively. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to read a wide range of text, and for those who do not recognise words, teachers effectively use symbols to help them to develop early reading skills. This has had a positive impact on the number of pupils able to read and the standards of reading achieved, particularly by pupils capable of higher attainment. The school has also developed a small library area which is stocked with an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction.
59. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and literacy skills are now taught through the literacy hour. This has been adapted skilfully to meet the needs of pupils in the school.
60. The teaching of English is good at all key stages. Planning is effective and in all classes teachers identify the individual needs of pupils, including those with more profound learning needs, very precisely. Within the literacy hour teachers use a range of imaginative resources, including music, puppets, dolls and artefacts to enable the whole group to share and enjoy stories. Pupils' involvement is supported by signing and symbols, although signing is not used consistently across all classes. Teachers work well with their support staff who are actively involved in lessons and provide high levels of support for individuals and groups.
61. The subject leader for English has taken up the post recently but has already identified some appropriate areas for development within the subject action plan. Good leadership of this subject has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well into the curriculum; however, the co-ordinator has not had sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and this has limited the extent to which the school has been able to share good practice.

MATHEMATICS

62. Pupils' achievements in mathematics throughout the school are good. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils match and sequence shapes and colours into a range of patterns and manipulate different materials to form shapes such as squares. Pupils recognise and name numbers and higher attaining pupils use numbers up to ten with confidence. Pupils with more complex difficulties are beginning to

recognise shape by touch and use their visual skills to locate hidden objects. By the end of Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils have built upon their skills and recognise and use number bonds up to 10. They make good progress in their use of numbers in simple addition problems. A small number of pupils count by rote up to 20. All pupils make good progress in mathematical investigations and have established the concept of lighter and heavier by using scales. The good progress made in basic skills enables older pupils to apply them in a range of problem solving situations, such as identifying money and calculating change. Knowledge of times tables is developing and is good amongst higher attaining pupils. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' ability to think mathematically is well developed and this allows them to undertake practical work such as measuring the volume of a container or using graphs to illustrate concepts such as longer/shorter, heavier/lighter. The achievements of pupils with more complex difficulties are good. They are provided with a good range of learning opportunities that enable them to develop an awareness and understanding of shape, number and money.

63. Teaching and learning is good overall and on occasions very good. There has been an appropriate emphasis on providing training for the Numeracy Strategy and this has enabled teachers to implement it effectively and raise standards. The introduction of the strategy has enabled pupils to make good progress in the development and the application of number skills. The careful organisation of lessons and the imaginative range of experiences provided ensures that pupils of all abilities are effectively challenged. In a Year 2 lesson the National Numeracy Strategy was made very relevant to pupils through imaginative activities. For example, pupils had very good opportunities to practise recognising and counting coins during a role play activity to buy fruit for a picnic fruit salad. Pupils found the activity fun and clearly enjoyed taking part.
64. Teachers' planning is good and effective use is made of support staff to take small groups of pupils for activities. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements because the level of support provided is high. Nursery Nurses and classroom assistants are skilled at supporting pupils of all abilities and this was clearly demonstrated in a lesson for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils who needed it were fully supported to develop practical skills when establishing the volume of a container and recording their results, and higher attaining pupils were enabled to work independently.
65. Assessment procedures, including the teachers' use of questioning and opportunities to share the outcomes of activities with the class, are used effectively to identify progress and plan appropriate tasks for future lessons. The discussions at the end of lessons about what has been learned are well structured and all pupils are effectively supported to contribute. They participate with enthusiasm.
66. The practise of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum is well developed. There are good opportunities for pupils to use number words in English and to record skills in physical education by keeping scores. In personal and social education pupils independently count and record the numbers wanting toast for their morning break.
67. The subject leader and the headteacher have worked hard to introduce the Numeracy Strategy by providing support and training for staff, as well as monitoring the outcomes of lessons. Subject developments have been identified for the future and these include a review of the scheme of work to ensure that it

fully reflects the National Numeracy Strategy. Recent improvements to subject provision include the development of individual targets for each pupil. This has made a significant contribution to improving standards. Another good development is the greater use of computer software to support pupils' work in numeracy. There has been good improvement to the subject since the last inspection and the successful implementation of the Numeracy Strategy has improved the quality of the teaching and the level of pupil achievement.

SCIENCE

68. Pupils' achievements are good and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils make particularly good progress learning to carry out investigations. Teachers provide clear instructions at the beginning of lessons, supporting this with good revision of previous work. This ensures that pupils are confident about what they are expected to do and are able to work with a good degree of independence using readily available resources with confidence. As pupils succeed staff guide them to complete work that is more challenging and this enables them to make good progress. Staff use their very good knowledge of pupils to judge when to help or when to encourage independence. Teachers encourage the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and ensure that behaviour remains very good, partly through effective strategies and also by the enthusiasm that they foster within lessons. Consequently, pupils are interested in their work and keen to solve problems.
69. Pupils at all key stages make good progress. They respond well to the increasing level of challenge because the work they are given is interesting. As pupils investigate, teachers consistently ask questions to check that pupils understand. Pupils are given good opportunities to explain their work and they use an increasing number of scientific words. This was evident when pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 completed circuits. They explained that the bulb would not light up if the circuit were broken. Because there is good planning pupils have appropriate opportunities to undertake increasingly more challenging work as they become older, building on their skills. For instance, pupils in Key Stage 3 continue to study electricity and light and with good support they explain that the sun is not the same as electric light because you cannot switch it off.
70. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils know about reproduction in mammals and are learning about reproduction in plants. The teacher reinforces pupils' understanding by effectively emphasising similarities in the vocabulary used. Good use of questioning enables the teacher to check if pupils have remembered facts from previous lessons about sex education. The excellent relationship the teacher has with pupils and the sensitive approach used enhances pupils' confidence to talk about personal matters. Planning is good and ensures that pupils follow a wide range of topics with a strong emphasis upon the practical elements of science. Pupils study the life of animals in increasing detail as they grow older and they also look at different dietary needs. Pupils are beginning to understand how to plan suitable meals and have an understanding of the specific needs of vegetarians. Older pupils and students attend college and this develops their understanding and interest in horticulture and animal husbandry. These opportunities build effectively on their past learning about the conditions plants and animals need to live. The topics of study at college deepen pupils' understanding, preparing them well for life beyond the school.
71. Pupils with more complex needs make the same progress as others because teachers plan well and ensure that work is matched to their needs. They also

make sure that these pupils receive a good level of support. Through carefully tailored tasks, pupils make decisions about food, expressing preferences through taste, smell and texture when they investigate fruit. They make good progress. Pupils respond well to encouragement, they operate switches to make choices between different pictures on the computer. Although there is good support and encouragement for pupils there are some occasions when they would make more progress if tasks were broken down into smaller steps. There are good examples where teachers provide symbols and signs to enhance pupils' understanding but the use of sign is inconsistent and this sometimes limited pupils' involvement in activities. There are good examples of teachers planning for pupils to use computers to help them with their work, such as retrieving information or presenting their work by word processing but this is not a consistent feature of planning.

72. The subject has been improved since the last inspection particularly teachers' planning which has been supported by improvements to the scheme of work. Planning is currently good and incorporates the changes required for Curriculum 2000 later this year. There is appropriate monitoring of teachers' planning but the subject leader would benefit from the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching science across the school. Systems of assessment are good. The subject leader is working closely with other schools to develop new assessment procedures for science. This will provide the opportunity to monitor pupils' learning more accurately and effectively over time and will provide a good basis for target setting to raise standards of achievement.

ART

73. Overall pupils make good progress and this is an improvement since the last inspection when achievement was judged to be satisfactory. By the end of each key stage they achieve good standards. Although it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching, it is clear that pupils' progress is the result of the good opportunities provided for them. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in painting and printing. Teachers are skilled at adapting activities and experiences to meet the pupils' needs. For example, younger pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop an awareness of colour and teachers' planning ensures that there are good sensory experiences for pupils with more complex needs. Pupils are shown large circles of colour, red, green and yellow, and there is good use of a black background to enhance these colours for pupils who have visual problems. Pupils' awareness of colour is reinforced further by exploring coloured tissue paper. They are encouraged to put their hands into a box of tissue pieces and watch them flutter down onto the table. With support pupils stick the tissue onto a paper plate to make a wall display for the story of 'The hungry caterpillar'. Pupils also have good opportunities to print. They are supported to hold the brush and apply the paint to the face of the block. Staff effectively encourage pupils to make progress and be independent by using praise to help identify their achievements. For example a pupil is praised enthusiastically when he closes his fingers around the handle of the brush and holds it for a few seconds without support. Teaching has improved for pupils at Key Stage 1 and teachers no longer over-support the development of pupils' work with their own input.
74. Older pupils look carefully at the painting 'The sleeping gypsy' by Rousseau. They are encouraged to talk about elements of the painting that they like and reproduce in their sketchbooks some of the colours used by the artist. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' vocabulary and their

understanding of 'stripes' is reinforced by carefully looking at the gypsy's dress. A good range of activities is provided to help reinforce pupils' understanding; they are encouraged to produce striped patterns using paint, chalk and fabric pens as well as the computer. Pupils at all key stages experience a wide range of activities and use a good variety of media and techniques.

75. The subject is well led and managed and the subject leader has established clear plans for the future. These include a review of the subject policy and scheme of work to ensure that it reflects the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Curriculum planning has been improved since the last inspection and the scheme of work contains good guidance for teachers. It effectively guides teachers' planning and ensures that pupils take part in an appropriate range of activities through which they experience all the aspects of learning identified in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils are introduced to the work of a wide range of artists such as Rousseau and Kurt Switters as well as art from different countries, for example, Africa and from different cultures and times such as the Aztecs. Pupils' work is valued by teachers; it is displayed well around the school and makes a significant contribution to the creation of a bright and stimulating learning environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. Pupils' achievements and progress are good at all key stages. Lessons are well planned and pupils of all abilities take an active part, experiencing activities at an appropriate level. At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about different fruits and have good opportunities to experience the different tastes, smells and textures. At Key Stage 2 they design and make their own greetings card, folding card and sticking pictures and shapes arranging the pieces by themselves. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make a model to their own design from clay and salt dough and older pupils in Key Stage 4 and students over 16 make an Indian meal together, learning about the traditions of another culture as well as the processes of food preparation. Students also take part in the mini enterprise scheme; they make biscuits, fridge magnets and greetings cards which they sell. The profits are spent at their favourite burger bar. Pupils take part in lessons with enthusiasm and interest. In all lessons, pupils are very helpful to each other and tolerant of each other's difficulties. Older pupils appraise their own work critically by completing self-evaluation forms. Pupils with more complex needs have good opportunities to explore different materials and are effectively supported to use simple tools as independently as possible.
77. The teaching of design and technology at all key stages is good and is very good in some instances. Lessons are well planned, and teachers provide a wide range of activities that are well matched to the individual abilities of the pupils. Each pupil has the opportunity to complete tasks as independently as possible and this creates a high level of challenge to which they respond positively. Teachers have good and sometimes very good subject knowledge and they have a particularly good awareness of food hygiene. Teachers are particularly skilled at providing individual work and support for each pupil while ensuring that pupils feel that they are working as a member of a group.
78. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. There is now a detailed and well-planned scheme of work and teachers have successfully addressed the challenge of getting pupils to complete work as independently as possible. Pupils now complete the majority of tasks for themselves. The school has developed a good assessment scale similar to the

national performance criteria for core subjects and pupils' achievements are now evaluated effectively. This helps teachers to plan appropriate work. The resources available for the subject are good. They include mobile resource trolleys, which are shared by all classes; these enable pupils to take part in a wide range of activities.

GEOGRAPHY

79. As a limited number of geography lessons were observed during the inspection, judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and records. Geography is recognised as a valuable and relevant subject and this is reflected in the well-presented displays around the school, including an interactive display in the school entrance about holiday travel. Pupils follow a detailed, well planned scheme of work that develops their experiences outwards from their own immediate surroundings into the local area and beyond, gradually incorporating themes from the National Curriculum programmes of study. Lessons are planned so that pupils learn at an appropriate level and lessons include sensory experiences for pupils with more complex difficulties. Because of this pupils make good progress.
80. At Key Stage 1 pupils explore their classroom, the school and the grounds. In Key Stage 2, pupils complete a weather chart, examine an outline map of Britain distinguishing land from sea, complete a project on litter and waste, and examine different modes of transport. Learning for pupils in Key Stage 3 is more challenging and they identify symbols on maps, use simple grid references and learn the points of the compass. They consider differences between two local communities and examine some features of an African country. Pupils make good progress. For example, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils attach symbols to a map of the Blackpool area, identify local landmarks and study African customs.
81. Teaching in the limited number of lessons seen was good. Teachers plan interesting and engaging activities and use assessment well to meet pupils' individual needs during a whole class project. Activities effectively meet the needs of individuals but teaching ensures that pupils feel part of the group. Classroom organisation and the management of pupils with diverse educational and physical needs is good.

HISTORY

82. Pupils enjoy their history lessons. Many of the interesting topics they cover are represented in classroom and corridor displays that demonstrate their hard work and enthusiasm. During the inspection only two lessons are observed. Both were very stimulating and engaged older pupils in activities, bringing history to life through role-play and sensory experiences. Pupils of all abilities were actively involved in the lessons and took part at their own level. Lessons are well prepared and work is planned effectively so that all pupils can participate. The management and organisation of pupils in quite complex lesson presentations is very good and sometimes excellent.
83. Pupils follow a well-planned scheme of work that provides a range of interesting topics. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils appropriately learn about the passing of time in relation to photographs of family members and of themselves as they have grown up. In Key Stage 3 pupils have good opportunities to study history in its broader context and they name the features of a castle, look at some of the traditions of ancient Egyptians and compare Viking and modern housing. The

local community is used effectively to support pupils' learning when they visit a local windmill. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study the life of Ann Frank and through role-play they experience the life of a family during World War Two.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are good. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils undertake simple computer operations such as using a switch to change a picture on the computer screen and they use word processing skills to generate a simple diary. Pupils with more complex needs make good use of switches to operate equipment, such as the bubble machine. Those with communication difficulties are effectively supported to use single switch communication devices to contribute to classroom discussions. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils operate a small number of computer programmes effectively and produce word processing in a range of sizes and print styles. Higher attaining pupils draw pictures using an art program and print their story of a visit to a local burger bar using a programme that generates text symbols. Good use is made of images generated by a digital camera. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 confidently use a variety of programs to type letters to friends and support their work in other areas of the curriculum. For example using the CD-ROM to look at the work of great artists. Pupils make good progress. They build successfully on their skills and by the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils generate word processed items, such as party invitations. Pupils with more complex needs use switches to answer questions and operate equipment, such as a radio or a hairdryer.
85. Teaching is good. Lessons are well organised and there are good opportunities for pupils to be withdrawn from the classroom. This enables staff to give pupils a good level of individual attention. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and also provides opportunities for the development of communication skills. Support staff are used to good effect in the teaching of information and communication technology. For example, during a session for a group of Year 4 pupils their enthusiastic and friendly approach gave the pupils confidence to use the computers well. The teachers and the support staff carefully assess pupils' work and this enables good quality, individual learning targets to be established. Pupils respond well to the careful planning and supportive learning atmosphere and a good feature of their response is the patience and concentration they show in order to achieve success.
86. The use of computers to support pupils learning in other subjects of the curriculum is becoming firmly established and effective use is made of numeracy and spelling programmes to support work in these areas. Older pupils use the computers to record their diaries and to record information from other subjects, such as recipes in food technology. A noteworthy and extremely effective use of the computers is in the support of pupils with profound and sensory learning difficulties. Pupils use switches to create a range of sounds and pictures in science. They also use switches for interactive displays, such as the "sound of the sea." These displays provide an interesting and stimulating environment for all pupils but especially those with visual impairment.
87. The subject is well resourced and good development planning, supported by effective staff training is beginning to result in effective use of the resources available. Appropriate training is planned for the future and this includes the use of the Internet. There has been good subject development since the last inspection. Lesson planning has been improved; the new format ensures that

teachers consider the use of computers in every lesson. The appointment of a Nursery Nurse as a computer technician has been effective in providing a good level of support to class teachers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)

88. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and it is not possible to judge pupils' achievements and progress or the quality of teaching. However, inspection findings indicate that the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils greet each other confidently using 'bonjour' or 'salut' and identifying each other correctly as monsieur or mam'selle. They correctly count the number of pupils in the group and can answer simple questions such as 'how many boys?' 'How many girls?' The teacher uses questioning well to make sure that pupils have remembered key words and phrases from the past lesson. Pupils remember that the lesson is about going on holiday and they answer the question 'Ou vas-tu en vacance?' using or repeating the phrase 'Je vais en vacance.....' saying that they would like to go to places such as Greece or Disney Land. They are confident to try new phrases, listening carefully and trying hard to pronounce the words correctly. Pupils with limited speech sign their responses or participate by pressing a single switch communication aid with a pre-recorded message. The teacher plans a good range of games and activities that enable pupils to rehearse what they have learned. Pupils name items such as towels, sunglasses and sweets, which they put in their holiday suitcase. They draw pictures of the items they have chosen and label them. Pupils capable of higher attainment use simple dictionaries to find the words they need. The plenary session is used well to recap the words and phrases that have been used during the lesson and pupils enjoy the opportunity to sing their favourite songs in French. The subject is well co-ordinated and managed.

MUSIC

89. A limited number of lessons were seen during the inspection and it is not possible to make firm judgements about pupils' achievements and progress or the quality of teaching. However, findings indicate that standards are at least satisfactory and remain broadly similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Teachers make appropriate use of musical activities as part of learning experiences in a range of lessons and situations. Songs are used well to reinforce younger pupils' understanding of number, for example, when they sing 'six fat sausages sizzling in a pan' and 'five current buns'. In the one lesson observed pupils in Key Stage 2 enthusiastically explored the sounds made by tuned and untuned instruments. They enjoyed the activity and responded well to the teacher when she asked them to stop playing. Pupils understood the role of the conductor and used simple hand signals to indicate that they want the class to play the instruments loudly or quietly. Pupils responded well, trying hard to follow the directions they were given. They handled the instruments appropriately and with care. Pupils took turns to play and listen to each other's contributions. They noticed the difference between high and low notes, often identifying them correctly when asked.
90. There are good opportunities for all pupils to perform when they take part in the school assemblies and in the Christmas production. Visits from a variety of professional musicians make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and their cultural development.

91. There is a satisfactory scheme of work and this ensures that teachers plan a suitable range of learning experiences. The recently appointed co-ordinator has identified appropriate priorities for the development of the subject and these include a review of the scheme of work and a series of music workshops to further develop teachers' skills. Learning resources for the subject are satisfactory and a satisfactory range of musical instruments has been purchased recently. There are appropriate plans to increase the range of multi-cultural instruments available in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. Pupils' achievements are good and the progress they make is good and often very good. Pupils enjoy activities because teachers are enthusiastic. They work hard to improve, responding well to teachers' high expectations. Pupils behave well and listen carefully to instructions. Particularly good behaviour was seen when pupils in Key Stage 2 waited patiently for their turn to go through some exciting tunnel equipment. The excellent relationship pupils had with staff enabled them to enter the 'dark' tunnel with confidence. Pupils were delighted with their success. Teachers' planning is effective and ensures that pupils with more complex needs take part in suitable activities and have very good support so that they make the same progress as others. Pupils are encouraged to improve their performance through activities that are well matched to individual need. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have good understanding of how well they perform and identify their best skill to demonstrate to the class.
93. Pupils in Key Stage 3, make very good progress when they attend a local tennis club. They behave in an exemplary way; they listen well and develop an understanding of the rules of tennis. The tennis coach promotes enthusiasm for the sport and pupils want to learn as much as possible so that they can play a game. Although they like to compete with each other, they are pleased with each other's success. Staff provide very good opportunities to promote numeracy through keeping score and they promote literacy well, ensuring that pupils learn appropriate vocabulary. Pupils discuss their game using words, such as backhand appropriately, and they talk about the news from Wimbledon.
94. Pupils achieve very well in swimming. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make very good progress towards developing early swimming strokes. The youngest pupils and those who have more complex needs attend hydrotherapy sessions at another school. They make very good progress following individual programmes planned by the physiotherapist. Pupils are very well supported and quickly develop confidence in the water. Through encouragement, they begin to move limbs, taking great delight in attempting to splash. The provision is extremely valuable but means pupils spend a considerable amount of time travelling and waiting for their turn. This restricts the amount of time available for learning in other subjects. The school has begun fundraising as part of a major project to build a hydrotherapy pool on the school site. This is an appropriate priority to promote pupils' wellbeing and progress and to ensure that the teaching time available is used to best effect.
95. There is good subject planning. Pupils follow a good range of activities within school and there are good arrangements to provide wider experiences such as outdoor adventurous activities and competitive sport. The accommodation for physical education is good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 but the hall is too small for older pupils. The school makes effective use of local sports halls and clubs, such as the tennis club, to promote learning. Resources for learning are good,

with particularly good provision of equipment to play team games. The school has arranged sports training for some support staff and they effectively lead games activities at lunchtimes. These activities are popular and make a good contribution to pupils' progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

96. The provision for religious education is satisfactory. It covers the main religions of Christianity and Judaism and includes some units of work on Islam. It is appropriately based on the Local Education Authority's agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has implemented a detailed scheme of work to support teachers' planning and ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to make progress. It includes topics on worship, values and beliefs, reflection, making choices and symbolism. It also offers suitable guidance about how teachers can meet the needs of pupils with more complex difficulties through the use of sensory clues and tactile stimuli.
97. A limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection but findings indicate that pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. Through story telling older pupils are developing an understanding of the lives of the saints and younger pupils are able to appreciate the story of creation through music and sensory experience. Good use is made of resources to bring the subject to life and to create periods of calm and reflection. Pupils respond well. They participate willingly in discussions, show obvious pleasure in activities and talk about their own experiences with enthusiasm. They work well together and display good attitudes to their work and to each other. There is a strong sense of shared experience in these lessons.
98. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has improved the resources to reflect a more diverse range of faiths and religions. There is now a good range of artefacts such as newspapers and prayer mats. The subject is appropriately monitored through teachers' plans and also through worship books, which are written by individual teachers for their assemblies. The subject contributes well to the spiritual and cultural experiences provided by the school.