

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ST GILES SCHOOL**

Retford

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122955

Headteacher: Catherine Kirk

Reporting inspector: April Dakin

25441

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 191192

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	DN22 7XN
Telephone number:	01777 703683
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Terry Slattery
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25441	April Dakin	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Geography.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
1311	Barry Wood	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10781	Robert Thompson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Modern foreign language.	How well is the school led and managed?
21899	Gillian Lawson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Music; Equal opportunities.	
2746	Roy Lund	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology.	How high are standards?
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Religious education; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17855	Gordon Gentry	<i>Team Inspector</i>	History; Art.	
10782	Henry Morton	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Post 16; Personal, social and health education.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Giles School is a small, mixed community special school for pupils aged between three and nineteen. The school caters for a wide range of special needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to profound and complex needs. The highest-attaining pupils have moderate learning difficulties, the lower-attaining pupils have severe learning difficulties, and the lowest-attaining pupils have profound and complex needs. Many pupils have a history of challenging behaviour associated either with emotional and behavioural difficulties or with autism. An increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are being admitted to the school. Year groups vary in size and primary pupils are broadly grouped by age. Currently the school has 88 pupils on roll, including one Nursery-aged child and four Reception aged children who are taught with three Year 1 pupils. The rest of Years 1 and 2 pupils are taught in one class, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 are divided into two mixed-ability classes. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are organised by age for English and mathematics and by ability in most other subjects. Students aged between 16 and 19 are grouped by ability into two classes. Forty four per cent of pupils receive free school meals, well above the national average. There is one child of Reception age who comes from an ethnic minority background. The great majority of pupils travel to school by local education authority transport; with some travelling for up to an hour.

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

This is an effective school. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, senior management team and governors give clear educational direction to the work of the school. The quality of teaching is good, and the majority of pupils, whatever their disability and gender, achieve educational standards that are good overall. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. The school gives good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- The headteacher, senior management team and governors lead and manage the school well.
- Teaching is good, and it ensures that all pupils achieve high standards in the majority of subjects. These include English, mathematics, science, and personal, social and health education, which includes citizenship. Pupils achieve very high standards in music.
- There is very good provision for Post 16 students. They are prepared well for life after school.
- Non-teaching staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Teachers and non-teaching staff manage pupils well, and as a result, pupils have very good attitudes to work, behave well and improve in their personal development as they move through the school.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school looks after its pupils well by responding effectively to their complex and varying needs.
- The school has good links with parents and very good links the local community and other schools.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The overall provision for children under six years of age.
- The achievement of pupils in information and communication technology, and the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.
- The amount of time available for teaching and learning for older pupils.
- The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating academic and personal development of the different groups of pupils in the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997, and the inspection identified a number of key issues. These were mainly related to the way in which the quality of teaching and of the curriculum was monitored to ensure that the lowest- and highest-attaining pupils achieved as well as they should. The school has made good progress towards resolving these issues and, as a result, standards are now good overall. There is scope for more opportunities for well-matched accreditation, but the school is finding it difficult to extend these. The reason is that it has not fully responded to the need to increase the time for teaching the older pupils, an issue identified at the last inspection. The school has put in place a rolling programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and has successfully implemented national initiatives, such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies and performance management. This has improved teaching significantly, although the proportion of good or better lessons remains about the same. The school is involved in the development of a nationally recognised curriculum development initiative for the lowest- and lower-attaining pupils. It has assessed all pupils to gain a baseline of their achievements, but has not gathered the information in a form that can be easily analysed in order to monitor the progress of different groups.

## STANDARDS

The table below summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	<b>Key</b>	
speaking and listening	C	B	B	A	very good	A
Reading	C	B	B	B	good	B
Writing	C	C	C	C	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	C	B	B	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	C	B	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	**	B	B	B	** No judgement made because IEP targets are not specific enough	

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

The achievements of the growing numbers of children under six are satisfactory overall, but they are not as good, comparatively speaking, as those of pupils of school age in language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development. They are good in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development and in physical development. Overall, pupils and students of school age and beyond achieve well and are making good progress towards meeting the challenging targets set by the school. Pupils and students achieve well in English. All pupils gain external accreditation by Year 11. The school has introduced the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network's (ASDAN) Transitional Challenge for the lower- and lowest-attaining pupils. The first moderation of work will take place this year in the summer.

Achievements in independent and creative writing are satisfactory, and in handwriting and reading they are good overall. Achievements in mathematics are good, and higher-attaining pupils are being entered for the Certificate of Achievement for the first time this year. By Year 14, students attain further accreditation through the 'ASDAN Towards Independence' programme. Pupils' achievements in science are good, and the present Year 9 pupils are on course to achieve a Certificate of Achievement in the subject by Year 11. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Because of shortfalls in resources, pupils do not have enough opportunities in other subjects to build on the information and communication technology skills they have learnt in discrete lessons, although some of the higher-attaining pupils do achieve Certificate of Achievement passes in the subject. Pupils' achievements in personal, social and health education are good by Year 11, and very good by Year 14. Pupils achieve well in art and design and in design and technology, and very well in music, but higher-attaining pupils do not have opportunities to gain higher-level accreditation in these subjects. Standards are also high in religious education and French, where higher-attaining pupils gain the Certificate of Achievement. Results are improving year on year in these subjects. All pupils attain well in physical education and are well supported by physiotherapists; the school has recently gained the Sportsmark Award and Healthy Schools' Award. There is no difference in the progress of pupils from different disability groups.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children, pupils and students enjoy coming to school and the great majority respond very well to all the activities they take part in.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Some children and pupils display challenging behaviour at times but their behaviour steadily improves as they move through the school. Students' behaviour in school is very good, and often excellent in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils have good relationships with each other and with staff. They take great pleasure in helping one another and take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
Attendance	Good. All classes, except the Post 16 class, have attendance rates well above those of similar schools. Authorised absence is due to poor health or the need for respite care.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1-6	Years 7-11	Years 12-14
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 and learning are good, and, as a result, pupils and students make good progress throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for children in Nursery and Reception and they make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and of learning is good in English, mathematics, and science, very good in music and at least satisfactory in all other subjects. Teachers plan well for individual needs and have clear targets for learning because they know the pupils and their subject well. This ensures that all pupils learn well in relation to their prior attainment. Most teachers have adopted a three-part structure for lessons, which gives time to check previous learning, to teach new work and to allow for evaluation at the end. This works well, and pupils learn the right things, revise regularly what they know, and become increasingly skilled at evaluating their own learning in lessons. Sensory resources are used well in most lessons to add interest and to support the learning of lower- and lowest-attaining pupils.

Questioning by teachers is good, but they do not always write down what pupils have learnt. Where teaching is less good, learning outcomes are not always made clear to pupils. A weakness in the teaching is that not all teachers give pupils opportunities to write independently or to practise skills in information and communication technology. Communication, numeracy skills and personal and social skills are taught well in discrete lessons and in other subjects. All pupils and students gain confidence in communicating for a range of purposes and audiences. Higher-attaining pupils learn to write simple pieces, and sometimes extended examples, and they read well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils make good progress and learn to manipulate numbers and to use their knowledge of shape and measurement. Students make satisfactory progress in using measurement and other mathematical skills during work in the community and in the school. Pupils are managed effectively and with care so that they learn to behave well and to take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, relevant, and meets statutory requirements well. Provision at Post 16 is very good, but the time devoted to teaching is too low for pupils in the secondary department, and this limits opportunities for accreditation and independent writing. Overall, the provision for children is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school is successful in promoting spiritual and cultural awareness, and very good opportunities exist for pupils' social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. The monitoring of individual academic performance and personal development is satisfactory, but on-going records are not detailed enough or rigorously analysed to monitor the progress of groups.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, in partnership with the governing body and the senior management team, leads and manages the school well. Together, they have been successful in improving teaching and learning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed and committed to the school. They play an important part in strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a cycle of evaluation that is linked to the good school development plan. It monitors the performance of teachers well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school controls its money well and uses specific grants effectively to support improvements. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

Non-teaching staff are very well deployed to support those pupils with the most need. Staffing levels are good, but accommodation is unsatisfactory, particularly for secondary-aged pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>They are well informed about progress.</li> <li>The approachability of the school.</li> </ul>	

The team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The achievements and progress of children in the Foundation Stage are, overall, satisfactory. However, their achievements and progress in language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development are not as good, comparatively speaking, as those of pupils and students in the rest of the school, because targets are not specific enough in individual education plans (IEPs). The children make good progress in creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are also making some good progress in swimming, after a long period of not being able to use the pool, and in their overall physical development. They make satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning.

2. The achievements of all pupils aged five to nineteen are good. The school has worked hard to ensure equality of opportunity. There is no difference in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties and those with more profound and complex needs make similar progress to each other in relation to their prior attainment. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards of achievement for the majority of pupils were satisfactory but those for the lowest and highest-attaining pupils were unsatisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in standards in many subjects because the school now monitors and supports teaching and learning well. As a result, all pupils achieve well and make good progress in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, French, physical education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. All pupils achieve very well in music. Achievements and progress in all other subjects are satisfactory overall.

3. Pupils' achievement in English is good. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils achieve well in the Certificate of Educational Achievement and make good progress in English. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and is due to the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy in the primary and secondary departments, which has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Good support from speech and language therapists is also contributing to the good progress that pupils make. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading. The younger pupils listen well in lessons and answer and ask questions eagerly. Pupils extend their vocabulary well throughout the school because there is an emphasis on learning key vocabulary in English and other subjects. Higher-attaining pupils learn a range of strategies for reading new words, and read a wider range of literature as they move through the school. The lower and lowest-attaining pupils make good progress, overall, in communication, and they pay good attention to signing when it is used in lessons. They use signing, read symbols and respond well to practical resources to convey basic needs or to make choices in English lessons. These additional methods of communication are not used enough in lessons other than English to help pupils acquire key vocabulary, for example on work sheets in history and geography. The lowest-attaining pupils make good progress in responding to a wider range of objects. The school's involvement in 'Improving the Quality of Education for All' (IQEA) is providing further challenge. The school has recognised that all communication practice needs to be more consistent, and is focussing on evaluating and sharing good practice so that achievement and progress in this area extends across all subjects. In history and geography there are only limited artefacts and practical resources which are appropriate for older pupils. This sometimes limits the ability of the lowest-attaining pupils to respond and to reflect on the learning that is taking place. Occasionally, this slows their progress in lessons. Pupils with visual impairment are well supported in withdrawal lessons and have recently been making good progress in recognising moon symbols for letters in their name.

4. Pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory. They make good progress in their handwriting, but satisfactory progress in writing independently or creatively. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough with higher-attaining pupils for drafting and redrafting work, and there is limited teaching of the use of symbol programmes to help lower-attaining pupils to write independently. This is mainly because the school does not have specialist attachments, such as concept key boards, to make this possible.

5. In the primary and secondary department pupils make good progress towards the targets set within individual plans for personal and social development, literacy and numeracy, and students make very good progress in Post 16. Targets are clearly stated, measurable, and relevant to individual needs for these age groups. The school has set challenging targets in consultation with the local education authority (LEA) and is well placed to achieve them. Targets for numeracy and communication and for personal development are also well linked to teaching in other subjects, and this is promoting good progress in these areas. The very good provision, both in discrete lessons and in and through other subjects, is leading to good overall progress in personal and social development. The school promotes PSHE strongly throughout all its work.

6. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the achievement and progress of pupils in mathematics, especially in the secondary department. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in the primary and secondary departments, and improved teaching, has ensured that achievement and progress in mathematics are good. Teachers know their pupils' needs well. Pupils learn to handle increasingly large numbers and to use their measurement skills in practical situations. This year higher-attaining pupils are being entered for the Certificate of Achievement in the subject for the first time.

7. Standards of achievement in science are good, and pupils make good progress in the subject, whatever their prior attainment. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make very good progress because of the high quality of teaching they receive. The present Year 9 are to be entered for the Certificate of Achievement in Year 11 and are working successfully towards that goal. Improved planning and specialist teaching have ensured that standards are much improved since the last inspection. Standards could be improved further by ensuring that older pupils have access to better facilities.

8. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory. Overall, higher-attaining pupils are achieving satisfactorily in the Certificate of Achievement by Year 11. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards for these pupils were unsatisfactory. Although teaching is good in discrete sessions, there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in other subjects. The scheme at present does not outline a structure for the development of switch and thinking skills for the lowest-attaining pupils, so that they can intentionally control their environment and make choices, using more than one switch. However, there is evidence of some of the lowest-attaining pupils using single switches to cause different effects. Changes to the operating system have affected progress to some extent, but the new co-ordinator is filling in gaps in the knowledge of most higher-attaining pupils, particularly in the area of control. There are still shortages in hardware and software to meet the needs of the lower and lowest-attaining pupils, and to ensure access for all in other subjects. As a result, progress for those lower-and lowest-attaining pupils who need additional aids and software, and for all pupils in using information technology across the curriculum, could be improved.

9. Achievement in art and design is good. Standards of achievement in design and technology are good; pupils make good progress in the making element and satisfactory progress in designing and evaluation. Specialist teaching and improved planning have resulted in improved progress throughout the school. There is no higher-level accreditation for the highest-attaining pupils in either art and design or design and technology.
10. All pupils, whatever their prior attainment, make good progress in religious education. At the time of the last inspection, inspectors could not make a judgement about progress in the subject as too few lessons were seen, but evidence shows that improvements have been made, particularly in planning and opportunities for accreditation. Higher-attaining pupils now achieve well, gaining merits and distinctions in the Certificate of Achievement. Pupils now gain a good knowledge of their own and other religions, and show empathy with other pupils' values and beliefs.
11. There have been only modest improvements in overall standards of achievement in geography because the school has not felt this to be a priority area. The monitoring of planning and teaching and learning in the subject has not been rigorous enough to improve standards overall, although most teachers are responding well to the challenge of providing meaningful lessons for the lowest-attaining pupils. There is not enough teaching time available for the older higher-attaining pupils to gain Certificate of Achievement in the subject, and there are occasional lessons where higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not make the progress they should.
12. Whatever their degree of difficulty, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and making good progress in history, particularly between Years 3 and 6. Standards of achievement by Year 9 and 11 are satisfactory, overall, in chronology and knowledge and understanding and in enquiry skills. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their literacy skills to record their own learning independently or to research topics using ICT. The oldest pupils who have a special interest in history do not have the opportunity to gain higher level accreditation in the subject.
13. Achievements and progress in physical education are good despite the less than satisfactory indoor facilities for pupils of secondary age. The school has worked hard to improve standards, particularly in the primary department. In the process, the school has achieved the Sportsmark and the Healthy Schools Award for physical activity. The lowest-attaining pupils make good progress towards physical targets set by physiotherapists, who support pupils well. There is a multi-professional approach to encouraging and supporting pupils' mobility within the school.
14. There has been a very significant improvement in the standards pupils achieve in music. They achieve high standards in all aspects of music and they all make very good progress throughout the school. This reflects the very high quality of teaching which all pupils receive. Pupils learn to compose and perform to a high standard, and are very successful in national competitions. Music also makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and is now embedded in the life of the school.
15. Standards of achievement in French are good, and are much improved since the last inspection. Higher-attaining pupils are gaining good levels of success in the Certificate of Achievement in French by the age of 16, and the lowest-attaining pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of French life and culture.

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

16. Parents say that their children, under the age of six, enjoy coming to school and settle quickly to the school routines and expectations of the teacher. Inspectors agree that children's behaviour, although challenging at times, is satisfactory overall.

17. The great majority of pupils and students of school age and beyond have very good attitudes to the school and to all the activities associated with school. The last inspection found that the pupils had good attitudes, so there has been a significant improvement. When they arrive in school in the morning, the pupils and students are keen to find out what they are going to be doing during the day, and at the start of each lesson they are eager to begin work.

18. Behaviour was good during the last inspection but is now often very good, and this indicates good progress. In lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils and students are good in almost all lessons and very good in half of them. This very good behaviour is associated with carefully planned lessons in which there are clear objectives for each pupil or student, well chosen and stimulating activities, and a good pace. The contribution made by the non-teaching staff in enabling pupils and students of all attainment levels to join in the lessons is outstanding. Often, pupils and students with histories of inappropriate behaviour from their previous schools are so stimulated and interested by their lessons that they give no indication that their behaviour has ever been a problem.

19. It is noticeable that the pupils' and students' behaviour becomes better and their attitudes become more positive as they move through the school. They are pleased to show their work to visitors and to discuss it with them. They welcome the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups, and instances of higher-attaining pupils helping those who are attaining at a lower level are not uncommon.

20. The pupils also behave well around the school. No instances of name calling or bullying were noted in the playground or at lunch times. The pupils like to help each other, and one Year 8 pupil explained with some pride that he fetched a younger pupil's dinner for her from the hatch every day. Break times, dinner times and transport to and from school are calm and orderly affairs. The members of the school council met with one of the inspectors, explained what they did, and answered questions with great maturity and confidence. This level of good behaviour is particularly impressive because a significant number of children and pupils enter the school with a history of inappropriate behaviour in previous schools. Most pupils settle down quickly and respond rapidly to the positive expectations of teachers and the non-teaching staff.

21. There are incidents of violent behaviour recorded. However, considering the very wide range of difficulties exhibited by the pupils, and the very wide age-range in the school, the quality of the attitudes, behaviour and relationships of the great majority of pupils and students is remarkable. It reflects great credit on the staff's very effective practice.

22. Children under the age of six make satisfactory progress in their overall personal development and have satisfactory and sometimes good relationships with others. All children, pupils, and students make good progress in their self-help skills, such as eating and toileting and dressing skills, for which there are detailed programmes to support learning.

23. Pupils and students make very good progress in their personal development. Pupils consider the work of their peers and cheerfully engage in constructive and critical comment. They show a high level of respect for one another, and turn-taking and mutual support is commonplace. Pupils are developing an understanding of commonly accepted values and

respect staff members and one another. Most pupils have the ability to re-assess their own values in the light of experience. Pupils and lower-attaining students undertake a range of responsibilities and small jobs, and higher-attaining students experience work placements, which they handle with an increasing sense of pride and self worth. They learn to communicate and interact with a variety of people, and higher-attaining pupils and students learn a good sense and respect of cultural diversity.

24. Relationships between all pupils and students and staff are very good and promote trust and understanding. The pupils and students feel valued and take great pleasure in their own achievements and in the achievements of others. The inspectors saw at first hand how pleased the pupils were to gain a “mention” for their work or good behaviour.

25. As was noted in the last inspection report, the school has good attendance. Unauthorised absence has been successfully reduced during the last three years to low levels. The incidence of family holidays, taken during term-time, is well controlled and is also low. Registration is taken calmly, politely, and efficiently at the beginning of each session. Registers are completed in a statutory manner, and are routinely analysed by the office to manage absence or lateness. Most children, pupils and students are brought to the school by a variety of contracted transport, which has a good record for punctuality, despite travelling significant distances. There is a considerable loss of teaching time at either end of the school day, due to traffic congestion in the car park and the time required to disembark and embark disabled pupils. There are no indications of any truancy.

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

26. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is satisfactory for children under the age of six and good for all other pupils and students. Almost all lessons were satisfactory and about half were good. A quarter of lessons were very good and three were excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved since the time of the last inspection when around 20 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory, although the proportion of good or better lessons remains about the same. The quality of teaching and learning over time is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology history, French, physical education and religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teaching is of a very high quality in music, where all teaching was at least very good and sometimes excellent. Excellent teaching was also seen in art. Teaching in all other subjects is satisfactory overall. Teaching has improved in English, mathematics, science, art, physical education and music. Teaching and learning is best in the Post 16 provision, where it is very good in about half of lessons.

27. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a three-part structure for the great majority of lessons, building on the success of this aspect from the literacy and numeracy strategies. The best teaching includes an introduction where learning outcomes are shared with pupils, a middle section where tasks and activities are set, and a plenary session where pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance and that of others. Because of this, pupils are aware of their own learning. Overall, planning is good, and more often than not it includes learning outcomes for pupils of differing ability, which are linked to IEPs, though occasionally learning outcomes are not made clear. In one unsatisfactory religious education lesson, there was too little emphasis on learning about the religious and personal significance of celebrating Mothers’ Day, and almost all the lesson time was taken up by a ‘making’ activity. Target setting is mostly good in IEPs, particularly for pupils over five. The senior management team has worked hard to improve the quality of learning outcomes and target setting by teachers. This has been very effective in improving the quality of teaching. Pupils are mostly well informed about what they are to learn and what they have to do to achieve. This gives a good focus to learning for all pupils, whatever their degree of

difficulty. This, and the quality of questioning which involves all pupils, is a particular strength of the best teaching. On the whole, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and of the pupils they teach. Although oral marking is good, what pupils have learnt in lessons is not always formally recorded in enough detail, particularly for the lowest-attaining pupils. The school has recognised this and is working hard to improve the detail and focus of recording for these pupils.

28. Teachers have raised their expectations of pupils, which is another outcome of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. They are successful in explaining and demonstrating quite difficult language, concepts and skills in lessons, because they know their subjects well. The best teachers also challenge pupils through discussion and investigation, but not all teachers challenge higher-attaining pupils to write at length. There are limited strategies in place for lower-attaining pupils who cannot access print independently to read and write, using ICT and symbols. The best independent recording by lower-attaining pupils was in science in Years 7 to 9, where pupils told the non-teaching assistants what they had learnt. The non-teaching staff wrote it down for them, and then the pupils copied it. Pupils develop their handwriting skills well through this method. Except in the Post 16 provision the school has not fully considered using a symbol system that can be generated by ICT to enable pupils to work more independently. In humanities, worksheets often do not match individual needs, so samples of work often all look the same.

29. Pupils are expected to use their initiative and to work independently where possible, and teachers and non-teaching staff almost always provide the necessary support when pupils find this difficult. The work of the non-teaching staff, in enabling all pupils to achieve class and individual goals, makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. For example, in one science lesson the non-teaching staff took a considerable amount of time and patience to help a pupil of very low attainment to extend the use of all her senses. This entailed sensitively stroking the leaves of different plants over her hands until she signalled through her response that she liked a particular texture. It also involved wiping the juice from a pineapple on to the pupils' lips to allow her the choice of licking it off and tasting it. Later, she and the teacher talked convincingly and enthusiastically about the recent gains the pupil had made in tolerating new and old touches and tastes. However, this information is not always formally recorded on a day-to-day basis.

30. The skills of speaking and listening are taught effectively in all lessons. English lessons promote speaking and listening and social communication. Pupils grow in confidence through role-play, listening to stories, and opportunities for drama. Many lessons are supported by speech therapists. In lessons other than English, there is an emphasis on learning new technical vocabulary, which pupils use to describe and evaluate their work in plenary sessions. There is an emphasis on social communication skills for all pupils, and every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to relate to each other and to take turns and make simple requests of others. In the best lessons, communication to and from pupils is well supported by the use of Makaton symbols and signs, although not all teachers are confident signers. Pupils learn a range of social communication signs, and some lower-attaining pupils learn to use colour signs in subjects such as science, but signing of key concepts or descriptive vocabulary in subjects other than English is not consistently observed.

31. In mathematics, basic skills are taught well through mental and written work. Pupils learn to manipulate number of increasing size mentally and to record their computations accurately. Numeracy is well taught across the curriculum. Younger higher-attaining pupils learn to describe as a 'sphere' or 'cylinder' the three-dimensional shapes they make in clay, and lower-attaining pupils learn to make symmetrical patterns with paint. In history, older higher-attaining pupils consider the size of Viking long boats through estimating and



measuring in standard units. Lower-attaining pupils have good opportunities to count and describe, by shape and size, the natural objects used in science and art. The lowest-attaining pupils learn to feel the different shapes and edges of natural and man-made objects and learn that their hands change the shape of clay. The development of numeracy skills is well planned in discrete ICT lessons in the secondary department, when pupils set up and interrogate databases and programme robots, using numbers and direction symbols.

32. Teachers use information technology especially well when they have access to the information technology room. The limited range of specialised hardware and software in the classroom inhibits the use of it at other times, especially for lower-attaining pupils. Several co-ordinators recognised the need to develop access to supportive software in their subjects.

33. Teachers manage pupils well through well-established routines and a clear code of behaviour, which is upheld throughout the school. Teachers capture the interest of higher-attaining pupils from the outset by the challenging questions they ask and the work they provide, and they insist that pupils take their turn and listen to others. The great majority of pupils with potentially very challenging behaviour work hard and are interested in the tasks set for them. Teachers and non-teaching staff involve them well, by giving them additional responsibilities within the class, for example. When isolated incidences of challenging behaviour occur, teachers who are on call, or non-teaching staff who shadow the most challenging pupils, follow well the good individual behaviour plans. Not all plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that strategies are working.

34. Resources are used well in most lessons to add interest and help the learning of lower- and lowest-attaining pupils. In music lessons, a wide range of musical instruments and supportive sensory materials is used for the lowest-attaining pupils. Music is often used to set the mood or scene in lessons, and this is so in French, where resources are used particularly well to create interest. For example, the teacher entered the room with a full shopping bag and pupils had to guess what was inside. Slowly, goods were removed until the ingredients and utensils for an English and French breakfast were revealed. The lowest-attaining pupils explored the materials, listened to the French language and paid good attention throughout. Lower-attaining pupils focused on the goods, listened well and made links between the goods and the new French vocabulary. Artefacts and prints are used well in art, so that pupils learn to develop their creative ideas and make very good gains in knowledge and understanding of art from different cultures and times. There is a shortfall of appropriate resources for the lower and lowest-attaining pupils, particularly in geography and history, and this affects the quality of their learning at times.

35. The provision of homework is satisfactory overall, but could be usefully extended for higher-attaining pupils, for example by setting research tasks. Through the home-school diary, the school works hard to inform parents about gains made in school and many parents build on the skills their children have learned, particularly those relating to personal and social development. Not all parents have a clear understanding of what is meant by 'homework' for the youngest and oldest lowest-attaining children and students in a special school such as this. Homework is always provided for those parents who request it.

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

36. The curricular and other opportunities offered to children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. There is a broad and balanced range of activities that mostly meets individual needs, and a satisfactory emphasis on play, personal and social development and language. There is a range of good opportunities for creative development, where specialists support the teaching. Where sensory methods and visits are used to teach knowledge and understanding of the world, learning opportunities are good. Physical development is well supported by organising children into ability groups so that all children are challenged. Those with severe physical difficulties are supported well by programmes from the physiotherapists.

37. The provision for pupils over five is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Provision is good for pupils in Years 1 to 6, satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and very good for students in Years 12 to 14. The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, but it is not fully balanced for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The time available for teaching these pupils does not meet the government recommendations, and this affects progress in writing and opportunities for obtaining accreditation in some subjects. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, as well as religious education. The curriculum meets statutory requirements well.

38. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex education and drugs education, is very good. Religious education is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus and meets statutory requirements. The discrete curriculum for ICT is good, but overall the failure to promote its use through other subjects inhibits provision and progress. In some subjects in the secondary department, notably science, art and design and physical education, learning opportunities are diminished by weaknesses in accommodation. Policies are in place for all subjects but some are out of date and do not always reflect current practice. Schemes of work and medium-term planning are based on published schemes but there is not enough detail on how subjects should be taught and how links are to be made for learning basic skills, particularly those ICT skills. Good IEPs and lesson objectives are used to match the requirements of the curriculum with the needs and abilities of the pupils. There are opportunities to obtain nationally accredited certification in English, ICT, mathematics, French and religious education through the Certificate of Achievement and also through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

39. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively modified to meet the needs of the pupils and they are improving pupils' achievements in English and mathematics. The development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, and usually to read, but there is often not enough time for pupils to write independently and at length, especially in the humanities. In numeracy pupils enjoy the challenge of the oral mental starter, and mathematics is consolidated well in other subjects.

40. Provision for pupils with additional needs is satisfactory for the youngest children and good for all other pupils. Not all teachers consistently use additional methods of communication, such as symbols. Provision for autistic pupils of school age has improved and the needs of these pupils are generally met well. The needs of pupils with additional sensory difficulties are well provided for within the school. The pupils are supported by the services for the hearing impaired and by the qualified teacher for visual impairment at the school. The needs of pupils with degenerative conditions are met sensitively. The speech and language therapists and physiotherapists provide good support. The school has good relationships with other support agencies, and calls upon their expertise and advice as and

when necessary, for example for occupational therapy. Every person concerned with the movement and transport of pupils with profound and complex difficulties, who often require large and complex equipment, shows high regard for their physical development and their comfort and dignity.

41. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. After-school clubs are difficult to arrange, because pupils are dependent on school transport to take them home. However, there is a small number and variety of activities available to pupils at lunchtimes, and a Monday evening club at the local leisure centre has been started. The school makes very good provision for residential visits to widen the pupils' horizons, and approximately a third of the school have this opportunity each year. There is also a range of sporting events with other schools.

42. The provision for PSHE is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The very good programme of careers education and guidance, and of work experience, enhances the provision. The comprehensive and very well planned package ensures a broad and balanced coverage of all aspects of the subject and includes citizenship, as well as sex and drugs education. The PSHE programme, which also has a strong emphasis on personal safety, is preparing pupils and students very well for their next stage of life.

43. The school has developed very good links with the local community, which greatly enhance the learning of pupils and students learning and increase their confidence in dealing with everyday-life situations. Local residents and commerce offer high levels of support through donations or opportunities for work experience. Pupils are enriched by learning about their community, understanding concepts of citizenship through a good range of visits and visitors to the school, and undertaking activities and events within the community for the benefit of others.

44. The school has very good relationships with local schools and these enable a few pupils to take good advantage of long-term dual placements. Until recently the school supported a number of integration initiatives in mainstream schools, although this responsibility now rests with the other agencies, as this service is now based elsewhere. Headteachers from other schools talk very highly of the work the school has done to support pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream placements. The mutually beneficial relationships between the schools have helped the development of ICT within St Giles. Until recently it had the services of a technician on loan, and the school's nurse has assisted local schools in developing care programmes. The school has played an essential role in developing a joint private finance initiative with other schools in the area, and this will help to address some of the weaknesses in accommodation. Relationships with colleges are good and give students opportunities to try a range of courses.

45. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when spiritual development was found to be unsatisfactory. There is no separate policy for PHSE, or information in other policies about how the school will promote it, but the assemblies and the curricular provision for PHSE, art, music and religious education promote all aspects very well. Throughout the inspection week, there were good and sometimes very good opportunities for pupils' development in many other subjects.

46. Opportunities for spiritual development are good, and much improved since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff provide good opportunities to develop pupils' values and beliefs and an awareness of others. These opportunities frequently arise in good quality discussions, both planned and spontaneous, which are a characteristic of many lessons. Good examples of were seen in lessons in religious education, when different

religious beliefs were being considered, and in music, when pupils reflected on their considerable achievements. Self-evaluation has become a strong feature in many lessons across the school, and the quality of reflection is impressive considering the wide range of pupils' difficulties in learning. Pupils are also given time to consider the work of their peers. School assemblies give them opportunities for reflection about their own beliefs and those of others. The school has good connections with local churches, and ministers from two of these churches conduct school assemblies from time to time.

47. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop an understanding of commonly accepted values, which are explained and illustrated by all staff. The staff are very good role models, both in their dealings with each other and in the treatment of the pupils and students. There is a constant but unobtrusive emphasis on appropriate behaviour, taking turns, and thinking of others' needs, and pupils and students show that they know what is required. It is general practice for pupils to praise the success of their peers and to be sympathetic when others cannot succeed with a task. All are encouraged to think of others beyond the school by raising money for local and national charities.

48. The provision for social development is also very good. Communication and co-operation are encouraged in all lessons, and also in other activities such as lunchtimes, assemblies, school productions and out-of-school trips. The school very effectively fosters relationships of high quality between pupils of different ages. Older pupils and students are given opportunities to help younger pupils, and to develop ideas about the school and the wider community. For example, the oldest secondary age pupils and Post 16 students undertake work experience both in the school and with a large number of commercial, industrial and caring institutions. There is a wide range of visits and visitors, including a weekly link at a local college for the oldest pupils of secondary age and Post 16 students. There are also residential experiences for all age groups, the use of the local sports centre, and participation in a book week and art week. Visitors regularly coming into the school include mainstream pupils, musicians, artists and speakers. The developing citizenship curriculum includes modules on forms of government, leadership, and legal and human rights. Pupils' personal development is also promoted by opportunities for them to give opinions and plan changes through the School Council.

The provision for cultural development is good, and pupils have good opportunities to gain a sense of their own cultural identity. For example, they study and create self-portraits in art, after looking at the work of European artists, and in religious education they gain a sense of what it is to belong to different cultures. They are also given good opportunities to develop an understanding of cultural diversity through topics about other countries such as Africa. The whole school regularly has a special day when staff and pupils dress in costumes of another nation, make that nation the focus of lessons for the day, and have lunch consisting of the national food. Pupils and students have regular opportunities to compare their own lives with those of Muslims and to consider the importance of such festivals as Ramadan. In PSHE, there are planned opportunities for pupils and students to consider life in a multi-racial society.

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

49. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to strengthen its support, guidance and welfare for pupils, and all are well cared for. Procedures for improving attendance and pupils' welfare are very good, whilst procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory. The school successfully contributes to developing pupils' ability to lead an independent and purposeful life. This is a very caring school which on the whole meets the needs of its very diverse population.

50. The headteacher and staff have a thorough knowledge of all the pupils and their parents, and they accept their pastoral role with diligence and dedication. All staff, including the transport staff, show an enthusiasm to promote the well being of the pupils. Pupils feel well supported by this integrated community, without any loss of their individuality, and help each other, even when they personally are physically limited.

51. The personal support and guidance for pupils is supported by good procedures. Pupils over five have IEPs that strongly feature personal development and personal care targets, although those for children in Nursery and Reception are less clear about how their personal development will be enhanced. Though the great majority of the plans are comprehensive, their presentation could be improved, and those for children under the age of six need to be more specific and measurable. As pupils progress through the school, their agreement on personal targets is sought increasingly. All plans are shared with support staff, so that conversations can take place on progress. Plans are monitored on a termly basis, although progress over the term is not always formally recorded. Annual reviews, which involve staff, parents and outside agencies, are excellent and keep all informed of pupils' progress over time in relation to their statements of special need. Older pupils and students contribute to these reviews in writing, and personally at the meeting. All pupils and students keep records of achievement in the same format, which represent a photographic and work record of the pupil while at the school. They are shared with parents, and those of the oldest pupils and students are of very good quality, which helps to raise their self-esteem. The school is very caring when considering the future of older pupils, and carefully plans their exposure to work experience schemes, or to college courses. This leads to the development of a carefully planned leaving strategy for each student, involving the student, parents, outside agencies and school staff working together co-operatively.

52. The school has a satisfactory range of support, guidance and welfare policies to underpin its actions, and they are kept up to date. The policies are implemented consistently across the school by well-trained staff. The very good staff handbook consolidates information for new staff, so they can contribute quickly. All staff are given good training in the movement and handling of pupils, and lifting injuries are kept to a minimum. The headteacher is very welcoming to outside agencies, who support the pupils on a routine basis or if there are specific problems. The school nursing service is permanently on site and produces a multi-purpose support service of high quality for pupils and parents. The nurses efficiently co-ordinate the school staff in caring and feeding pupils with profound multiple learning difficulties, and they assist the school's provision for sex, hygiene, diet, and drugs education. Parents are well briefed on the sex education lessons and there has been no withdrawal of pupils.

53. Child protection procedures are good, and they comply fully with the LEA policy. Staff have received a satisfactory amount of recent training. Their vigilance is well supplemented by the on-site school nursing service, and by the contribution of outside agencies.

54. The school office maintains very good computerised systems for information on pupils. These are sufficient in scope and accuracy, and are effectively used in the event of any medical need or emergency. Parents are well supported through high quality induction procedures, which enable pupils to make a confident start to their school lives and reduce parental anxieties.

55. The school has high expectations for the behaviour of all its pupils, and respects and values them as part of the school family. It has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour in the great majority of pupils. The good behaviour policy includes an effective section on the restraint of pupils. It is put into practice fairly and

positively, but classroom restraint practices for children and younger pupils with challenging behaviour have not been regularly reviewed with senior management staff or with parents. Staff seek to create a calm and relaxed community, which they achieve through logged observations and audit, development of individual behaviour plans, and staff meetings. All written behaviour plans are agreed with parents, are reviewed termly, and often have the input of outside agencies. Staff receive ongoing training and are adept in anticipating pupils' mood changes and intercepting problems. The school has a widely displayed code of conduct, and the culture of good behaviour helps the development of a good teaching and learning environment. Adults use praise effectively, and this fosters good relationships with strong mutual respect. Personal, social and health education lessons reinforce the moral provision, and many lessons have objectives which reinforce good social behaviour. The school makes good use of awards to stimulate and motivate pupils, either in class or in the school at large, and these are celebrated in assemblies and in the records of achievement. There are adequate sanctions in place, and these are successful in the case of the majority of pupils.

56. Attendance procedures and systems are very good and have produced consistently high performance. The school distributes good attendance certificates, which are prominently displayed in the records of achievement. Office staff maintain close contact with contracted transport to enable them to make initial enquiries in the case of absences. Parents have a good understanding of their statutory obligations for attendance, through the prospectus. Where necessary, the school communicates well with parents on the first day of absence. Computerised office procedures are strong in controlling poor patterns of attendance and punctuality. Despite the conscientious efforts of contracted transport, the school's arrangements for loading and unloading pupils at either end of the school day are not good enough. This results in a loss of teaching time. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, and health and safety procedures are good. There are sufficient qualified first aiders, who are well supported by the school nursing service. First aid procedures and facilities are good.

57. Procedures for assessing attainment are clearly outlined in the policy guidelines and, except in the Foundation Stage and in design and technology, are satisfactory and put into practice well. Some aspects of the monitoring process are good, such as the annual records of progress, which are often detailed and highly informative. They give a clear picture of gains pupils have made in knowledge, skills and understanding in the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and of the pupils' next steps and future targets. This is good practice.

58. The system and structure of IEPs are good overall. They are reviewed each term, but there are only limited records of how well pupils have achieved until the end of the year, in readiness for the formal annual review. Pupils are mostly learning the right things in lessons but there are a few instances when pupils are not sufficiently challenged because assessment is not used well enough. The great majority of pupils have specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-related targets. These are set at the annual review meeting, and are then copied to parents after discussion. Target setting is generally good for individuals in lessons, but inspectors found only limited on-going records of achievements, except in English, mathematics, science, music, and personal and social education. The school has begun to improve the records of the lowest-attaining pupils, and some good detailed recording of communication by one such pupil was seen in Year 6.

59. Individual records of achievement are in place throughout the school and gradually build up to an accredited Record of Achievement by Year 11 and again at the end of Post 16. Parents and pupils value these highly, as was evident in their written response to them; they particularly like the inclusion of photographic materials and certificates. The externally accredited Records of Achievement are of very high quality, and are rightly regarded by the

governors as an important indicator of pupils' progress in the school. The individual portfolios for pupils aged between three and fourteen do not give enough information about what the pupils have learnt, though they do give a flavour of what has been covered. There is no separate marking policy, and the school not yet developed portfolios for subjects to show moderated and agreed levels of work. The school has a clear commitment to both recognising and celebrating pupils' achievement through a comprehensive system of awards and certificates. Most of these are awarded in public at assemblies or in front of a class group. These systems are a significant factor in boosting pupils' confidence and self-esteem, and in helping to motivate them.

60. The school has collected a considerable amount of data about pupils' academic achievement, and this is often used well to set targets for individuals and age groups in the school, in order to raise achievement. The school has set its own targets for year groups this year. However, it has not collated the wealth of assessment information in a form that is easily analysed to show how different groups of pupils are doing.

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

61. Little has changed in this respect since the last report, as the school successfully realises its aim of "supporting the entirety of the child through working in partnership with the child, the family and other professionals". Over half the parents support the school enthusiastically, and parents continue to express a very good level of approval of the school, respecting the efforts of the headteacher, staff and governors. Parents' responses to the latest questionnaire indicate that there is some misunderstanding of the concept of homework for the youngest and oldest lowest-attaining children and students. However, there are no significant levels of dissatisfaction on the part of parents.

62. The school not have a parents' policy, but its aims, documentation and actions demonstrate that it wants and achieves very good links with all its parents. It has an open door policy, and parents universally feel that they have access to the school and staff at any time if they have concerns. Most pupils are brought to school by contracted transport, so the opportunities for face-to-face informal conversations with parents are few. Transport drivers play an essential role in linking parents and the school with routine information. Staff readily telephone parents with information, anecdotes or advice, and the home-school diaries are well used in keeping parents apprised of the day's events.

63. The impact of parents' involvement in the school is limited but of good quality. A few parents help in the school, in either staff or voluntary roles, and parents are starting to run a weekly sports club. The four parent governors have faced competitive elections, are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and have good access to information and all aspects of the school. The Friends' Association has played a major role in the school in raising essential funds.

64. The quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are satisfactory. Induction procedures for new pupils are very good. Parents are well supported by home visits from a parent-teacher counsellor service before their children join the school. The school's policies and procedures for the care of children are well written. Other written communications, including a termly newsletter, are of good quality. They are friendly, sufficient, and respectful to the role of parents, and give them enough time to react. The annual review is the cornerstone of the school's communications with parents. This represents a thorough dialogue between parents, school staff and outside agencies. The feedback is well supported by extensive written reports, after the collection of educational and medical reports and information on each

pupil. This is an excellent process, and parents recognise the progress their children have made over the year in each subject of the National Curriculum, and in personal development. The system allows parents to be totally involved in the strategic planning of their child's education, care and medical provision.

65. Overall, the contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and in the home is good. All parents have signed the home-school agreement, and want to comply both in the spirit and the letter of the agreement. They enable the school to maintain good levels of attendance. The school has held a satisfactory number of workshops at convenient times for interested parents. The school nurse runs an effective parents' support group in two locations outside the school. The annual governors' meeting for parents is poorly supported, but there is excellent support for social events and for school events which involve pupils. Pupils are given homework when their parents request it. At present, however, there is not a good understanding by all parents that homework can involve the reinforcement of some aspect of the school's care provision, or work which the parent and child do together. Nevertheless, most parents conscientiously support the child's progress in the home environment, and there is good feedback to the school. Parents are given further insight into their child's progress through the good records of achievement.

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

66. The leadership and the management by the headteacher and senior management team are good. Collectively, they provide a clear direction, and the headteacher manages change well. After the school was reorganised in 1995, the headteacher inherited staff from seven different establishments and pupils and students from three different schools. In order to give a sense of ownership to the newly formed staff she led the senior management team and the staff and governors towards the development of new clear precise aims and a mission statement, which the whole school and its users now embrace. The good improvement in standards since the last inspection reflects the shared commitment of all staff to succeed. The headteacher has reorganised the senior team and introduced a collegiate approach to management. The senior team now has members from the non-teaching staff, as well as the teaching staff, and this has had a very good impact on the quality of provision, and on its leadership and management. A middle management structure is now also in place. Collectively, all concerned have detailed knowledge of the whole school and all its pupils and students.

67. The headteacher delegates responsibility satisfactorily to subject co-ordinators, although some exercise more initiative than others, and a few are very new. The leadership and the management of music and in the Post 16 provision is very good, and English, mathematics, science, French, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are all well led and competently managed. The leadership and the management of other subjects are satisfactory. Subject action plans vary in their quality and focus, but in most subjects the co-ordinators are effective in promoting learning and higher standards.

68. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities conscientiously and to good effect. The very experienced chair has sought consciously to recruit strong governors who offer particular expertise. As a result, the committees for health and safety and finance are well led, and they ensure that the school is a safe place for children and staff and that financial planning is strategic and tightly managed. Governors have a good awareness of the principal aims of the school and are clear about their role in helping the school achieve them. They appreciate the regular presentations made to them by staff, which keep them well informed about the curriculum, assessment, and new initiatives, such as citizenship.



Many are participating in a Nottinghamshire scheme 'Fit for Governorship', an audit to improve each governor's ability to govern. Governors make regular visits to school, especially the parent representatives. Visits are reported back to full meetings of the governing body. Governors are also involved in joint training with other schools, which they find helpful when attempting to measure the schools' effectiveness.

69. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are good and have significantly raised standards since the last inspection. There is a shared view of what good teaching is like for different groups of pupils, but this is not yet translated into a teaching and learning policy which outlines approaches for pupils of differing needs. The headteacher and senior management team observe teachers on a regular basis, and their formal feedback identifies the strong elements in the lessons and those that require further development. Co-ordinators are not yet fully involved in the process, mainly because of the complexity of the timetable, which means that release time does not always coincide with teaching of their subjects. The school has also invited the link adviser to observe teachers as a form of moderation of the initial judgements, and this has also helped the school to improve the quality of teaching.

70. Methods to check and compare the progress of groups of pupils, for example boys and girls or pupils of differing abilities, have not yet been developed. The school has a wealth of information, but not in a form that is easily analysed for comparison within the school or with other schools. The school recognises this and sees it as a priority for future development. It consults with a variety of outside agencies and parents in order to survey its strengths and weaknesses and to set the school's statutory targets. Targets for individual pupils and students, written into their IEPs, work well in informing the planning of lessons, although those for the Foundation Stage are not specific enough. Targets are well presented at annual reviews and form the basis for targets the following year.

71. Among the teaching and non-teaching staff there is a good balance of subject expertise and knowledge of special educational needs. Non-teaching staff are well integrated into the life of the school and play a significant role in helping to extend pupils' learning opportunities. There was a part-time ICT technician until recently, and the school is trying to fill this post so that the co-ordinator can concentrate more on development and teaching. Induction procedures are good in preparing new teachers and support assistants to become effective in their roles. The strategy for appraisal and performance management is good and has built on the school's already good practice. The governors have set, monitored and evaluated the headteacher's targets for some time now. Team leaders have been appointed and all teaching staff have agreed targets. The school is now nearly at the end of its second cycle. The principles, especially those that relate to target setting, are very effectively put into practice in the school's routines and procedures. The school has gained Investors in People status.

72. The school has good quality financial planning to support clear educational priorities and aims. The school's development plan is a good document that represents a thorough self-evaluation. It includes the development of aims and priorities for the next three years and is a very comprehensive overview of what needs to be done. It has allocated responsibilities, time scales and costings which match individual accounts in the school's budgets. There are many realistic targets defined, with key criteria for success. All priorities fit with the vision of the headteacher, governors and staff. They are defined in the private finance initiative bid, and form the long-term strategic plan for the school. In the short term, the school continues to raise standards and control costs well. This it achieves in a building which is not ideal and has temporary classrooms, and against the backdrop of rising school numbers with a greater complexity of pupil disabilities.

73. The last auditor's report verified that the financial administration of the school is good. Annual budgets are planned prudently after consideration of a number of scenarios which are prepared by the headteacher. There is satisfactory involvement of curriculum co-ordinators in bidding for resources, and the school is now allocating money to match their educational priorities. Financial regulations and controls, as documented in the financial procedures policy, are well implemented. Although expenditure on administrative and clerical staff is above average, the team is experienced and competent and ensures the smooth running of administration. The office fully exploits various software packages, but the use of ICT in the rest of the school is only satisfactory, as there are shortfalls in ICT resources to support aspects of teaching and learning.

74. Income and expenditures per pupil are average in comparison with other special schools of similar complexity. The school's fundamental strategy is to support a classroom teacher and eight pupils with a Nursery nurse and a care assistant, which leads to high costs for staffing in comparison with other schools. Expenditure on learning resources has been high, though only during this year, and as yet it has not had an impact on improving the resources base, which is satisfactory overall. Resources are good for science and music, and satisfactory overall for all other subjects. The school makes good use of out-of-school facilities, such as the local pool and sports centre, and much of the Post 16 education takes place off-site in the community.

75. The school's cash balances have been reduced to recommended levels, as the school has needed to support an increased pay settlement for non-teaching staff and allocate money for school transport. The school has maintained competition in requesting tenders for services and goods, and focuses well on this aspect of best value. The headteacher has made determined and resourceful efforts to attract grants for the school. This money has been well used to support initiatives to improve accommodation and provide extra resources in the classroom. The Friends of St Giles, and residents in the community, have supported the school well to provide additional resources.

76. Costs associated with the building are high, due in part to the maintenance of the hydrotherapy pool. The premises staff take pride in ensuring that the buildings are kept in good order and are very clean. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, particularly for older pupils. The main building is adequate, and pastoral classrooms are large and airy. The sensory garden is attractive, with innovative ICT switches which give the lowest-attaining pupils and the youngest children additional opportunities to control their environment. The large playing field area is well set out, and all swings and climbing apparatus have safety surfaces under them.

77. There is generally a lack of storage space across the school, particularly in the multi-purpose hall, which is too small and unsuitable for physical education for pupils of secondary age. There is no covered play area for the youngest children. Many of the mobile classrooms are a walking distance from the school and there are no covered walkways to protect the more delicate, non-ambulant pupils from inclement weather. The library is too small for groups, and this limits pupils' opportunities. The arrival and departure area of the school is congested, causing long delays to pupils and significantly reducing the amount of teaching time available. The design and technology room for resistant materials is too small for larger groups. The Post 16 accommodation is cramped when the food technology room, which is adjacent to it, is in use. There are limited social facilities for students over the age of 16. The science room is shared with art and French, and this makes it difficult for art teachers to put up essential displays, or to leave unfinished work to dry and finished work to be displayed. The music teacher does not have permanent facilities for keyboards and the recording of music. In addition, the room does not have basic science facilities, such as the supply of gas and water to the tables. The school has a strategic plan in place to address these weaknesses.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher and governors should:

- Improve the achievements and progress of children in the Foundation Stage by:  
(Paragraphs: 1, 55, 80, 82, 84-87)
  - \* developing a discrete and detailed rolling programme of work for all areas of learning. This should identify what opportunities will be given to differing groups of children, how they will be taught, the resources needed, and how learning will be assessed at the end of each unit of work;
  - \* improving the quality of IEPs, so that they have specific and measurable targets that are relevant to the differing needs of the children;
  - \* formally evaluating the targets and recording progress each term;
  - \* developing the use of individual schedules and of picture exchange systems, and monitoring and evaluating the individual behaviour management plans for the most challenging children, particularly those with autism;
  - \* keeping detailed on-going records, at least weekly, of children's most significant achievements, and ensuring that records of achievement reflect progress in all areas of learning.
- Improve the overall achievement of pupils in ICT, and its use in the support of learning in other subjects by:  
(Paragraphs: 8, 12, 28, 32, 38, 74, 92-94, 102, 112, 120, 125, 126, 130, 132, 136, 139, 145, 146, 151, 168)
  - \* implementing the good development plans for the improving of resources and of the expertise of teachers and non-teaching staff expertise;
  - \* ensuring that all policies and planning are clear about how ICT will be used to support learning in each subject and what ICT skills will be developed for pupils of differing abilities;
  - \* extending the current programme of work beyond single switch skills for the lowest-attaining pupils and the use of writing with symbols programmes for lower-attaining pupils.
- Extend the time available for teaching and learning for pupils of secondary age by:  
(Paragraphs: 25, 37, 56, 131, 132, 139)
  - \* improving the procedures for arrivals and departures so that time is not lost at the beginning and end of the day;
  - \* adjusting lunchtime arrangements for the older pupils.

- Improve the arrangement for monitoring and evaluating academic and personal development of the different groups of pupils in the school by:  
(Paragraphs: 29, 33, 59-61, 71, 112, 120, 126, 130, 132, 139)
  - \* developing more detailed ongoing records, particularly for the lowest-attaining pupils;
  - \* ensuring that records are more rigorously analysed and that this analysis is formally recorded within the termly evaluations of IEPs and individual behaviour plans;
  - \* assembling the wealth of information about the levels achieved by pupils of different abilities, in a form which is more easily analysed to monitor their progress;
  - \* developing portfolios of agreed levels of work in all subjects.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	24	49	13	1	0	0
Percentage	3	27	54	15.0	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	88
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3	School data	0.6

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

### Achievement by Year 11

Four students achieved WJEC Certificate of Achievement in English, 1 distinction and 3 merits. Three students achieved WJEC Certificate of Achievement ICT all at pass level. Three students achieved OCR in religious education, 1 distinction and 2 merits. Three students achieved OCR in French, 1 distinction and 2 merits.

## Achievement by Year 14

Eleven students gained a certificate for completing 2 modules in ASDAN Towards Independence. Thirteen students achieved Bronze Award and one student gained Bronze/Silver Award in the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. Eight students achieved an award for completing eight units towards the National Proficiency Test Council Certificate for Agriculture and Horticulture. One student achieved the South Yorkshire Open Network Certificate in ICT.

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

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	83
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*Not all parents disclose the ethnicity of their children*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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	9	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: YN–Y14**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.2
Average class size	7

#### **Education support staff: YN–Y14**

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	714

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	<b>2000-2001</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	1087602.00
Total expenditure	1050121.00
Expenditure per pupil	12355.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	60823.00
Balance carried forward to next year	98304.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	92
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.	90	10	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	18	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	48	0	0	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	17	3	0	45*
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	83	17	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	97	3	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	14	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	83	14	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	83	14	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	17	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	28	0	3	17

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

\*Of the 45 per cent of parents indicated here, 35 per cent felt this question was not applicable to their children, as parents of very young children or of the oldest students with complex needs in Post 16 provision.



## **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**

79. At the last inspection no judgement was made on the achievements, teaching and progress of children in the Foundation Stage because there were so few children of this age. At the time of this inspection, there was one very new child of Nursery age and four other children of Reception age, with a wide range of needs. These children are taught in a class with three Year 1 pupils. There has been a recent increase in the number of higher- and lower-attaining children with autism who exhibit challenging behaviour. At present, the school does not have a discrete curriculum for children of this age. Teachers' planning is not fully supported by a suitable written scheme of work to meet the very wide range of needs and ages of the children. Children are taught by a number of teachers, including a specialist teacher for music. The individual approaches used by these teachers in most lessons is ensuring satisfactory progress overall, but there is not a consistent approach to their education. The school's has recently moved towards using alternative communication methods for the children with autism as part of its involvement in 'IQEA'. This is likely to improve their progress, particularly in communication and personal and social education. Overall judgements could not be made about children's progress towards targets set within individual education plans (Eps) because they were not specific or measurable in literacy and numeracy. However, satisfactory and sometimes good progress is recorded in annual reviews to parents, which the parents confirm in their written representations. Good progress is made towards meeting targets for self-help and mobility skills. Overall, children make good progress in creative development, in physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning. The one child of different ethnic origin is making similar progress to her classmates. Over time, teaching is good in physical development, creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. It is satisfactory in all other areas of learning, but could be better if IEPs for these areas were more specific and measurable.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

80. Teaching is satisfactory in this area, and children make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in toileting and feeding and eating skills. Detailed individual programmes, which are planned with the speech therapist and taught by the class teacher, are effective. Children learn to use a spoon and fork well and some are learning to use a knife. A few make choices of lunchtime foods and understand when it is toileting time by pointing to or reading symbols. Lunch times are social occasions and children are sensitively encouraged to eat and chew a wider range of foods. Special dietary needs are well met. Children with physical difficulties are fed carefully, according to the programmes set, and learn to use their tongues and teeth to receive food, to give eye contact to their helper, and smile to let them know they want more.

81. Parents say that their children are happy to come to school and have become more manageable at home since starting school. Most children make satisfactory progress in extending their concentration span, because most of the activities they are given are relevant and interesting. Children make satisfactory progress in controlling their own behaviour because of the routines and high expectations set by the teacher and support staff. Behaviour tends at times to be controlled by physical management, rather than improved through behaviour plans or additional methods of communication. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Staff work hard to ensure that all children take a part in lessons and

there is an embedded code of acceptable conduct, which teachers and support staff make clear to pupils through their actions, and sometimes through signing. However, symbols are not used consistently, so opportunities are missed to increase communication about behaviour, choice of play activities, and self-advocacy.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

82. The teaching and learning in language and literacy is satisfactory overall and children make satisfactory progress. There are regular times for children to sit together at the beginning of the morning and afternoon for registration, and these give good opportunities for pupils to learn to greet the teacher and their friends. Higher-attaining children say, or sign, 'Good morning' clearly, and lower-attaining children give eye contact for increasing lengths of time. Children are given satisfactory opportunities to pay attention to read the symbols on the class schedule for the activities of the day, and some are able to read them. Music is used well in these sessions, and often in other lessons, to set a calming atmosphere for speaking and listening as a group. The teacher gives regular opportunities to share 'big books' with the whole group and with individuals. Higher-attaining children learn to handle books in the correct way, turning the pages carefully to look at the pictures. They develop a love of stories and factual books, and are beginning to use the pictures, and, occasionally, initial letter clues to read new words. Lower-attaining pupils learn to understand a satisfactory range of new vocabulary. In one lesson, when 'Rumble in the Jungle' was shared enthusiastically with the whole class, higher-attaining children showed absolute joy at having the opportunity to share a book about wild animals from Africa, and had learnt the story and repetitive refrains very well. 'A great story', one said. Unfortunately, because not all lower-attaining children had full sight of the pictures, or opportunities to hold the soft toys that were available, they lost attention and were less involved. Samples of work showed satisfactory progress in the development of handwriting skills, although work sheets are not individualised. One or two children write over letters or between lines of decreasing size and width, and some begin to form the letters in their name. Others make marks or colour within shapes, with increasing accuracy. Activities designed to encourage free writing were not planned into the regular opportunities for play.

## **Mathematical development**

83. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, and children make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Children are given regular opportunities to count, sing number rhymes and recognise numbers and groups of objects. Each day, children have opportunities to play with materials, beads and puzzles, and a range of small toys and role-play activities, although the development of mathematical language during play activities is less well planned. Higher-attaining children learn to count by rote or count objects securely to five and sometimes beyond, and recognise numbers up to seven. One or two count back from five to zero. Children use their number knowledge when working with money. Higher-attaining children recognise most coins and some recognise higher numbers in this context. Lower-attaining children join in with number rhymes and 'buy' currant buns from the teacher, mainly with support, and higher-attaining children begin to understand the concept of taking away until there is 'zero' left. The children learn to thread bead patterns and match and sort shapes.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

84. Overall, the teaching and learning is good, and the teacher provides a broad range of learning opportunities, including visits, for this area of learning. As a result, children make good progress. The teacher uses many opportunities to reinforce this understanding across all areas of learning, although play activities are not always planned to link in with the topics. The teacher gives daily opportunities for children to gain a sense of time. They learn which activities are associated with each day by using a daily class schedule, which has symbols, so that all begin to read and understand, for example, that Tuesday is swimming day. Lower-attaining children build up a personal history through their record of achievement, and higher-attaining children learn about significant people in history through stories, for example about Florence Nightingale. During inspection week, children learnt about the culture of Africa through stories and pictures, and creative activities. Sensory approaches were used well to give a flavour of the country. Higher-attaining children learnt that Africa has wild animals such as elephants and snakes, and that tropical fruits are grown there. They learnt that drums are used to give a strong beat to African music and that many Africans dress in bright coloured robes. Lower-attaining children learnt to listen and move well to African music. They enjoyed tasting the tropical fruits to be found there, wore clothes of the country, and increased their tolerance to working in a group. Children explored animal shapes and chose materials such as felt and wool when making animal hand puppets. However, the children's fine motor skills are less well developed because of the amount of support they are given in order to achieve the end product. Children are given good opportunities to use switches to experience and control a jungle environment within the sensory room.

## **Physical development**

85. Teaching and learning are good, and children make good progress. Children with physical difficulties make good progress in their physical development. This is because teachers are well supported by physiotherapists, who design specific individual programmes for this area of development, and skills are practised throughout the day. Most children are active and energetic. They explore large play equipment with growing confidence. The swimming pool has been closed for repairs. This has limited long-term progress in swimming. The pool recently re-opened and in one lesson observed the children made good progress in gaining confidence in water. The staff taught children independent dressing and undressing skills well. New children coped with the pool environment very well and showed good achievement. By the end of the session they walked across the pool, put their head in the water, blew bubbles, and floated. Children behave very well in the pool and play together very happily. Demonstration is used well in movement lessons and children learn to copy actions and begin to follow instructions. Fine motor skills are developed through specialist design and technology lessons and in literacy and creative lessons. There is evidence, however, that lower-attaining children need considerable support to achieve end products in tasks in design and technology, and in art and design, which are really designed for more able pupils. During play activities the children learn to thread beads and post shapes and to build with large interlocking bricks. They make good progress in these play activities.

## **Creative development**

86. Teaching and learning are good, and children are well supported by very good specialist music teaching. The children make good progress in their creative development. They enjoy art lessons, and teachers give them good opportunities to learn to use a range of tools, to apply paint and to glue strips of paper creatively to make patterns, such as zebra

stripes and giraffe patches. Some of the work on display has been achieved with the support of staff, but other work shows that the higher-attaining children gain good mark-making and gluing skills within a narrow range of work. Painting and mark-making opportunities are not set up as a choice of daily activity, so independent creative work is much less in evidence on display. Music, especially appreciation, is promoted regularly throughout the day, but there is no collection of musical instruments to play and explore during the free choice of activities. In music sessions, learning is good overall, and very good when taken by the music specialist. Children learn to explore a wide range of instruments, such as rainmakers and African drums, as well as specially designed instruments for those with physical difficulties. Children develop a good sense of rhythm and are challenged to create music to reflect events, such as the sounds of the sea. They listen well and create movement in response to snowflake music by working together to bounce white pom-poms on stretchy material. Turn-taking and opportunities for counting are often emphasised in lessons, so children also extend their numeracy and personal development in music-making time. They learn a range of songs, which they sing with increasing confidence into microphones that amplify the sounds. This helps them understand that sounds can be loud or soft.

## ENGLISH

87. Pupils achieve well in English and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in communication and reading has improved and they make good progress throughout the school as a result of the effective teaching, which is underpinned by a sensitively adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy. The improvement is also due to the strong focus on communication and the extended range of strategies for work with lower-attaining pupils.

88. Most pupils enter school with very little ability in communication. Through skilful teaching, tailored to meet a wide range of individual needs, pupils learn to make themselves understood and to understand others through speech, signing, symbols, pictures or objects. The focus on communication and the close relationships between teachers, non-teaching staff and the speech therapists has led to the development of more consistent systems of signing and the increased use of symbols. Teachers try to provide the particular manner of interaction each pupil needs, and they include sensory cues, signs and symbols at the correct level and pace for each individual. The school also uses music very skilfully to promote communication skills. The introduction of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) is at a relatively early stage, but it has been highly successful in developing communication for pupils with autism.

89. By Year 2, pupils achieve well and make good progress. They use their symbol books to communicate their choices. The highest-attaining pupils have some emergent speech and use signs and symbols confidently to make their meaning clear and to show understanding. Teachers use songs and rhymes very well to encourage communication, so all pupils sign, gesture, or give prolonged eye contact, and some give vocal responses to key parts of songs and rhymes. The lowest-attaining pupils vocalise and smile, and show more consistent looking and turning to locate sounds. One of the lowest-attaining pupils with autism, who found group and class activities very difficult, was seen making very good progress in extending her time in the group and responding with prolonged eye contact. Pupils love books and stories and they show the symbol for 'story' with great enthusiasm. The lowest-attaining pupils are delighted with the sensory 'props' and objects of reference, which teachers use very well to develop understanding, and, as a result, pupils vocalise and show excitement when it is their turn. For example, in one lesson the teacher passed around the class a wooden box, containing a surprise. Pupils had to ask to open it by communicating either through eye contact, vocalisation, gesture or signing. All joined in

with interest and excitement. Higher-attaining pupils look at books independently and recognise their favourite parts. They point to parts of great interest and know some letter sounds. They recognise their name in print and know symbols for all their regular activities. Lower-attaining pupils match pictures well and know up to five symbols. Pupils begin to make marks on paper and higher-attaining pupils trace simple letter patterns and their name. They colour simple shapes. With support, lower-attaining pupils trace their name and follow lines.

90. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, some higher-attaining pupils learn to speak clearly, listen carefully and follow simple instructions. They hold conversations in familiar situations, taking turns, answering questions and making suggestions. Teachers and non-teaching staff make very good use of music, particularly in developing tone and encouraging faster and slower singing to encourage speech. In one lesson, three higher-attaining pupils sang solos, confidently and in time. Teachers are enthusiastic in their presentation and encourage pupils to work hard, and this gives pupils confidence to try new things. They listen carefully and react promptly to common instructions accompanied by signs. Lower-attaining pupils join in with gestures or signing, and some copy the teachers' signs. The lowest-attaining pupils participate well by smiling and vocalising and showing signs of excitement. Pupils maintain their enthusiasm for reading and this is reinforced well by stimulating and dynamic teaching. In a lesson with pupils from Years 3 to 6 a teacher, very ably supported by non-teaching staff, delighted pupils by a dramatic reading of 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. All took part in all the actions and responded to the choruses with speech, gesture, or vocalisation. The 'hiding under the covers' part of the story made the lowest-attaining pupils laugh with delight, obviously enjoying the range of sensory experiences provided by the teaching team. Through expert support, which used the pupils' symbols book and 'calming' methods, a low-attaining pupil with autism extended her time within the group and sustained good eye contact.

91. Pupils follow a well-structured reading course, which links in well with the literacy strategy, and this ensures the thorough teaching of reading skills. Higher-attaining pupils know many sounds and recognise some words. They read simple familiar books that match individual needs. Lower-attaining pupils look at books, help turn the pages and express interest in favourite characters. They use single wooden letters to build up words, and use ICT to reinforce rhyming words. A few pupils write their names independently. Their letters are evenly formed and correctly oriented, and they are beginning to spell a few words independently. The majority write over or copy words written by their teacher. The lowest-attaining pupils make good progress in handling objects and holding and grasping sensory materials and other resources.

92. As they move through Years 7 to 9, pupils further develop their skills in English. By the end of Year 9, their achievement is good. Pupils respond appropriately in a variety of situations. Higher-attaining pupils express themselves clearly, and some use a varied vocabulary, though a few have difficulties with listening and attention skills and their speech is indistinct. The speech therapist works with staff and individual pupils, throughout the school, to support those with difficulties in communication. Teachers and non-teaching staff use photographs, practical resources and tactile aids, as well as skilful questioning and prompts. Lower-attaining pupils respond well, actively trying to reach out, seeking eye contact, and vocalising. Generally, pupils listen carefully to each other, show interest and make sensible contributions. Higher and lower-attaining pupils continue to build on their phonic skills and, encouraged by the introduction of 'Big Books' and attractive new resources, maintain their genuine enthusiasm for books and for shared reading. Higher-attaining pupils identify the title, and make good use of picture clues, phonic sounds and the labelling in pictures, to read unfamiliar words and discover meaning. In one lesson, when reading 'Story Poems', they showed clear enjoyment in the rhythm and rhyme of poetry and

enthusiastically joined in with the reading, successfully guessing unknown words. The lowest-attaining pupil was encouraged to feel the sensory props and to look at the 'Big Books' and responded well with exploratory hand movements and vocalisation. The highest-attaining pupil in Year 9 reads independently and accurately and is beginning to use knowledge of alphabetical order to find books and information from books. Most higher-attaining pupils complete simple sentences with support. They are careful to copy spellings correctly, to form their letters well and write on the lines. Many over-write or copy the sentences they dictate to adults, but not enough use is made of ICT to enable pupils to write with symbols and to develop creative ideas. Teachers use a range of practical methods, gluing, shaking, and scattering, to increase fine motor skills with the lowest-attaining pupils.

93. By Year 11 pupils maintain their progress and achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils talk clearly, with good understanding, about the books read in class. They discuss the plot and characters in some detail, and accurately retell the story of their book. They predict story endings sensibly and read confidently. For example, in a lesson with the book 'Own Goal' they recognised and could clearly explain the influence of certain characters and the importance of the main scenes. They listen to each other with interest and work well together in a group. Most recognise familiar words and use more than one strategy to work out more complex unknown words. Teachers and non-teaching staff work expertly with the lowest-attaining pupils to enable them to gain skills and understanding. For example, in a lesson involving the sensory story 'The Hungry Caterpillar', pupils responded well by showing recognition of the caterpillar's mouth and they knew where to put the objects he ate. They understood where the objects were and why the caterpillar was ill. Higher-attaining pupils begin to write for a range of purposes in sequences of sentences which are organised and clear. They draft and redraft their work with support, and are more aware of the audience they write for. A few, with support, begin to write creatively, for example in their own poems and in their response to literature. They complete coursework projects accurately and with a good awareness of purpose. Pupils' presentation of work is sound but they do not make enough use of word-processing to improve the quality of their writing. By the age of 16, higher-attaining pupils achieve well in the Certificate of Educational Achievement, and results over the last three years have improved.

94. The successful introduction of the literacy strategy, and the establishment of a clearly understood, highly structured reading scheme, has raised pupils' confidence and interest in reading, and improved their ability to break down and read unfamiliar words. Teachers increasingly use sensory cues, signs and symbols and have introduced symbols effectively to help lower-attaining pupils make progress. Most pupils make sound progress in developing writing and pre-writing skills and their achievement is satisfactory. However, not enough use is made of information technology to develop writing and presentation skills further. Although the school has highly appropriate ICT programmes, they are not used throughout the school and this holds back the development of writing skills for some pupils.

95. Teaching is good overall. The best teaching shows careful planning and preparation of a varied and interesting range of activities, designed to motivate pupils, and to broaden and extend their knowledge. Teachers use the right balance of pace and challenge to extend and develop pupils' confidence and ideas, and they have very good relationships with pupils. Teaching is dynamic and exciting and pupils are highly motivated and do their best. Most teachers have clearly defined learning objectives, which they communicate well to pupils so they know exactly what they have to do. They keep useful records of pupils' progress to ensure that they are learning the right things and their needs are being met. In the best lessons very good use is made of the end-of-lesson discussion to share and reinforce learning. Occasionally, this part of the lesson is rushed or too little time is left to complete the work planned, and these opportunities are lost. A particular strength lies in

the close working relationship between teachers and the skilled non-teaching staff. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress by ensuring a uniform approach to the teaching of skills and to behaviour management. Pupils have great confidence in all the adults in the classroom, are responsive to lessons, and behave well.

96. The co-ordinator gives clear educational direction and manages the department well. She monitors teaching and learning effectively and has established the literacy strategy through the primary part of the school and introduced it into Years 7 to 9. This, together with a very well structured and established reading scheme, has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading and writing. Although some teachers give a great deal of attention to literacy development, practice is inconsistent overall in lessons other than English. The co-ordinator has worked hard with the speech therapists to introduce symbols into the school successfully, but the use of them for developing literacy skills is limited in other subjects, such as humanities. Literacy in subject areas is at an early stage of development. The English schemes of work have been revised in line with the literacy strategy and now include a stronger literature content. Accreditation has been extended to include the Certificate of Achievement in English. Outside visits, drama workshops and school productions enhance the provision in English and add good opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The school library is bright and adequately stocked, but it is very small and cannot accommodate a whole class or even a large group of pupils. It is too small for adequate movement and has no space for a study area. This has an impact on learning, particularly of higher order reading skills, which limits pupils' development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. Standards of achievement and progress in mathematics are good. Pupils in each key stage achieve well and make good progress. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when achievement was judged to be at least satisfactory for pupils in the primary department, but unsatisfactory for pupils in the secondary phase. The main strengths of the subject are the quality of the teaching, the good teamwork between teachers and non-teaching staff, the staff's knowledge of the pupils and the pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships. These qualities are augmented by the enthusiastic leadership by the co-ordinator, the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been suitably modified to meet the abilities and needs of the pupils, and the use of mathematics in other subjects.

98. By Year 2, higher-attaining pupils sort and match objects and pictures. They name some colours and know common two-dimensional shapes such as *triangle*, *circle* and *square*. They count to ten and recognise the written number. Lower-attaining pupils match shapes, using an inset board, and know the difference between *long* and *short*, *big* and *little*. They begin to recognise sequence through simple stories such as 'Goldilocks and the three bears' and start to join in number rhymes. The lowest-attaining pupils show participation skills in 'giving five'. They begin to anticipate actions and enjoy interaction with adults.

99. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils recognise place value to a thousand and rote count in twos and tens. They add and subtract to 99 (though without a carry) and know what a quarter and a half means. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and know what is meant by an *edge*, *face* and *corner*. They measure to the nearest centimetre and weigh to the nearest gram. They compile a data table and convert the results to a standard bar chart. Lower-attaining pupils rote count to thirty and add and subtract to 20, using cubes. They read the two times table and begin to understand what + and – means. They

begin to recognise time by hours and half-hours and assist in collecting data and constructing a bar chart. The lowest-attaining pupils are engaged well by adults. They feel large tactile numbers and develop their anticipation skills through constant repetition of practical experiences.

100. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils add and subtract to 20 and are making progress in moving on to 100. They understand positional vocabulary and move objects by following instructions. They recognise most two dimensional and common three-dimensional shapes. They collect information, make data tables and convert them into pictographs and block graphs. Lower-attaining pupils count to 20 independently and to 100 with help. They add and subtract to 20, using aids such as cubes and counters. They match shapes, such as the triangle and circle, and find these shapes in the environment. The lowest-attaining pupils encounter shape and fractions, such as a half, when making a paper pizza with support. They crumple different coloured paper and glue it to a circular base. The support staff describe and explain each stage to them throughout.

101. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils count on and know some number bonds to 10. They add and subtract to 100 and understand the concept of change when shopping. They recognise all coins and notes and they read the price labels in shops, but need support when making small transactions. These pupils recognise most two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, understand perimeter, and measure to the nearest centimetre and metre. They conduct simple surveys, collate results and construct and read simple tables and bar charts. Lower-attaining pupils count to 10 and match shapes, such as the triangle and circle. They describe a container as full or empty and begin to recognise half, quarter and three quarters full. The lowest-attaining pupils encounter and show brief awareness of full and empty by filling and emptying a container with sand. Non-teaching staff emphasise the difference in weight between the containers.

102. Examples of mathematics were observed in other lessons, and in displays around the school. For example, there was good use of the language of speed, direction and time in geography. In personal and social education, pupils were asked to count those in the class whom they trusted. The counting and recording of the number of pupils present is a regular feature of the registration periods. In food technology, they measure weight, count the number of slices as they cut the bun mixture, and discuss oven temperature. In French, they count to ten and name some colours. Counting is also practised during the country-dance sessions in physical education. Pupils sometimes have the opportunity to enhance their mathematical skills by using a computer. Older pupils learn to set up databases and to interrogate them, for example. These facilities were not well enough exploited during the inspection in lessons other than ICT.

103. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Teaching is good at each stage. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and motivating. There is usually a brisk start, with a well-planned and executed mental exercise so that the pupils are focused on the subject. Included in the lesson are activities and resources which help them to learn. For example, in one lesson a discussion of halves and quarters led into pupils investigating capacity, using containers of various shapes and sizes. They practised measuring a quarter, half or three-quarters of each container and then they estimated and checked which held most, equal or least liquid. On the evidence of teachers' records and reports, and of the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them, it is clear that the quality of learning over time is good. Learning is reinforced at the end of the lesson by a plenary session, where pupils are praised and rewarded for their efforts. Pupils have individual objectives for each lesson, which link to the targets set in their IEPs. Well-established routines for managing pupils enable the lesson to proceed smoothly, and to keep disruption to a minimum when activities change. Pupils' attitude and behaviour in lessons is rarely less than good and is sometimes very good. Pupils relate well to each



other and very well to staff. In all lessons there is very good teamwork between teachers and non-teaching staff. They know the pupils very well, and often anticipate any difficulties, thus avoiding confrontations or problems. Most lessons include some practical activity. Resources are well used and changes of activity are skilfully timed, with the result that pupils are well motivated and play a full part in their work. Staff provide role models, and organise activities which demand taking turns and working together. This ensures that mathematics contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.

104. The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively and the subject has been developed well since the last inspection. The scheme of work is being continuously developed and improved and is being used successfully. Teachers have been supported constructively with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, through monitored teaching, observation and discussion. Baseline assessment is carried out when pupils enter the school, and teachers keep records of attainment and are beginning to use 'P' Scales and National Curriculum levels, so that progress over time may be monitored and evaluated. Pupils' progress in mathematics is reported clearly to parents in the pupils' annual reviews, which state what pupils can do, understand and know. Resources are satisfactory and the co-ordinator is constantly looking for further improvement.

## **SCIENCE**

105. Standards of achievement are good from Year 1 to Year 11 and very good from Years 7 to 9. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when achievement was satisfactory overall.

106. By Year 2, pupils are making good progress in investigative skills and in their understanding of scientific concepts. Higher-attaining pupils know that cutting, bending and tearing can change materials. They predict whether or not they can be changed back. Lower-attaining pupils have some knowledge of parts of the body and of facial parts. Lowest-attaining pupils follow the sources of lights and watch shadows.

107. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils are making good progress in the classification of materials according to different criteria. They know that some are called 'textiles' and some 'minerals.' They predict which float and which sink. Lower-attaining pupils sort metals with a magnet, and the lowest-attaining pupils feel and respond to the materials and the water in which they are placed.

108. By Year 9, pupils have made very good progress in their investigative skills and scientific knowledge because they are grouped by ability and taught by a specialist, experienced teacher. Higher-attaining pupils understand that heating changes materials and that some changes are temporary and some permanent. They predict what will happen to different materials when heated, and why. They melt solid chocolate by heating and turning it into a liquid, and note that it solidifies when cooled. Pupils heat paper, wood and coal and note that each changes irreversibly. They discuss what has happened and record their results. Well-focussed support from the non-teaching staff allows lower-attaining pupils to join in the same work and to record the results of their experiments. Lowest-attaining pupils feel the materials and give close attention to the changes in them.

109. By Year 11, the pupils have made good progress in developing their knowledge of investigations. Higher-attaining pupils know that plants produce oxygen, and set up an experiment to test their hypothesis. They discuss their results and record them well. Lowest-attaining pupils respond well to lights and sounds, textures, and smells. They make choices when investigating plants, and some use single switches independently to cause the 'sun' to shine in the sensory room.

110. Throughout Years 1 to 11, pupils with challenging behaviour behave well for most of the time and join in all the activities, because the activities are well matched to their needs. They are stimulated by good teaching and make good progress. Pupils with autism are involved very sensitively with all the activities in lessons. The non-teaching staff offer closely focussed support, which enables the lowest-attaining pupils to make good progress alongside the other pupils.

111. Teaching and learning are good overall. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. The very good teaching in Years 7 to 9 results from the teachers' very good subject knowledge and experience. Where teaching is very good, there are clear objectives for each pupil in every lesson. These objectives are linked to appropriate support from non-teaching staff. The quality of this support is outstanding and ensures that all pupils in every lesson are actively involved as much as possible. The teamwork between the teachers and non-teaching staff, and the relationship between them and the pupils, is very good. The pupils learn to work on their own or in pairs and they are keen to help each other. One pupil in Year 9 was heard to say to a lower-attaining pupil: "Come on, I'll help you". Pupils clear up well at the end of lessons, with no fuss.

112. The teachers' questioning is clearly focussed upon the needs of each pupil, and this enables the pupils to recall what they already know and what they have learned during the current lesson. Recording sheets are tailor-made for each pupil so that they complete them easily, either on their own or with help. The activities are carefully chosen to interest the pupils and there is a good pace to lessons, with a good mix of practical investigation and discussion to keep the pupils busy. As a result, the pupils remain interested throughout and most behave well. Targets set within IEPs are good, but progress towards them is not always recorded term by term. Because of shortages in ICT resources, not enough use is made of ICT, especially in the area of scientific research or to support pupils in recording their own work.

113. The subject co-ordinator manages the subject well. There are good schemes of work that are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Development planning is good, although planning for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for the use of ICT is not planned well enough. The school has plans to offer accreditation at a higher level for the highest-attaining pupils, and the present Year 9 pupils are working successfully towards Certificate of Achievement. Although there is informal monitoring of pupils' work and of science teaching throughout the school, not all teachers get written feedback on their work. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The current room is too small, and it is shared with other subjects. There is no gas or water supply to the pupils' benches, and no preparation room for the storage of equipment and materials and for setting out materials and equipment prior to lessons. The resources are good overall and they are well organised by the co-ordinator.

## ART AND DESIGN

114. Standards of achievement are good. Pupils, whatever their age, gender and prior attainment, make good progress throughout the school in learning a range of techniques and skills. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and helps them to make very good progress in their personal development. Throughout the school pupils work in small groups with increasing independence and they learn about a wide range of multi-cultural art. Progress is good because of the good quality of teaching throughout the school. There has been an overall improvement in art since the last inspection.

115. By Year 2, pupils have developed simple skills in making marks, and in producing paintings and other drawings, using a range of tools and media. In one lesson, pupils made symmetrical patterns by applying paints of their own choice to one half of a piece of paper, folding it over and opening it again, and were amazed at the results. Pupils produce interesting self-portraits in pencil, using the basic shape of their face, adding features, and producing an expression. They have started to produce creative works in all colours with totally free expression. Amongst the work are some very colourful finger paintings. Groups work well with staff and produce very good displays which support their work in literacy, numeracy and other subjects.

116. By Year 6, pupils have considerably developed their skills and have a greater knowledge and understanding of their work. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection, when teachers were considered to undervalue knowledge and understanding. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that pupils have a greater maturity in approach to the subject at this age. Pupils are also more willing to engage in creative work. They concentrate for longer periods and there is more evidence of independent work. Pupils make good progress whatever their prior attainment. The higher-attaining pupils use tools with increasing confidence and control. They are prepared to experiment and investigate. Lower- and lowest-attaining pupils make equally good progress towards the targets set for them. All pupils are challenged and extended to produce their best work. In one lesson, pupils worked with clay to form cylinders and spheres, from which they created a head and shoulders model. The higher-attaining pupils managed to include facial features whilst the lowest-attaining pupils successfully felt and moulded the clay, working on it with cutters and a rolling pin. Pupils in this age group have produced an excellent range of work, including still life and landscape painting in the style of Monet and Van Gogh, and a three dimensional mixed media collage about the jungle in Africa.

117. By Year 9, pupils' work shows further good progress. Pupils' portrait work includes representing photographs of people. They are developing drawing techniques well and exercise their creativity when expressing their feelings through sponge paintings. With support, lower- and lowest-attaining pupils produce a comprehensive portfolio of work in a range of media that reflects a real enjoyment of art and design. Sketchbooks are well used to extend the skills and techniques of higher-attaining pupils. Art and design is often used as a medium for recording areas of learning in other subjects for the lowest-attaining pupils. For example, pupils made a very good Buddhist shrine, complete with Buddhas made from clay and painted gold. There is also a good collection of puppets made by the pupils, to be used to illustrate a play.

118. By Year 11, all pupils make steady progress and some make impressive progress in drawing skills and techniques. In one lesson, pupils produced good representations of 'The Pyramids at Dawn' after discussing the use of perspective in a painting by Pieter Bruegel. The discussion was mature and discerning. They used this knowledge, and that gained from a painting by Grandma Moses, to inspire their own work. The pupils' use of perspective, in line

and in colour, was very effective and they were extremely proud of the work. The gains in confidence were almost tangible. In one collage of a country scene, the lowest-attaining pupils had made colourful trees, leaves and butterflies from paper, whilst the higher-attaining pupils wrote prose to accompany the artwork.

119. Teaching in art is always at least good and frequently very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged as broadly satisfactory. The criticism that teaching concentrated heavily on investigating and making, rather than on knowledge and understanding, no longer holds. Teachers and support staff work with considerable flair and imagination. They know the individual needs of all pupils and work to these. The use of art to build self-esteem and confidence is widespread. Praise is very effectively used. Behaviour is excellently managed through good relationships and stimulating lessons. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They co-operate well and enjoy becoming engaged in their work. Discussion is a strong element of all lessons and pupils are given good opportunities for self-evaluation and reflection. Peer relationships are very good and pupils take a real interest in each other's work.

120. The current co-ordinator has been responsible for the subject for only two terms. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator realises that medium-term planning needs to be more detailed and assessment to be more rigorous in order for achievement to be sustained. There has been very little monitoring of teaching and planning by the co-ordinator. Long-term assessment, recorded in annual reviews, is good, but there is limited on-going assessment of the subject. Resources are satisfactory. The annual allowance is insufficient for a subject that uses many consumable and expendable materials, and this limits the range of techniques that can be taught. An attempt has been made to improve art accommodation since the last inspection. The accommodation is still unsatisfactory since the room is shared with science and modern foreign languages. This means that it is impossible to leave around partly completed work or to use interactive displays in lessons. At present, there is no external accreditation in the subject, and there is limited use of ICT to support the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. Design and technology is taught in the form of resistant materials and food technology; a specialist teacher normally teaches the resistant materials component, and a specialist teacher and class teachers teach food technology. Supply teachers taught the majority of the specialist lessons during the week of the inspection because of the absence of the specialist co-ordinator. When samples of previous work are taken into consideration, standards of achievement are good. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory overall, although higher-attaining pupils still do not have opportunities to gain accreditation in the subject. Most of the pupils' work centres on the making element of the subject, and they are making good progress in this area. Design and evaluation components of the subject are less well developed, and pupils make satisfactory progress in these areas.

122. By Year 2, both higher- and lower-attaining pupils use a mitre saw, with help, to make a relief picture. They use files, glass paper and PVA glue to make a decorated box, and they colour and stick to make a pop-up card. The lowest-attaining pupils are well supported to achieve the same outcome. They feel the materials and watch them being assembled.

123. By Year 6, with help, higher-attaining pupils use mitre and tenon saws, files and glass paper, and a cordless drill to make a class puppet theatre. They cut and shape plastic sheet and use a vacuum former to make moulds for chocolate. Well-focussed support allows lower-attaining pupils to complete the same tasks. The lowest-attaining pupils explore the materials, watch the assembly and taste the results.

123. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 used mitre and tenon saws, a band sander, screwdrivers, hammers and nails to make a crib for the local church. They make mobiles, using the plastic bender to bend strips of plastic. They peel, chop and slice fruits safely to make a tropical fruit salad. Lower-attaining pupils cover the same work, to a lower standard. The lowest-attaining pupils feel materials, watch the assembly and hold and taste the fruit.

124. Teaching and learning are good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and this is reflected in the quality of the artefacts and dishes produced by the pupils. Lessons are well planned. There are appropriate objectives for each pupil, which are closely linked to the support each pupil needs from the non-teaching staff. The way in which staff enable the pupils to join in the activities ensures that they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. There is very good teamwork between non-teaching staff and teachers, and the relationships between teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils is also good. The teachers make good use of questioning, which is focussed on the individual needs of pupils and helps them to recall what they already know. In the youngest classes stories are used well as a starting point for making activities, and tasks are linked well with topic work on Africa. For example, pupils made tropical fruit 'smoothies'. Clear routines for using the workshop and food technology room enable the pupils to carry out safety and hygiene procedures automatically. Pupils in all years know the importance of using tools safely and wear goggles and other protection when necessary. They have a good awareness of basic hygiene in the food technology room and know, for example, that fruit needs to be washed before being used to make a tropical fruit salad. Throughout Years 1 to 11, pupils with challenging behaviour behave well for most of the time and join in all the activities because they are kept busy with the right kind of activities. Pupils with autism are well supported and are involved very sensitively with all the activities. The pupils are keen to clear up at the end of lessons and take a pride in doing so. In general, not enough use is made of ICT, especially for design work and for supporting pupils in recording their work independently.

124. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and is well qualified and experienced. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, but the monitoring of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough. The food technology room is good; it is large enough for pupils in wheelchairs and is well resourced. However, the workshop is too small and there is not enough storage for materials and for pupils' work. Overall, resources are good, but shortfalls in ICT restrict its contribution to learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Overall, pupils' achievements in geography are satisfactory. Higher- and lower-attaining pupils make good progress in learning map skills and the language of place. The lowest-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development through the sensory experiences teachers and non-teaching staff provide for them, which enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world.

126. By Year 2, the lowest- and lower-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about the culture of far-away places, through sensory experiences and stories. They listen to and respond to stories and African pipe music, touch and feel artefacts, such as African pots, and smell exotic scents and begin to make links with these experiences and Africa.

127. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils make very good progress in lessons, but over time progress is satisfactory rather than good because pupils often repeat work done in other classes. Pupils make good progress in their personal development because of the emphasis placed on learning about other cultures and places. Pupils recognise and identify features of a tropical rain forest, gain a good knowledge of water features through visits to local canals and rivers, and make good progress in developing their map skills. They name oceans, seas, rivers and lakes on maps, and have a good understanding of compass directions. However, some pupils covered the topic of water masses in two consecutive years and there is little evidence that previous learning on this topic was extended in this period. Similarly, in Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils are studying the effects of climatic change on the daily lives of people and some pupils have already covered this in Year 6. The lowest-attaining pupils make good gains in their personal development and knowledge of place through the sensory activities presented to them.

128. In Years 7, 8 and 9, there is not enough challenge for the highest-attaining pupils; this is evident in lessons and in the sample of work. It is reflected in the individual objectives set out in IEPs, which do not always clearly build on previous geographical, numeracy or literacy learning. Information and communication technology is also not used enough to support learning in the subject, and pupils have few opportunities to research the geographical questions they have posed themselves. The lower- and lowest-attaining pupils gain some benefits from having work repeated and revised and they make satisfactory progress overall. This is particularly the case in developing key vocabulary of knowledge and understanding of the world, which is well emphasised in all lessons. Video material is used well to exemplify the changes in weather and human activity as seasons change, for example. Pupils learn the name of seasons and associate them with changes in nature and the different activity of people and animals. In this way they make good gains in their social and cultural development. Good links are made with scientific knowledge and understanding, and pupils are overawed by some of the animal activity shown on speeded up video material, for example spiders building webs and caterpillars and aphids munching through a mountain of leaves. The lowest-attaining pupils make some good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world because teachers and support staff use good artefacts such as branches in bud, catkins, birds' nests and early flowers. The pupils are supported to touch, smell and look at these, and begin to make the connection between these changes and climatic change. The lowest-attaining pupils record their work by making collages of the sensory materials they are given. However, there is limited information about gains made in specific geographical knowledge and understanding of place. Lower-attaining pupils have few opportunities to complete worksheets independently, as they do not have symbols to support reading. In addition, they cannot record their work independently because symbols of key vocabulary are not provided.

129. By Year 11, the progress of higher-attaining pupils is good and the pupils build on previous gains well, but achievement is satisfactory overall. There are no opportunities for pupils who have an interest in the subject to gain higher accreditation because there is too little teaching time available to cover the subject in an appropriate depth, for Certificate of Achievement for example. Higher-attaining pupils learn to use ordnance survey and local area maps very well and talk about general features of different types of settlement. The lower-attaining pupils make good progress in learning the different features found on maps. Non-teaching staff support the lowest-attaining pupils sympathetically, although activities provided are not always fully successful. There are not enough suitable resources for

pupils to explore, using their senses, and pupils are therefore not always fully engaged in lessons. Some of the lowest-attaining pupils are making good progress in developing their mobility and awareness of the school environment because of the good additional support they receive from the teacher of the visually impaired.

130. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The strengths are the use of available resources, including the use of non-teaching staff and of the local community. Teachers manage pupils well and this results in very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons. At times, though, there are incidences of passivity and challenging behaviour from the lowest-attaining secondary aged pupils, because of limited resources. Leadership is satisfactory overall, but there is still much to do to raise standards, which have not improved since the last inspection. The subject has not been a school priority for development so far, although the school is working hard to improve provision further for the lowest-attaining pupils, as part of their involvement in 'IQEA' project. The scheme of work has not been monitored and evaluated well enough to ensure that long-term topics are not repeated, and that the emphasis is placed on learning geographical knowledge and understanding rather than general knowledge. The present medium- term planning does not have enough detail but is supported by units from national guidance, which is interpreted well enough by most teachers. Guidance on how to use these schemes is not clear in the medium term planning or in the outdated policy. Targets set for geography within IEPs are not clear enough for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Not all areas of planning are clearly identified; for example, the resources, including ICT resources, are not always listed for each topic area and this makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to plan strategically for renewals and new purchases.

## **HISTORY**

131. Standards of achievement are satisfactory, overall. Pupils, whatever their age, gender and prior attainment, are making good progress throughout the school, are gaining a sense of the passage of time, and are learning effectively about the past. In their history lessons they also make very good progress in personal development. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because they are given good opportunities to work together, and sometimes independently, to learn about their own and other cultures in the past. Discussion at the beginning of each lesson shows that good progress has been made, and this reflects good quality of teaching. There has been an improvement in history standards since the last inspection because the work set is now better matched to the wide range of needs at the school.

132. By Year 2, during topic work, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding about the past in their own country and in the world. They link this with their knowledge in mathematics and science to draw conclusions and to talk about changes over time, using photographs of events in their own lives, such as babyhood, birthdays and festivals. Pupils keep very good notebooks and learn to use simple vocabulary such as 'before' and 'after'. The higher-attaining pupils develop a simple family tree. Pupils make good links with literacy and learn about people in the past, for example Florence Nightingale. The lowest-attaining pupils develop a sense of time through their structured daily programmes. They associate days and times with specific events in the week.

133. The evidence of pupils' work and discussions with teachers shows that, by the end of Year 6, pupils have broadened their concept of the passage of time by looking at different eras and cultures. They learn about life in the time of the Romans, Tudors and Victorians. Higher-attaining pupils differentiate between a decade and a century. Lower-attaining pupils understand that time is measured in days, weeks and months. The lowest-attaining pupils understand that various activities occur on different days. All pupils are beginning to understand simple time lines.

134. By Year 9, pupils extend the breadth of historical study and learn about Ancient Egyptians and the Vikings, for example. The lower-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress overall in their understanding of chronology, and most have achieved standards equivalent to those of the higher-attaining pupils in Year 6. They learn the key vocabulary associated with historical studies, such as 'Viking' and 'longboat'. The lowest-attaining pupils make variable progress, but overall make similar progress to their classmates. All of them have an increasing knowledge of the passage of time and make satisfactory gains in associating their sensory activities with past events in their own lives, such as a recent visit to the sea at Scarborough, and with models of Viking ships. They respond well to sounds of the sea, the smell of seaweed and the feel of wood. The higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress. These pupils participate well in discussions about the past. There is good revision at the beginning of lessons and good opportunities for self-review at the end. It is clear from these that pupils remember facts well and make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding, for example of the Vikings. They consider and assimilate facts and make predictions. They learn where the Vikings came from, how they travelled to Britain and what they did when they first came. Pupils have a greater understanding of chronology than at the last inspection. In one ICT lesson, the highest-attaining pupils were given a good opportunity to use the Internet to research the Vikings topic, but opportunities are few because the room used for history is not linked to the Internet.

135. By Year 11, pupils are showing a more critical interest in history. Progress continues to be at least satisfactory and some good work is to be seen. Pupils learn about people in more recent times, finding out about life in the 1930s and the time of the British Empire. A good breadth of work is covered. Pupils learn about key events leading up to the Second World War and they link events, such as the recession at home and in Germany and how this led to the rise of Adolf Hitler. The lowest-attaining pupils learn about life in the 1930s by helping to prepare and take part in a typical teatime of that era. Good use of resources makes history real and relevant to them. Higher-attaining pupils record their work rigorously, in many cases on worksheets, but there are missed opportunities for all pupils to write independently about the past.

136. The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection and is now good. The strengths of the teaching are in the high quality of discussion and the development of key vocabulary. Teaching methods are good; they meet a wide range of needs and make very good use of first rate non-teaching staff. Management of pupils by all staff is always very good. Pupils enjoy finding out about the past and gain the confidence to talk about their work. Self-evaluation is a strength of lessons and it gives a time for reflection. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They develop very good attitudes and are industrious. Relationships between staff and pupils and between peers are very good, and this contributes to the successful learning environment.

137. The current co-ordinator has been responsible for the subject for only a term. Leadership and management of the subject are developing well but there is much to be done. The present satisfactory standards are directly related to the knowledge of the teachers, but this is not secure. Medium-term planning does not have enough detail on how history is to be taught, including how ICT is to be used, how pupils of differing abilities will record their work, and what resources are to be used. The scheme of work is unsatisfactory in these respects.



Long-term assessment recorded within annual reviews is good, but not all new gains are recorded after each lesson, so learning is not always built upon in lessons and this slows progress, particularly for older pupils. Resources are generally satisfactory, but there are some shortfalls for those pupils who have the greatest learning difficulties, and this makes occasional lessons less relevant than others. There are limited opportunities for accreditation for the highest-attaining pupils with an interest in the subject, because of the limited time available for teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

138. The quality of teaching and learning in discrete lessons is good, and over time it is satisfactory. As a result, pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. The school has maintained the overall standards for pupils in Years 2 to 9 and has improved provision and achievements for pupils in Years 9 to 11. Improved resources and training have extended teachers' confidence in teaching the subject and have expanded opportunities for pupils. The school is working hard to fill in gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in control, which has had limited coverage in the past. Resources have been improved by the purchase of several computers to supplement the school's old stock.

139. No discrete lessons were observed in Year 1 and 2, but records show that by Year 2 the higher-attaining pupils within the group are beginning to take control of a mouse and to use switches to control the environment in the sensory room. There is evidence that software is used satisfactorily to support the numeracy and reading skills of higher-attaining pupils at this age and that they learn to load software independently. Lower- and lowest-attaining pupils attend to switches and are beginning to understand that switches cause an effect and change the environment. Higher-attaining pupils begin to name and talk about how they use ICT equipment.

140. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils are mastering new skills, and set up and close down programmes for word processing, for example. Computers are used for a wider range of purposes, including the use of a database in mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in learning to programme a desktop robot in order to control its movement. They use their numeracy skills well when counting the number of movements and when controlling its direction. Lower-attaining pupils learn to understand key vocabulary, such as *up*, *down*, *right* and *left*, and higher-attaining pupils use it well to describe the robot's position. Spiritual development is well promoted in these lessons, when all pupils are amazed at how the instructions they have programmed make the robot move towards a set target. Higher-attaining pupils, with support, use interactive commercial programmes that help pupils understand rhyming words. The lowest-attaining pupils are developing the ability to control a variety of single switches intentionally, responding with increased vocalisations or communicative behaviour to the changing sound and light effects in the room. The development of switch skills and thinking skills for the lowest-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory, as there is no structured programme to support pupils' progress in moving from using one switch to a choice of two, for example.

141. By the end of Year 9, higher-attaining pupils use simple spreadsheets and database programmes well. They carry out surveys, enter data carefully and are aware that what happens affects the computer's analysis of results. They show a good understanding when interpreting the data and graphs and explain their work fully to visitors. Lower-attaining pupils are unable to do this independently because symbols are not used to give them access to the data, although non-teaching staff help pupils to access any print, and to check for errors in the data input. The activities promote social development well when pupils work in pairs and threes and help each other to enter and interrogate data. In one discrete

lesson for Year 7 to 9, higher-attaining pupils accessed the Internet, searched for a history site on 'Vikings', downloaded the information they wanted, and printed it off for their files. The lowest-attaining pupils, with support and sustained perseverance, use head and toggle switches to activate the lights or change effects.

142. By the end of Year 11, higher-attaining pupils complete a Certificate of Achievement. Last year, three pupils passed this award. Lower-attaining pupils are developing and filling in gaps in their experiences and enter a programme to make a desktop robot move to a specific target. They predict movements well and reassess and re-programme in order to be more accurate. The lowest-attaining pupils continue to develop their individual skills with single switches, and some move on to operating more than one switch. They learn to operate sensors, in sound mats or toys, for example.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is good in discrete lessons. The lessons have clear objectives that are fully explained to pupils at the outset and reviewed at the end; as a result, pupils are aware of the extent of their learning. The good learning is well supported by the increasing maturity which pupils show in their approach as they progress through the school; their behaviour is very good and they try hard to succeed. Within lessons, pupils with challenging behaviour are managed very effectively both by teachers and by non-teaching staff. They receive praise and positive feedback to show that their work is valued, which, in turn, improves their self-esteem. Over time, teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good, because not all teachers plan to give enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. Research skills are underdeveloped in history, religious education and geography, and there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop creative and independent writing skills using ICT. Cultural development is enhanced where pupils do have opportunities to complete research, such as when they entered the web site of Lincoln cathedral during a history project, and viewed the inside of the cathedral.

144. Leadership of the subject is good and its management is satisfactory. There is a good policy, with clear aims, but these are not yet fully met because of shortfalls in resources. There are good strategic plans in place to improve this position. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and there are good quality reports to parents. Although there is no ICT suite, the way in which teachers manage the arrangements to use ICT stations in classrooms is very good. Many of the pupils need positioning in large wheel chairs or other equipment. This is possible in the classrooms, but would be difficult in a traditional ICT suite.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

145. At the time of the last inspection French was a developing subject and there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on standards. French is now well established on the school curriculum and taught from Years 7 to 14. The co-ordinator, a qualified specialist teacher, was appointed three years ago and she has worked hard to establish and promote French in the school. As a native speaker her subject knowledge and knowledge of France is exemplary. There is a new policy and good planning for the subject. The co-ordinator has introduced external accreditation for the higher-attaining pupils and they are now achieving good standards in the Oxford and Cambridge RSA Examination (OCR). Last year, one pupil passed with distinction and two others gained merits.

146. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress in learning to speak, listen and understand. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils understand and use a variety of French words and phrases concerned with greetings, food and drink, numbers, and time. They

increase their knowledge of French food and culture and take part in French food tasting sessions. They talk about themselves and their families in simple terms and know the names of major landmarks, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. As a result of the very good example set by the teacher, many pupils develop good French accents and work hard at practising their pronunciation of words, listening carefully in class. Lower-attaining pupils are well supported by the high quality non-teaching staff, and learn key vocabulary and phrases. The lowest-attaining pupils are given good quality sensory experiences to promote their understanding of French culture. Pupils feel objects, smell and taste French food and drink, listen to French music and are immersed in a French atmosphere in the classroom.

147. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils are successful in the external examination. They build up well-presented files of work. Lower-attaining pupils continue to follow a sensory, cultural programme and make connections between their sensory experiences and life in France. They show their understanding in different ways, such as eye contact and smiles and, at times, giggle when responding to French stimuli and language. They enjoy listening to music and tasting the cuisine of France.

148. The quality of teaching and learning is good both in lessons and over time. Teaching has a number of strengths. The target language is used almost exclusively in lessons, and understanding is supported by the teacher's use of body language and other cues. A wide range of activities is presented on a single theme at a brisk pace, which results in pupils having good recall of the language. Games, adapted to meet varying needs, are very successfully supporting the basic skills of literacy and communication. Planning is detailed and ensures that all pupils participate fully. Pupils are managed well in lessons because of the good teamwork between the teacher and the non-teaching staff. Praise, encouragement and good humour are used well to encourage pupils to persevere, and pupils make rapid gains in confidence in the subject. Pupils very much enjoy lessons, have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. They work well together, take turns, and support and encourage each other. They are quick to celebrate each other's successes, and this enhances their personal development.

149. The subject is well and enthusiastically managed, and teaching and learning are monitored effectively. There are good displays of French-related work on the walls and corridors. Pupils refer to these displays when searching for vocabulary. Resources, many of which are made by the co-ordinator, are of good quality and appropriate for the range of needs within the school, though ICT is not well enough planned to support the subject's learning goals. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development when cultural comparisons are made. Pupils were amused and amazed at the way the French would drink chocolate from a bowl, whereas English would drink tea from a cup. Pupils also learn about the work of French artists, such as when the work of Paul Cezanne was used very effectively to bring out 'French colour' language, encouraging the pupils to describe the range of colours used in his paintings.

## **MUSIC**

150. Music is a strength of the school and there has been a very significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is now very good throughout the school, owing to the energy and enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator. Evidence of pupils' progress was gathered from a scrutiny of work, records and reports, and videos, and from observation of music in lessons, class routines and assemblies. It showed that, in relation to their starting points, pupils make very good progress in their music making, appreciation and singing. Music has a high profile in the life of the school, and pupils are given a wide range of suitable learning experiences. Musical activities in lessons are

supplemented extremely well by opportunities to perform in school and at outside venues. Music also makes a very strong contribution to the ethos of the school and to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. All pupils regularly and successfully perform in front of an audience, which enhances their self-esteem, enables them to work co-operatively, and gives them very good opportunities to take part in cultural events.

151. Pupils enter the school with limited experiences of music but they achieve very well, and make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had the experience of handling a range of tuned and untuned instruments, and as a result they gain confidence in exploring the sounds. Some copy their teachers and beat simple rhythms, while others move rhythmically to the tunes of familiar songs in class routines and in music lessons. Higher-attaining pupils know some of the words and anticipate the actions that accompany them. The lowest-attaining pupils take part by turning to the sound of the singing or the beat of the drums. Some show their involvement by smiling, others by vocalising or actively reaching out. For example, a Year 2 pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties joined in with the "Rumble in the Jungle" chant by turning her head for the 'rustle' sticks, anticipating the crescendo of the verse by showing signs of excitement. Pupils show joy and pleasure in the music they hear. Some, particularly those with challenging behaviour, calm noticeably in response to music. Pupils continue to make very good progress, and by the end of Year 6 achievement is very good. Pupils use pitched percussion instruments and become increasingly confident in using rhythms and beats. Higher-attaining pupils produce music to accompany an animal song. They look at various ways of making sound effects, including the use of voice, and have a good sense of time and rhythm.

152. Pupils develop their enjoyment of music through Years 7 to 11, making very good progress in their music-making skills. Their attitudes and response to music continue to develop well, and by the end of Year 11 pupils have developed individual musical tastes and have had good opportunities to develop composition and improvisation skills. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils were seen composing music to accompany a story. A higher-attaining pupil, who is learning to play the clarinet, composed a signature tune for the whale in 'The Whale's Song' and recorded her music score, using simple notation. Lower-attaining pupils generated themes for the characters in the story by using chromaharps and drums. The lowest-attaining pupils played in the ensemble, one pupil using slipper bells, one spontaneously strumming the chromaharp, and the third shaking a tambour containing shells. Higher-attaining pupils and Post 16 students learn simple notation and acquire a simple music vocabulary of the names of instruments and musical terms. They learn to play a three-note phrase or more, and sing tunefully, taking great pride in remembering the words of songs that they will perform to others. The lowest-attaining pupils with complex needs show sustained enjoyment of music through head and eye movements and facial expression and gesture.

153. Pupils develop their rhythmic and vocal skills further and have the opportunity to play a range of instruments, including keyboard, percussion, and samba instruments, which are used in the school samba band. The samba band played at Retford Town Hall at Christmas with great success. A group of secondary aged pupils and students are preparing excitedly for a visit to Rome, where they will play and perform samba music with Italian mainstream students. As members of the St Giles choir, pupils and students from Year 7 to Post 16 take part in a range of music events outside the school. These include appearing at the Albert Hall in Nottingham as part of the 'National Voices Competition' to compose and sing a song for the millennium.

154. Teaching is very good and occasionally outstanding. It has improved considerably since the last inspection. A significant strength in teaching is the passion and energy brought to the lessons by the teacher, who transfers her love of music to the pupils and students. Consequently, they are highly motivated and behave very well, and relationships

are very good. The teacher, who is a music specialist, skilfully builds up the confidence and self-esteem of pupils so that they are willing and eager to learn. Her expectations are high but they are tailored to the needs of individual pupils so that pupils receive the right amount of challenge and are successful. Music is taught to pupils in every class and to Post 16 students by the subject co-ordinator. She also supports class teachers in the music they include in their lessons and ensures that music themes link with topic and subject themes. She works closely with class teachers in managing regular school shows and productions. This means that pupils have many opportunities to experience and perform music outside timetabled music lessons. Pupils are also able to experience a variety of music through visits and workshops with professional musicians. They took part in the children's' concert at the Royal Festival Hall, and have the opportunity to work with other schools and adults.

155. The subject is very well managed. Medium- and short-term planning is strong and makes good links with other areas of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and of pupils' diverse needs. This is reflected in the scheme of work, which ensures progressive support for developing skills. Pupils are exposed to a broad range of music activities, which vary appropriately according to age and ability. The programmes pupils explore are clearly linked to the National Curriculum but they also reflect individual targets. These relate not only to music, such as demonstrating a reaction to various styles of music or specific instruments, but also to pupils' communication needs. The careful links to other subjects mean that individual pupils' progress is monitored well. Individual targets are good, and there is clear evidence of planning to meet the wide range of needs.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

156. Standards of achievement in physical education are good in relation to pupils' prior abilities, and have improved since the last inspection. Although no lessons were observed in the secondary stage of education, the scrutiny of teachers' records and reports, discussion with pupils, and other evidence indicate that progress for these pupils is also at least good. The range of activities provided is extensive. The main strengths are the quality of the teaching, good behaviour management and successful motivation of the pupils and, for the lowest-attaining pupils, the greater involvement of the physiotherapists.

157. By Year 2, higher-attaining pupils have a very good sense of balance, climb with confidence, and run and jump. They throw and catch a large ball and become more independent in dressing and undressing. Lower-attaining pupils enjoy bouncing on the trampoline and begin to jump. These pupils, and the lowest-attaining pupils, take increasing control of their bodies when moving to music.

158. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils continue to improve their co-ordination and balance. They pass a ball with a bounce pass in basketball, and begin to trap and return a pass accurately in football. They begin to understand some of the basic rules of the two games. They enjoy country dancing, count the beat and anticipate the changes. Lower-attaining pupils practise skills of rounders by hitting a stationary ball at waist height from a support pole, and they respond to music by varying their pace and moving their limbs to simulate their perception of the mood.

159. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils are developing the basic skills of batting, bowling and fielding in cricket. They also play hockey, soccer and basketball. Pupils develop their hand/eye co-ordination by throwing and catching small balls. They continue to improve

their swimming. Lower-attaining pupils work with large apparatus and with large balls to improve gross motor skills. They begin to swim, and gain certificates for swimming five metres unaided. Pupils also enjoy music and movement, and perform expressive dance sequences.

160. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lesson planning is good; it is linked to clear learning objectives for individuals, and provides opportunities for all the pupils to be challenged physically according to their ability. As a result, pupils improve their understanding and proficiency in the activity, as well as developing their personal independence. Behaviour management and organisation are of good quality, and coupled with motivating activities they keep the pupils engaged. Pupils enjoy physical education, work hard and want to improve their performance and achieve as well as they can. They are very enthusiastic and very well behaved. They listen well to instructions and show good levels of independence. Relationships between pupils are good, as are levels of co-operation. Teachers and support staff work as a team to ensure that all pupils participate as fully as possible, and this promotes effective learning. There is satisfactory assessment and recording of pupils' skills against predetermined individual learning outcomes. Attention is paid to detail, especially to health and safety issues, and lessons are conducted with an inconspicuous, but high, regard for safety. Pupils and staff are appropriately dressed for lessons and use warm up and cool down routines well. They are taught to observe the rules and to be good sports, so that they spontaneously cheer each other on and applaud good performances, whilst shouting and supporting their own team. In these ways physical education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Good use is made of photographs, certificates and other visual records to help pupils and students fully celebrate their sporting successes.

161. There is sound management of the subject, although currently there is no curriculum leader. The curriculum is planned well and includes all the required elements. In addition, adventurous activities, such as rock climbing and hill walking, are available in some of the residential visits to North Wales. There are several residential opportunities for pupils so that all may have this experience. Some adventurous activities such as climbing, canoeing, and orienteering are included in the general curriculum. Social activities such as ten-pin bowling are made available at the local leisure centres. Resources are satisfactory. There is a hydrotherapy pool and general swimming at the local leisure centre, but the school hall, which is multi-purpose, is cramped for secondary-aged pupils and therefore unsatisfactory. There is limited storage space for physical education equipment, with the result that large items are stored around the walls, and this gives rise to health and safety considerations. The use of off-site facilities is good. The school has achieved the Sportsmark Award and the Healthy Schools Award for physical activity.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

162. Overall, standards of achievement and progress in religious education are good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, and those in Years 3 to 11 achieve well and make good progress. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when no overall judgements were made. The good progress pupils are making is due to the dedicated leadership of the co-ordinator and the good teaching, combined with the good teamwork between teachers and support staff.

163. By Year 2, pupils learn to reflect about 'ourselves' and to express their thoughts and feelings, such as 'happy' and 'sad', by looking at pictures and talking about them. By Year 6, pupils compare the religions of Islam and Hinduism with Christianity by looking at similarities and differences in places of worship. They also listen to parables and discuss some of the moral issues that are raised.

164. By Year 9, pupils add Judaism and Buddhism to their knowledge of other faiths. They study and compare places of worship, special days, special books and some of the celebrations of the different faiths such as Shabbat, Purim, Divali, Christmas and Easter. In lessons observed, higher and lower-attaining pupils took part in meditation, so that they could experience Buddhist practices at first hand, and developed strong moral aims for their own behaviour. In this way, they developed a better understanding of the use of the mandala (circle for the focus of meditation) and of right and wrong. They learned that Buddhists use a rosary (mala), just as some Christians do. Higher-attaining pupils remember most of the points of the Buddhist Wheel of Life and lower-attaining pupils remember a few of them. The lowest-attaining pupils have similar learning opportunities and were supported well to meditate on the gifts of nature when they made a miniature sensory garden, for example. Pupils make very good progress in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their personal development through these experiences. By Year 11, pupils build on their previous learning about Judaism and continue to compare different faiths, for example by considering the use of plates in each, such as the Seder Plate, used at the Jewish Passover. Pupils achieve well and their results, which include merits and distinction, are improving each year.

165. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good features. Teaching has a number of strengths. A detailed scheme of work provides a good range of learning experiences. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and of the needs and abilities of the pupils, and they provide a wide range of appropriate activities. They encourage the use of communication skills when they ask questions and initiate discussion. Teachers of pupils of secondary age have a high expectation that they will reply fully to questions they are asked. In this way, speaking and listening skills are promoted very effectively. Pupils are encouraged to look at the person speaking, and listen carefully to what is said. Teachers make good use of questions both to enable pupils to remember earlier work and then to draw inferences from their understanding. This helps pupils to improve their speaking skills, and to learn from one another. Teachers make good use of artefacts. In a lesson about Buddhism, the artefacts captured pupils' interest and attention and helped them to excel in making their own. They asked questions and showed curiosity and respect for the beliefs of others. Lessons are well organised, with learning support assistants playing a positive role in the pupils' learning and ensuring that pupils enjoy their work. All staff are aware of the desired outcomes of the lessons and work together to enable success. Pupils respect the views of others and are very supportive of one another. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed, the task set was one of simple art and design with not enough explanation at all of its religious significance.

166. The co-ordinator has played a major part in the improvement in religious education since the last inspection. She is an efficient and dedicated manager, with a clear sense of direction and of the future needs of the subject. A scheme of work has been produced which meets the requirements of the new, revised locally Agreed Syllabus. The scheme is proving very effective, particularly for those pupils aged between 11 and 14. There has been some monitoring of the teaching of the subject and this will be continued. The co-ordinator has introduced accreditation for older pupils. Resources have been audited and improved, and further expansion is planned. Assemblies make a good contribution to the subject, especially those which give pupils time for reflection. The use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)**

167. Pupils achieve well in PSHE and make good progress as the result of a very comprehensive programme and good teaching. Pupils' personal development is also promoted well through school routines, teachers' high expectations and skillful behaviour management. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of life and have very good behaviour and good attitudes to school.

168. By Year 2, pupils learn to sit together socially and mostly co-operatively. They develop awareness of their own faces and bodies and recognize themselves in photographs of the Christmas concert. By Year 6, all pupils have built up friendships and are beginning to control their own behaviour and are developing a sense of respect for others. Higher-attaining pupils learn about people they can trust. They learn to make an emergency phone call, and recognise that calls should be made only in a real emergency. By Year 9, relationships are well established. Pupils work as a team and develop a good understanding of what citizenship entails. Higher-attaining pupils know at least two pieces of information to give when they dial an emergency number, and which emergency services they need for different occasions, and they know the names of at least six emergency services they can call on. By Year 11, pupils develop a good awareness of voluntary organizations and how they care for people or animals in need. Pupils show that they take very seriously the problems that arise from drug use.

169. Vocational education for the older and oldest students is in the form of a very well organised programme of work experience and experiences in the wider community. Students are making good progress in their understanding of the options available to them after school and in developing the confidence needed to face the future. The school makes very good use of external advice, support and practical help, such as in work-related experiences and opportunities.

170. The teaching and learning of PSHE is good overall. It is satisfactory overall for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The achievement of individual goals is well recorded. Much of the pupils' learning is extended and reinforced over time, with the older pupils exploring more detailed and sexual features of their bodies. Sex education and education in drugs misuse is carefully planned. The school has worked hard to provide well-planned discrete modules on citizenship. There is a strong emphasis on personal safety. A particular strength of the teaching is in the way in which teachers use visits and visitors to enhance their own knowledge and understanding and that of the pupils. Pictorial resources are used well in many lessons to gain pupils' attention and interest. Teachers provide many opportunities for discussion and social communication and for making choices. Just occasionally, the lowest-attaining pupils are not fully involved because the resources used are not appropriate for their level of understanding.

171. The subject is well led and managed. The last inspection recorded satisfactory standards in personal, health and social education and in careers education and guidance, and these have been improved. All pupils have PSHE targets set within their IEPs, so progress is monitored well overall. There has been good improvement, particularly in making choices and in 'self-advocacy'.



## Post 16 provision

172. All students achieve well by Year 14, building on their previous good progress in literacy, satisfactory progress in numeracy, and very good progress in their communication and personal and social development. The school offers a rich and relevant curriculum that matches students' needs very well. It prepares students for their future life and enables their achievements to be recognised through a wide range of appropriate and externally validated accreditation.

173. The quality of teaching and the guidance that students receive is good. As a result of this good teaching, students achieve well. Teachers follow the excellent planning, which supports the school's aims. Teachers plan to promote basic skills, and also ensure that there is a range of opportunities for students to put their skills into practice. As a result, higher-attaining students communicate very well, sustaining their concentration for lengthy periods of time. They listen carefully and considerately to each other's viewpoints, and to instructions and information from people in the community, and they make their own valid contributions when invited to do so. The quality of discussion seen in religious education and vocational education lessons was remarkable. This aspect of the curriculum, and the many opportunities for reflection, promotes students' spiritual development and self-awareness very well. The lower- and lowest-attaining students sustain their responses to a wide range of stimuli for longer periods of time. Students make satisfactory progress in developing their numeracy skills and learn to estimate and measure ingredients in life skills lessons, and to estimate and measure length, depth and perimeters, for example when making a pond during conservation work in the community. The higher-attaining students make good progress in their writing when it is supported by the use of ICT, which includes symbols for writing, although there are occasions, in religious education, when students are not challenged to write independently. Students develop word processing skills, including drafting and redrafting, which they use to record their work towards further accreditation. Research skills are well developed when students learn to use science reference books, for example to find out about pond life during the conservation project. Students who have additional learning difficulties receive effective help and support, with the result that they make the same good progress as all other students towards individualised course work targets.

174. A strength of the very good provision is the promotion of students' moral and social development. All students develop very good personal and social skills through their adult relationships with staff and through developing further relationships in the work place. They learn to look after the environment, through conservation projects, and there is a strong emphasis on developing independence and self-evaluation skills. This makes a good contribution to promoting students' confidence, enabling them to exercise some choice about the next steps in their lives. Teachers promote students' health and personal development very well because lessons make effective use of the community. In one visit during the inspection, students were given a tour of all the specialist outpatient units in the local hospital. They related very well to the senior school nurse, hospital staff and in-patients. The attitudes and behaviour of students are very good, and frequently excellent, and people in the community speak very highly of the students from the school.

175. The department is managed very effectively to provide a rich and improving range of courses. Support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of the team work that prevails. The particular strength of leadership and management is the vision of what can be achieved for students, coupled with first class day-to-day administration and organisation. There are limitations in the accommodation. The strength is that some of it provides a place where students have a discrete education and are treated in a more adult way. There is limited accommodation for developing students' independent living skills.