

INSPECTION REPORT

PEAK SCHOOL

Chinley, High Peak

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 113039

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Scowcroft

Reporting inspector: Graham Pirt
14563

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 191328

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19 yrs
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Buxton Road Chinley High Peak
Postcode:	SK23 6ES
Telephone number:	01663 750324
Fax number:	01663 751359
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. Dorothy Pearson
Date of previous inspection:	21 – 24 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14563	Graham Pirt	Registered inspector	Creative Development (music, art and design)	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30071	John Pearson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Design and technology Religious education	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy (English) History Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Personal and social development Equal opportunities	Attitudes, values and personal development
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical development	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

QICS

“lbsley”
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small special school for boys and girls, aged two to nineteen years. Pupils have a range of special educational needs which include profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour. The nature and range of pupils' needs has changed significantly since the last inspection. All pupils have statements of special educational need. There are 39 pupils on roll, of whom 22 are boys. Classes are organised in such a way that there are wide age ranges within them. There is a hostel at the school which caters for up to 6 boys and 7 girls. At the time of the inspection there were nine pupils in the hostel. None of the pupils in the school comes from minority ethnic families. Pupils travel from a considerable distance around the north of Derbyshire and a small number from neighbouring authorities. In order to meet pupils' very low levels of attainment the school follows a curriculum based on areas of learning. The inspection, therefore, reports on these areas rather than National Curriculum subjects. At the time of the inspection there were no pupils in Year 6 and because of the very small numbers of children in the foundation stage and the very small number of pupils over sixteen it is inappropriate to report separately on their achievement. However, the report does make judgements about the provision made for these age groups and provides examples of what pupils know and can do. Because of pupils' learning difficulties and the small number of pupils in each year group it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 9. However, judgements have been made about pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11 and by the time they leave school at Year 13. The report gives examples of pupils' understanding and skills across all year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well, and often very well because teaching is of good quality. This has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching leading to a very high effort, involvement and interest of pupils in their work.
- Very good teamwork allowing pupils to experience a wide range of learning opportunities.
- Very good assessment enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The very good contribution of the community to help pupils learn.
- Very good quality of information for parents leading to their very positive view of the school.

What could be improved

- The accommodation for younger pupils who have challenging behaviour and the accommodation for pupils who are taught in the hostel flat.
- The use of teaching approaches for those pupils with challenging behaviour.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in January 1997 the school has made good improvement. Considerable work has been done to improve the entrance to the school making a safe arrival and departure point for both pupils and staff. There have been significant curriculum developments to meet the needs of the changed pupil population. The school now offers a good curriculum which is relevant to pupils' needs. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed so that teachers now have good knowledge of the curriculum that should be provided. Changes in the range of pupils' special educational needs since the last inspection has resulted in the need for further training of staff and this has been achieved. Teaching has improved through monitoring and training and this has resulted in more consistently good teaching and better standards of achievement. The school development plan is now a good working document which enables the school to effectively manage improvements. There has been considerable decoration of the classrooms.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By Year 11	by Year 13	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	Very good	A
Reading	B	B	Good	B
Writing	C	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

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

There were no pupils in Year 6 so a judgement has not been made about standards in this year. The very small numbers of pupils and the wide range of abilities in each year group make it inappropriate to make judgements about standards by the end of Years 2 and 9.

The standards pupils achieve are good, and often very good. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress. There is no difference in the achievement between girls and boys. Good quality teaching ensures that pupils are involved and interested in their learning which helps them make good progress. The school sets relevant and challenging targets for pupils in their individual education plans and annual reviews. Suitable whole school targets have been set to improve standards of achievement in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development. There are a small but significant number of occasions when the progress made by pupils with challenging behaviour is satisfactory, rather than good. This is because the work given to older pupils does not challenge them and enable them to make enough progress and the approaches used to manage the behaviour of younger pupils are not effective. When this happens pupils do not take part in activities well enough to make progress. Unsuitable accommodation for younger pupils with challenging behaviour also has an effect on how well teachers can manage their behaviour. Pupils make good, and often very good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy because of the very good emphasis teachers place on these skills in all the areas of learning. Pupils' achievement and progress in the development of mathematical understanding and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world are good because the curriculum provides effective guidance for teachers when they prepare work. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their physical and personal and social development. Their achievement and progress in the area of creative development is only satisfactory because the range of work covered is limited. Pupils' progress in developing an awareness of world religions is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school. They show pleasure when they meet staff and their involvement and interest in activities is very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils work well alongside each other. Behaviour in lessons, around the school, and in the hostel, is good, despite the fact that many of the pupils' special needs are related to challenging behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is just as good when they are out of school on visits. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The emphasis on individual planning for pupils leads to good development of their personal skills. Relationships in the school and

	hostel are good.
Attendance	Very good. Nearly all absences relate to illness or medical appointments.

Pupils are interested in their work and this involvement means that there is no wasted time in lessons, with pupils concentrating well and working hard. Pupils are co-operative and polite and are developing good social skills because of the targets set for them. Their progress in personal development results in good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Teaching of pupils:	By Year 6	By Year 11	By Year 13
Quality of teaching	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. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they use effective methods of teaching and have high expectations that pupils will succeed, particularly in communication and other basic skills. Curriculum and lesson plans are good and there is effective use of on-going assessment. This provides good information for teachers when they plan the next stage of learning for pupils and it raises teachers' expectations. Rigorous monitoring of teaching by the head and deputy headteacher, combined with curriculum developments and procedures for the training of staff, have contributed to the quality of the teaching. Teachers plan a good range of both literacy and mathematical tasks and they plan good learning opportunities which enable pupils to develop early scientific skills. Teachers ensure that pupils' personal development is promoted through the personal, social and health education programme and at other times during the day such as snack time and playtime.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is relevant to pupils' needs and provides them with good opportunities to participate. Provision for children under five and pupils over sixteen is effective. The hostel provides pupils with a good range of activities but these are not sufficiently well linked to the work done in the classrooms.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills and become independent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school's procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are effective. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are good.

The curriculum for pupils of all ages is good and learning experiences planned by teachers provide opportunities for them to make good progress. Planning ensures that individuals have good opportunities to cover the curriculum because teachers prepare an individual programmes of work for each pupil. The school pays good attention to health and safety on a day-to-day basis and there are appropriate procedures for child protection within the school and hostel. The school effectively promotes and monitors pupils' personal development because it uses good curriculum materials which reflect pupils' early stage of development. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to work with different social groups either in the classroom, the hostel or at other times and they do not have enough opportunities to work or play with children in mainstream schools. The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievement are good and enable teachers to monitor and measure the progress pupils

are making and plan opportunities for them to learn more. The school has very good links with parents. It provides them with very good information about their child's progress and the life and work of the school. Parents are very effectively involved in the work of the school and very supportive of their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school benefits from the vision and very clear educational direction of the headteacher who is supported well by members of the senior management team.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and is effective in its work. The governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and the deputy effectively monitor teaching and other developments in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources, including, staff are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

The educational vision for the school and the commitment to improve what it provides for pupils is shared by all staff. The system for planning improvement identifies clear, appropriate and relevant targets which are linked to and supported effectively by the school budget. Staff do not have as many opportunities to contribute to development planning as they could. The governors are fully involved in the running of the school and in planning for its development. Financial management is good and procedures for ordering equipment and resources are managed effectively and efficiently. The school ensures that it gets best value from its purchases and its investments in resources, including staffing by careful monitoring and evaluation of the impact they have on standards. Staffing levels are good, but accommodation for the needs of pupils in the school is unsatisfactory. Resources are good in most subjects and there is an appropriate planned programme of improvements for those areas which need further development such as creative development and religious education.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ their children enjoy school ▪ being able to approach the school with questions or a problem ▪ the teaching is good ▪ their children make progress ▪ their children behave well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for the school to provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons

The returned questionnaires and comments made at the parents' meeting indicate that parents are very positive about the school. A very small number express some negative comments about a number of areas but the inspection team did not find evidence to support these views. A more significant number of parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team agrees with this view and believes that the school could improve this aspect of its provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' achievements are consistently good and often very good. It is not possible to compare the standards achieved by pupils in the school now with those in the previous report because of the significant change in the nature of pupils' special needs. The good quality of teaching leads to pupils being fully involved in their learning and this has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. In addition, the very thorough assessment procedures ensure that teachers and other staff have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. This knowledge is used very well when planning the next steps in learning and consequently ensures that good and very good progress is made in subjects and against targets in pupils' individual education plans. The school sets appropriate and achievable targets for pupils in these plans as well as setting appropriate whole school targets to improve standards in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, social and health development. These targets lead to pupils making good progress over time.
2. Pupils with challenging behaviour frequently make satisfactory rather than good progress because there is too much emphasis on the approaches used to manage their behaviour. Older pupils are not given work which is sufficiently challenging so they are not able to learn more and the teaching approaches used to manage the behaviour of younger pupils are not implemented well enough to help them participate in the learning planned for them. In addition the accommodation for primary and younger secondary age pupils who have challenging behaviour is not suitable and it makes it difficult for teachers to effectively manage their behaviour.
3. Pupils' achievements in personal and social development are good because of high quality teaching and pupils' own positive attitudes to learning. Teachers place a significant emphasis on this area of learning. Pupils are supported well to respond positively to the opportunities provided for them, to take responsibility and to increase their independence skills.
4. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good, and often very good, progress in the area of communication, language and literacy. This is because the teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons. Teachers plan pupils' learning to take good account of literacy targets in their individual education plans and school targets. This ensures that there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication in all lessons. As a result pupils learn to make choices and to have some control over the experiences they are given. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in their listening and communication skills because teachers plan activities that motivate them. They use stimulating resources which help pupils to develop their ability to look and respond. For pupils, with autistic spectrum disorders the ability to co-operate is often difficult. However, teachers have a secure understanding of their needs. The teaching approaches they use enable pupils to participate and generally make good progress. Teachers effectively use the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils achieve well.
5. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing as they develop their mark-making skills into copying and then writing their first name. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently to help pupils progress from mark making to writing so achievements are only satisfactory.
6. Standards of achievement in mathematics are good because the teaching of mathematics is well planned and based on good assessment. This allows pupils to build effectively on past learning. The use of an appropriate mathematics curriculum, as well

as the effective adaptation and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, means that relevant work is provided. This helps pupils to make good progress and ensures that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and challenging behaviour are supported well to make progress. Because teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils, those with additional special needs are able to make the same progress as others.

7. Standards of achievement in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world (*science*) are good. Primary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to work together experiencing sensory aspects of the world around them. Primary age pupils with severe communication difficulties make good progress with the highest attaining pupils understanding simple scientific language such as push and pull. Older primary and younger secondary pupils with challenging behaviour only make satisfactory progress in this area because their behaviour gets in the way of their learning.
8. Good teaching and effective planning ensure that pupils achieve well and make good progress in developing understanding and skill in aspects of history, geography and design technology that form part of this area of the curriculum. Pupils effectively learn about the passage of time by becoming familiar with daily routines and the concepts of 'in the past' and 'now'. They learn about the school environment and the local and wider community. Pupils make snacks and meals and are involved in activities which help them develop a good understanding of materials when they 'make things' such as carnival shakers. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their understanding of different religions and faiths.
9. Pupils achieve well and make good progress using a wide range of equipment such as audio-tapes, CD-ROMs, electronic talkers and switches and in using computers to help them understand cause and effect. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning across all areas of the curriculum. Both primary and secondary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve well in relation to the assessments which are undertaken for information and communication technology. Younger and older higher attaining pupils with no speech use their communicators effectively to participate in lessons and express their needs and make choices.
10. Standards of achievement in the area of physical development are good. Pupils use the safe, well-planned and resourced outdoor facilities to make good progress in exploring and experimenting with their movements. Pupils with challenging behaviour do not always participate as effectively as they could in activities because their behaviour prevents them. On these occasions they only make satisfactory progress. The achievement and progress of pupils in the area of creative development is satisfactory, although there are good aspects within individual lessons. The narrow curriculum for both visual arts and music restricts the progress that pupils are able to make.
11. In almost all the areas of learning pupils' achievement and their progress is good because each year their attainment is assessed effectively by teachers. This information is analysed to identify trends, set targets for improvement and to inform curriculum developments. For example, a small number of pupils are achieving in literacy and numeracy at Level 5, 6 and 7 of the 'P' level assessment criteria. The school recognises that it will need to develop the curriculum to provide more access to the National Curriculum for these pupils in the future. The school has also identified trends such as the positive impact that the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had on standards and it has a clear picture of areas where individual pupils appear to have reached a plateau in their learning and the progress they make. This enables the school to prioritise and address areas for development and identify effective teaching and learning. Pupils of statutory school age are assessed appropriately using nationally

recognised assessment materials and the outcomes are submitted as part of an initiative to provide benchmark information about attainment in special schools.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have good attitudes to school. They demonstrate interest and enthusiasm for the activities they are involved in and there is no deliberate time wasted. Because the curriculum is well-planned to meet their individual learning needs, pupils concentrate well and work hard. They become thoroughly involved in the wide variety of experiences that teachers provide for them. The youngest pupils are tired but are still enjoying their work at the end of each day. Pupils clearly enjoy the many opportunities provided to go on visits and walks in the local community. They arrive at school with smiles for the staff who greet them and they co-operate very well as they go to their classrooms. The pleasure and enjoyment pupils experience at school is reflected in the way they laugh and smile.
13. Pupils cope well with the many changes of activity each day. The youngest pupils, with profound and multiple learning difficulties, thoroughly enjoy making a birthday cake, and sitting together at the table to celebrate a classmate's birthday. They work happily in a circle in their music lesson, holding textiles and props that add colour, interest and fun to their singing lesson. The Chinese New Year was celebrated during the inspection, and pupils showed a curiosity and willingness to taste Chinese foods, listen to Chinese music, and be involved in an activity to paint a Chinese dragon.
14. Pupils' behaviour can at times be affected by the nature and extent of their special educational needs, however, to the best of their ability they behave well in all parts of the school and in the hostel. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are co-operative, polite with each other, and with staff and visitors. They treat resources, including their reading and writing books with care. Pupils work safely with equipment and materials, for example, growing and caring for plants and taking care of animals. Pupils are sensible when they go out, they cross roads safely on the way to nature walks, and know how to behave appropriately in public places. There is no deliberate bullying or oppressive behaviour, although at times pupils with challenging behaviour can unintentionally be the source of another pupil's anxiety. Parents are very pleased with the efforts the school makes to promote good behaviour. During candle time each day pupils show that they understand 'special times' and they behave appropriately when the curtains are closed, the candle lit, and the music played.
15. The development of pupils' personal skills is good. They make good progress learning to be independent in their eating, drinking, dressing and personal organisation. This is particularly the case for pupils in the hostel. Daily opportunities to practise these skills are well-planned, helping pupils of all abilities including those with additional special needs to become more independent. Pupils clear up after themselves during practical work and take responsibility for aspects of their personal hygiene such as washing their hands. They deliver registers to classrooms and return them to the office. They practise dressing after physical education lessons, make choices at snack time and learn to use their individual timetables so that they know what activity is going to happen next. Pupils over sixteen are developing an awareness of their own personal progress through simple statements, written in symbol form, about what they have done and achieved. Day pupils work with their parents and carers at home to extend what they have learned at school. For example, six pupils with communication difficulties in Years 9 to 13, respond very positively to the highly effective methods the teacher has devised for setting homework.
16. Pupils learn to make choices and where possible develop independence. A pupil with challenging behaviour is learning to travel on public transport. With his educational care officer he chooses which local town to visit by bus and the activities he will do once

there. Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and traditions and they take part enthusiastically when the school celebrates festivals in the weekly school assembly and during lessons.

17. Pupils are developing good social skills because teachers set them individual targets. A Year 9 pupil with autistic spectrum disorder manages to sit with his classmates throughout a discussion about plants they have found in the school grounds. A group of pupils in Years 8 to 13 who have no speech, enjoy hearing each other's weekend news by listening to the songs and stories recorded by parents, brothers and sisters on their communication aids.
18. Pupils' attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was good. There are no published attendance rates for the whole school, as some of the pupils are residential. From a review of registers, the calculated attendance rate for 2000/01 was 94.9 per cent and there were no unauthorised absences. Nearly all absences are due to illness or medical appointments. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time. However, hostel staff do not always ensure that pupils are ready or set off in enough time to get to school at the beginning of the morning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are now good. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In almost a quarter of all lessons teaching and learning was judged to be very good. Effective lessons reflect teachers' good subject knowledge and high quality planning. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will succeed and they use assessment procedures effectively to plan what pupils will learn. The improvements to the curriculum provide good guidance for teachers when they plan lessons. Improvement in the quality of teaching has been brought about by several factors. Monitoring by the head and deputy headteacher which is rigorous and provides teachers with clear written feedback, evaluating strengths and areas for further development and the procedures for the training of both new and more established staff.
20. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils have access to effective teaching. As a consequence, in the area of communication, language and literacy, there is consistently high quality planning. Teachers take great care to ensure that clear individual targets are linked to the overall aim of the lesson. A very good literacy lesson was seen for pupils, with communication difficulties, in Years 8 to 13. The focus for the lesson was the use of adjectives and the teacher provided an imaginative range of activities which involved pupils making choices using symbols. Pupils were able to achieve well because learning was effectively related to their individual targets and to the objectives for the lesson. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are given good opportunities to make choices, for example when they select tactile and sensory books. Teachers recognise how pupils communicate by using sounds, facial expressions or body postures because these responses are monitored effectively. Teachers help pupils' communication by providing good prompts which help them to understand what is expected of them. For pupils of all ages planning for the development of communication is very good and effectively contributes to their social development. This emphasis on communication ensures that pupils make very good progress in developing independence and confidence to communicate their needs and wants.
21. Although there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' communication, teachers do not use signing consistently and do not have a shared understanding of why, when and how to use symbols which sometimes limits pupils' curriculum opportunities. The co-ordinator for augmented and alternative communication (AAC) who has only just been

appointed, has already established a good action plan with clear and appropriate priorities to draw existing practice into more cohesive provision which will enhance pupils' curriculum opportunities further.

22. Teaching is good in numeracy. Teachers clearly identify what they want pupils to learn and support this with a good range of activities. Teachers plan well to help pupils become familiar with number and activities which enable them to develop an awareness of size and shape. Teachers use daily routines effectively to help pupils recognise patterns. The activities provided by teachers offer good opportunities for pupils to learn to recognise familiar events both in their work and in social time. Primary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are given opportunities to explore resources such as stacking objects. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and they are given good opportunities to practise their skills, for example, when they move their hands during a number rhyme or select three boxes from a tray. Teachers continue to plan good opportunities for secondary age pupils and those over sixteen. Opportunities for them to handle and explore objects effectively extends their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this is developed from careful assessment. Teachers plan a good range of mathematical tasks for younger pupils with challenging behaviour which involve activities for sorting and matching.
23. (*Science*) The quality of teaching and learning in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Planning for individual pupils is good and teaching methods and materials are used effectively to help pupils maintain their concentration and interest. Pupils are encouraged to persevere and remain at their work so that lesson time is used effectively. Teachers ensure that primary age pupils with communication difficulties are helped to understand simple scientific language, for example, when they describe how a prism 'splits' light. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to group materials when they are asked to distinguish between cardboard and metal. Their learning is effectively extended when teachers use appropriate descriptions of the different materials. Teachers of older primary and younger secondary pupils with challenging behaviour plan simple experiments which provide opportunities for pupils to take part in practical investigations such as flying paper helicopters. Teachers are not fully confident in setting up valid science investigations and need further development in their knowledge to enable pupils to develop their investigative skills further so that they can draw appropriate conclusions.
24. (*Design and technology*) Teachers plan activities that are challenging yet achievable for pupils. Sensitive and effective support is provided by educational care officers and this helps to promote pupils learning. Teachers make sure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties engage positively with materials, and have good opportunities to use their senses. They effectively involve pupils in designing their products, by helping them to communicate their choices and ideas. The teaching of computer skills is good. Activities are well-planned to help pupils develop the skills they need and there is effective support for pupils learn how to operate their electronic communication aids.
25. Teaching in the area of physical development is good and staff work together effectively to support pupils through the activities. In the area of creative development good teaching was seen during music and art activities. Opportunities are well-planned and teachers clearly identify what they what pupils to learn. They help them to concentrate and pay attention by providing interesting changes in activities.
26. The good training provided for staff has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. There has been considerable development of teachers' knowledge of how to use TEACCH approaches for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour and effective training for the use of SCIP (Strategies

for Crisis Intervention and Prevention). Teachers manage behaviour well in most cases because training has provided them with a good understanding of the methods to be used. When pupils' difficulties are not managed well this is because the TEACCH approaches are not being effectively implemented. For example, pupils sometimes have to move from one part of the classroom to another in order to use their visual timetables. This can lead to difficulties as pupils' concentration is interrupted and other pupils are disturbed by the movement.

27. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school owes much to the very good support provided by education care officers. They are an integral part of the teaching and learning for pupils and, as a result, teaching staff have considerable confidence in them. Pupils benefit from the effective team approach adopted in all classes. The methods and organisation used by teachers mean that educational care officers are often responsible for working with small groups or individuals. They do this well and, although they follow teachers' planning, the majority also show considerable initiative when working with pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is also enhanced by the support provided by visiting specialists. Their specific expertise makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and the progress that they make in personal and social development and in individual subjects.
28. A strength of teaching and learning across the school is the way teachers use assessment to judge the impact of their teaching on the progress that pupils make. For all pupils observation of their responses to activities, tasks and experiences is used very effectively to gain knowledge of how they are progressing. More able pupils respond positively to teachers' questions and this enables them to test pupils' knowledge and understanding. This approach has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and their involvement in their own learning.
29. Teachers use homework effectively for day pupils to extend their learning. One teacher uses the home-school books very effectively to develop pupils' independence and to involve them in homework by recording what they have been asked to do. The nine residential pupils are not developing responsibility for homework on week-day nights because teachers do not set them any work.

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

30. A good quality curriculum is provided for pupils of all ages. The curriculum for children under the age of five and for pupils over sixteen is effective. There has been very good improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection, and it now provides good opportunities for all pupils to participate and make progress. It meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum policies are good and reflect the learning opportunities provided to meet the wide range of pupils' learning needs. Planning ensures that every pupil has equality of access and opportunity because teachers prepare individual programmes of work for pupils in all the areas of learning.
31. The curriculum is very relevant. It has been developed in areas of learning which reflect pupils' early stage of development. The work planned provides good opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate early knowledge, understanding and skill in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. An appropriate amount of time has been allocated to the majority of learning areas. There is a good emphasis on language and literacy and mathematical development but the time allocated to creative development is too little and is restricting pupils' opportunities. Planning for the area of creative development does not provide a sufficiently broad range of experiences in art and music.

32. The school has rightly recognised the need to develop a more age appropriate curriculum for older secondary age pupils and those over sixteen and it is already addressing this. Modules of work from the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) curriculum are being effectively introduced alongside the existing curriculum to ensure that these pupils have opportunities that are more relevant for their age and enable their learning to be accredited. They also take account of drugs awareness and sex education.
33. There is currently one child in the foundation stage who learns alongside younger primary age pupils. Learning is planned from the school's curriculum, which is based on the areas of learning recommended for young children, the teacher prepares a programme of work which is informed by careful assessment of individual need and provides a good range of 'nursery' learning experiences. The school has recently identified a co-ordinator for early years who is beginning to familiarise herself with the provision and establish appropriate plans for the future.
34. The curriculum for pupils over sixteen is appropriately different from that for the younger pupils and provides a broad range of learning opportunities, with a relevant emphasis on language and literacy and mathematical development. The introduction of modules of work from the 'ALL' curriculum ensures that there is a suitable emphasis on vocational education. Pupils follow an appropriate range of courses that will enable their learning to be accredited. The school currently has six pupils over sixteen. The curriculum meets their needs well because teachers use the curriculum and assessment effectively to establish individual programmes of work. These are developed to be age appropriate and to meet pupils' academic and personal needs.
35. The twenty four hour curriculum is satisfactory. It provides a good range of experiences for those pupils in the hostel but it is not used effectively to support the learning they do in class. The school and hostel do not work together sufficiently well because they do not identify targets for pupils that will enable evening activities to support and extend the work being done in the classroom. Hostel staff are not sufficiently aware of the targets set by the school.
36. Curriculum opportunities and experiences are planned on an individual basis. Each pupil has a programme of learning which is informed by careful assessment of their achievement and this enables pupils of all abilities, including those with additional special needs to make the same progress. The opportunities for pupils with mobility difficulties to make progress in the area of physical development are enhanced by the use of approaches such as Movement Opportunities Via Education (MOVE). These sessions focus effectively on developing pupils' independent movement through a series of group and individual activities and there has been some significant progress made by individual pupils as a result.
37. The school has introduced a communication systems based on symbols and the use of single switch and more complex communication aids. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) has been implemented effectively to help pupils learn to make choices, be independent in their work and record what they have learned. However, the school, although it is working hard to become a total communication environment has not yet established a clear philosophy about communication.
38. The careers education programme is satisfactory and modules of study from ALL provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work. There are currently limited opportunities for work experience, although the school provides suitable opportunities for those pupils who can benefit from them. There are good links with the careers service and the careers adviser attends the annual reviews of pupils who are fourteen and over. The co-ordinator is beginning to identify appropriate developments for

the future. Pupils over sixteen do not have opportunities to experience college life and its approaches to teaching and learning. This is because there is no suitable provision available to meet the needs of the schools' changed population.

39. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The use of curriculum material developed specifically for pupils with low levels of attainment, high quality teaching and pupils' own positive attitudes to learning lead to good progress.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Candle time each day creates a special atmosphere for quiet reflection and stillness. Darkened classrooms with music and artefacts help pupils to focus and recognise this as a 'special time'. There is evidence, from teachers' planning and videos, of the good contribution these experiences make to pupils' knowledge of Christian and other faiths, cultures, festivals and traditions.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Staff constantly reinforce high standards of courteous and respectful behaviour. They are very successful in fostering good relationships and team work, and pupils learn from the good role models staff provide by working well together. Class targets are set to promote good behaviour and social development. Morality and good behaviour are effectively taught through stories in English and history. Pupils learn to be tolerant, to wait their turn without fussing and to understand the words 'wait' and 'later'. They learn to care for the environment and to treat other people and animals with care. Their understanding is effectively reinforced when a mother and new born baby visit the school and when they have opportunities to stroke a kitten. Staff treat pupils with dignity and respect, and well established procedures ensure pupils' rights to privacy during personal care routines.
42. Provision for pupils' social development is good. They are given plenty of opportunities to develop the skills they need to be independent. Pupils are taught to make choices, for example, about which book to read or what to eat and drink. They are effectively taught skills in feeding, personal hygiene and care and independent learning skills. Teachers ensure that pupils learn how to read their own timetables or use objects of reference, photographs, symbols or words to help them understand the demands made of them during the school day. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. For example, collecting registers from the office and returning them. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to learn to take responsibility for their own actions, for example when older pupils clear up their 'mess' after a highly enjoyable but very muddy practical lesson, taking responsibility for washing their own hands.
43. Frequent visits into the community, to places such as, shops, the theatre, police station, and restaurants, help pupils to learn what is acceptable social behaviour. Individual pupils, effectively supported by members of staff, learn to travel by bus to the local town and, where possible, they progress to travelling by train. Arrangements are made for pupils to work in other classes for part of the week, and to work and play with pupils in other schools, but these arrangements are too few in number. The accommodation has been altered to provide more individual learning spaces but this now restricts opportunities for pupils to work in different social groups. Nine pupils have their lessons in other buildings on the site. They have few opportunities to socialise with pupils in the main building and are quite isolated.
44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The weekly assembly is well-planned to cover many of the festivals throughout the year, for example, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Ramadan and Chinese New Year as well as Christian festivals. Pupils visit the theatre, listen to music and taste food from around the world, handling artefacts from different cultures and traditions. Displays help pupils to recall the assembly themes and see the

richness of other cultures. However, the curriculum is less well-planned to give pupils experience of the ethnically diverse nature of the local and wider community. In art, pupils copy the style of famous artists such as Picasso. Visiting musicians provide pupils with experience of harp, brass, and piano music. Other visitors include singers, a samba group, a Christian puppet theatre, and an art/dance group who work with pupils to create multi-sensory experiences.

45. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular opportunities. However, a significant number of parents feel that their children do not have enough opportunities to take part in activities outside school time. Transport arrangements contribute to the difficulties the school has in organising activities. Pupils in the hostel have a good range of experiences, including the use of specialist facilities in the school such as the ball pool and snoezelen. There are also activities such as cookery, painting, music and walks, and pupils use local facilities such as the Lynx Youth Club. The school has also organised for a football coach to come in and provide football instruction. The school is hoping to open up this range of opportunities to day pupils but this will be dependent on parents arranging transport.
46. The school's links with the local community are diverse and rich and a very good resource for the curriculum. The school makes extensive use of the area around the school for travel and independence training and visits to local shops enable pupils to improve their social skills and make choices and purchases in real life situations. The school is very well supported by the community who attend the summer and Christmas fairs. There is also a very good range of visitors to the school, such as the local vicar, police and fire brigade. These visitors talk to pupils and share information about their lives and experiences with them. Opportunities like these effectively extend pupils understanding of life in the community. There are a number of volunteers who help with swimming and horse riding.
47. Good links have been established with local mainstream schools through involvement with the local education authority's inclusion project which finishes this year. A very small number of pupils go to a local primary school for music therapy but there are very limited opportunities for pupils to work alongside children in a mainstream school setting. Opportunities for them to work in different social settings within the school or the hostel are also limited, in part by the accommodation but also because these opportunities have not been sufficiently considered as an option. The school has developed effective links with health service professionals such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists and this makes a significant contribution to effectively meeting pupils' needs and supporting them to make progress, particularly those pupils with additional special needs. The school provides good quality work experience placements for local secondary schools, further education colleges and universities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school has good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. It has appropriate procedures for child protection and has drawn up a clear and detailed policy which provides good guidance for staff. The headteacher is the designated person with responsibility for child protection and she carries out her duties effectively. Adults working in the school are aware of the school's procedures. The arrangements for pupils looked after by the local authority meet statutory requirements and the school has invited two charities to act as independent advocates for specific pupils.
49. The arrangements for first aid and medical care are good. The school nurse is available during the school day and is based in a well-equipped medical room. She ensures good links between the hostel, school, medical services and home and she provides comprehensive support for pupils' medical needs. The nurse's duties are wide ranging

and include taking pupils to the dentist, ensuring that transport escorts can deal with pupils' seizures and advising on dietary concerns. She also helps to teach aspects of the personal, social and health education programme and this makes a good contribution to the progress that pupils make.

50. The school pays good attention to health and safety on a day-to-day basis. Staff are vigilant of any risks to pupils' safety. Regular risk assessments have been carried out and appropriate procedures are in place for fire drills, testing electrical equipment, and handling and moving pupils. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy but this lacks details of roles, responsibilities and procedures.
51. The school effectively promotes and monitors pupils' personal development. Promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying is effectively addressed through the curriculum and through the expectations staff have of pupils. The curriculum provides good opportunities to develop pupils' moral awareness. The programme for personal, social and health education appropriately reflects pupils' early stage of understanding and teachers, through careful assessment, set individual targets which reflect pupils needs and enable them make good progress in their personal development.
52. Because staff know pupils well they provide suitable levels of support which encourage independence and develop pupils' ability to take responsibility and show initiative. There is an increasing emphasis on enabling pupils to be independent learners particularly in classes for secondary age pupils and those over sixteen. There are high expectations of pupils and they are expected to use the prompts they are given to organise themselves and record their work.
53. The school has produced appropriate guidance for staff on how to feed those pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and there are detailed plans for how to help pupils who have challenging behaviour cope with mealtimes. They provide clear guidance on how difficulties should be handled and recorded and this guidance is implemented consistently. These plans do not, however, identify targets for improvement.
54. The plans established to help teachers manage pupils' behaviour do not enable them to accurately measure pupils progress although they do effectively identify changes. The school has already identified this as an area for development. Teachers are now recording the types of behaviour that cause pupils problems in their annual review report so that progress or lack of it can be monitored more effectively. This record is a description of what the pupil does and it outlines some suitable strategies to prevent or deal with the behaviour but it still does not identify targets with success criteria against which improvement can be measured. The school also provides parents with a questionnaire that asks about their child's behaviour, their perception of improvement and areas for concern. This provides a good level of additional information from which targets could be developed.
55. There is an appropriate care policy and philosophy for pupils in the hostel. Pupils are aware of the morning and evening routines, are welcomed into the hostel after school and given time to settle with care staff who have been assigned to work with them. All staff are aware of the medical and social care programmes of the pupils with whom they work. A significant number of pupils have behaviour management programmes and these appropriately reflect what is being done in the school. There are regular fire drills and aspects of health and safety are monitored well. Recommendations from regular fire inspections are efficiently acted upon. Care staff are appropriately involved in the annual reviews of pupils. They clearly care about pupils and the quality of support that they provide is good.

56. The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements have improved since the previous inspection. They are good in all the areas of learning of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment is carefully assessed against the learning objectives identified in the ACCESS and ALL curriculum materials. These assessments are used very well by teachers to plan what pupils should learn next. Teachers establish an individual programme of work for each pupil which covers all the areas of learning of the curriculum and activities and experiences are planned effectively to enable pupils to make progress and achieve the targets that have been set for them. These assessment procedures are precise, and enable teachers to measure pupils' progress accurately. Curriculum planning sheets provide a good record of pupils' experiences and achievements because they are used effectively by teachers to indicate if the learning outcomes planned for each individual pupil have been achieved.
57. The school is making good use of the annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational need to identify, plan for, and review, new learning targets. The identification of clear and measurable learning outcomes for each pupil, which are reflected in pupils' individual curriculum plans enable teachers to use assessment very effectively to plan what needs to be learned next. Because teachers check what pupils have learned in relation to what has been taught the assessment procedures make it easy for teachers to monitor the progress of individual pupils. The school effectively links the targets in individual curriculum plans to the annual reviews and annual reports on pupils.
58. The targets set in lessons for a small number of secondary age pupils and those over sixteen are shared very effectively with them through simple statements written in symbols. This enables pupils to develop an awareness of their own achievement and progress. Pupils' records of achievement are of good quality. They provide a comprehensive photographic and annotated record of their experiences throughout their time at school.
59. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Registers are marked correctly and the school has recently adopted a computerised system to record and analyse attendance data. The school does not contact home on the first day of absence, but generally follows up unexplained absences effectively. There is no unauthorised absence. The school appropriately involves outside agencies on the rare occasions when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive and they say that their children enjoy school. Many are delighted that their family life has been transformed, as their children make progress in their social and communication skills. Parents have confidence in the headteacher's leadership and management and they feel that teaching is good and that their children behave well and are expected to work hard. Parents value the way in which the school works closely with them and they appreciate that fact that staff are always willing to discuss their concerns. Comments indicate that parents feel fully informed about how their children are getting on and are pleased that the school helps them to support their children's learning at home. Some parents are unhappy about the lack of out-of-school activities. The inspection team agrees with parents' views and feels that the school could improve the range of activities offered to pupils.
61. The school has improved its links with parents and carers. At the time of the last inspection they were good and they are now very good. The staff and particularly the headteacher are very supportive of pupils' families and encourage them to become involved in their children's education. The home/school diaries are a very effective means of communication between parents and the staff (including teachers, care workers and the nurse). One parent commented that the diaries are 'a life-line'. The

school makes parents feel welcome and keeps in telephone contact with those parents and carers who live some distance away. The school takes parents' views into consideration, for example by providing more information in the annual reviews. Parents value the home visits made by therapists.

62. The quality of information provided for parents and carers is very good. The school is very aware of the concerns new parents have when they are choosing a school for their child and parents appreciate the opportunities they are given to visit the school and have discussions with the headteacher. The prospectus paints a very good picture of school life and provides useful information for parents. The governors' annual report to parents provides a brief overview of the school year, but there is little information about school finances. Newsletters are of a good quality. They keep parents fully informed of future events and celebrate the school's successes. The school sends parents useful information about the topics their children will be studying and invites parents to help during lessons. These opportunities enable parents to become involved in their children's work. The school's annual review provides parents with a very detailed analysis of how their children are getting on. Termly consultations give parents valuable opportunities to discuss their children's progress with staff.
63. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Parent governors are very supportive and help to shape the school's future. They also offer a beneficial and supportive network for parents. Although some families live a long way from the school there is a very active parent teacher association which works hard to raise funds for the school. The majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement.
64. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is very good. The vast majority of parents want to help their children and work hard at home to continue the learning and specialist programmes that are used in school. Parents make important contributions during the termly consultations when education plans and annual reviews are discussed. For example, the school values parents views about the targets set for their children and the help they give in reviewing children's behaviour plans. Most parents help their children with homework, such as sharing books and recording messages. The school appreciates the help given by parents who assist with swimming and on trips.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The leadership and management of the school is good. Although there was no clear judgement expressed at the time of the previous inspection there were significant shortcomings which have now been successfully addressed. There has, therefore, been a good improvement in the leadership since that time. This fully supports the views of parents, expressed at the meeting prior to the inspection and in the questionnaire returns. The leadership and management of the headteacher is very good and the school benefits from her vision and the very clear educational direction she has established for the future. She is supported well by colleagues and governors. The very strong commitment of the headteacher to the school and the pupils is shared by the deputy headteacher and together they set appropriately high standards for themselves, staff and pupils. The educational direction of the school, particularly in relation to meeting the wide range of educational needs of the pupils and the desire for excellence, is shared by all. This commitment is reflected in the improvement since the last inspection.
66. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior management is rigorous and effective. It is having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils. The procedures involve scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and observations in the classroom. This is followed up with written feedback and support and guidance where necessary. Although co-ordinators collect and monitor teachers'

planning, they do not have the opportunity to visit lessons to check how well pupils are learning. At the moment co-ordinators are not fully aware of how well pupils are learning in other classes. However, these opportunities are identified as a priority in the school improvement plan. The staff benefit from the school's desire to improve and they are provided with good opportunities to undertake training. This enables them to meet the high expectations set by governors and the headteacher to meet pupils needs.

67. The school has good systems in place to plan for improvements. These identify clear, appropriate and relevant targets and there is a good link to the school budgeting process. The planning is based on a review of the previous year's development plan and embraces national, as well as local initiatives. Both staff and governors play a part in contributing towards school developments. The subject co-ordinators have increased their role since the previous inspection and most of them produce a review of their subject identifying some of the ways forward. However, as yet this has not been formalised so that it becomes an effective part of development planning. Subject co-ordinators' responsibilities are not specifically linked to the areas of learning in the new curriculum. Although the review of planning at the end of the year is detailed and rigorous it does not fully assess the effects that developments and targets have on pupils' learning.
68. The governing body shares in the headteacher's commitment to the continuing improvement of the school and it has a clear vision to raise standards and improve the quality of provision for the benefit of pupils. It is not only very supportive of the headteacher but is also effective in its own work in the school. The governors are effectively involved, through their committees and fully governing body meetings, in managing and monitoring the work of the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the curriculum, staffing and accommodation and finances which helps it to make informed contributions to school planning and decision making. The governors have great confidence in the headteacher and the decisions that she makes. However, they also measure the effectiveness of the school through their own monitoring systems, including visits they make to the school and their links with subjects and classes. They consider that they hold the headteacher accountable for the success of the school. The way in which they carry out their role has improved since the previous inspection. Although statutory responsibilities are carried out, a few of them, including contents in the annual report to parents, would benefit from increased detail, for example the financial statement, staff training details and rates of absence.
69. The school has successfully implemented the Performance Management process. Teaching and learning is regarded as a major focus in the school. Teachers are observed teaching and are provided with feedback to agree targets for development. Subsequent visits provide the opportunity to monitor how effectively these targets have been met and their impact on learning. This contributes to the successful teaching seen in the school and is a significant improvement from the previous inspection.
70. The school makes effective use of specific grants, such as National Opportunities Fund (NOF) to support school planning. Day-to-day financial management is good and well managed by the administrative staff. Both the governors and the senior management have been very successful in clarifying the budget with the local education authority. The resolution of this long-standing issue means that the school is in a much better position to plan more effectively for curriculum development. The procedures for ordering equipment and resources are well known to staff and are managed efficiently. The school makes good use of technology to manage funding, maintain records and allow teachers to produce effective documentation. The school is also committed to the principles of 'best value' whenever the opportunity arises. There is appropriate delegation of financial controls to the headteacher.

71. The local education authority has recently established a permanent and temporary post for two teachers to be responsible for outreach. These teachers are currently involved in two areas of support. The first is focused on providing support for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders who are in local mainstream schools. It is part of a county-wide initiative and consists of offering schools specific advice in relation to individual pupils, or more general support about the management of pupils. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation at present to accurately assess the success of this new venture, although informally schools value the service. The second area of support is for mainstream school colleagues who provide education for pupils with severe learning difficulties. This is a local education authority initiative which is supported by government funds and it aims to increase the numbers of pupils with severe learning difficulties who remain in mainstream education. This is the second year of this project and there have been good attempts to monitor its success. However, evaluation is proving difficult because the aims and objectives were not established clearly by the local education authority at the outset.
72. Staffing levels are good, both in terms of teachers and education care officers. The number of teachers and the match of their expertise to the responsibilities they have been given is good. The education care officers provide invaluable help in the classroom, and for individual pupils, and their work is a strength of the school. They are effectively involved in training and this enables them to carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They feel valued and the school has established effective channels of communication through which they can express their views. The school's arrangements for the continuing professional development of all staff are good. The deputy headteacher oversees good quality training and the school identifies professional development priorities within the school improvement plan. Support staff also benefit from courses run by the school and the local education authority.
73. The care team in the hostel is effectively managed and they work well together. Care staff have undertaken appropriate courses and attended whole school INSET days. The head of care is a member of the senior management team and links with the headteacher are effective in ensuring that the provision made for pupils is constantly improved. Although there have been recent developments to support communication between the hostel and school these still have to be formalised to ensure that relevant information concerning pupils is always passed to teachers each morning and to care staff at the end of the day.
74. The school accommodation is unsatisfactory. However, effective and imaginative use has been made of the widespread facilities available. The staffroom is too small to accommodate all teaching and non-teaching staff at the same time. There are no areas for teachers to prepare work and the deputy headteacher has to work in an office which is a curtained off area of a corridor. The hall is not suitable for physical education lessons, particularly for secondary age pupils. The bungalow, which is used to teach primary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, has been effectively adapted and provides a stimulating learning environment, but is isolated and could not cater for older pupils. The use of the flat in the hostel as a classroom is unsatisfactory.
75. The hostel accommodation is satisfactory. Staff have worked hard to make it look homely and have helped pupils personalise their own rooms. A television lounge has been added since the previous inspection. The communal areas are pleasant and enable pupils to relax after school.
76. A library has been created in a room that was used for storage and, although small, can be used by most pupils. The outer play areas, which lead off the classrooms, are appropriately covered with a rubberised material to provide a safe surface. The last inspection report judged that the school was maintained to a high standard and this continues to be the case. There are now two caretakers who work a split week of three

and two days. Their contribution to the upkeep of the school buildings and organisation of the busy school car park is highly valued.

77. The resources available to staff are used appropriately. Most are held in classrooms, except those for literacy, which are now held centrally in the recently created library. This ensures that they are accessible to teachers. Resources are good overall although those for music and art are only satisfactory and for religious education they are barely adequate. Most subjects have an allocated a budget, the spending of which is decided by the co-ordinator according to needs which have been identified by all teachers when they review the effectiveness of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. The governors and senior management should:

- (1) Examine the use of accommodation, particularly where it is having an impact on the effective management of behaviour for primary and younger secondary aged pupils with challenging behaviour. Provide a more appropriate location for the pupils who are being taught in the hostel "flat". (Paragraphs 2,26, 43, 74,103)
- (2) Improve the use of teaching approaches and improve learning opportunities for those pupils with challenging behaviour by:
 - Improving the use of TEACCH approaches so that younger pupils with challenging behaviour can participate more effectively in the learning opportunities that have been planned for them. (Paragraphs 101, 106,116,120,126)
 - Ensuring that where TEACCH approaches are used rigorously, teachers plan work that is sufficiently challenging to enable older pupils with challenging behaviour to make more progress. (Paragraph 101)

The governors may also choose to include the following minor issues in their action plan:

- I. Implement the action plan for alternative and augmentative communication systems throughout the school to ensure that it is applied consistently and supported by a shared philosophy. (Paragraphs 21,37,87)
- II. Improve the links between the hostel and the school to help the 24-hour curriculum support the learning that pupils do in the classroom. (Paragraphs 29,35)
- III. Improve opportunities for inclusion within the school and other settings. (Paragraphs 43,47,80)
- IV. Establish targets in feeding plans. (Paragraph 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

39

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	25	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	64	13	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll

39

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

3

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

2

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

0

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data

5.06

Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	2
Average class size	5

Education support staff: Y R– Y13

Total number of education support staff	46
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1031.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1047985
Total expenditure	1070118
Expenditure per pupil	27438
Balance brought forward from previous year	25833
Balance carried forward to next year	700

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	39
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	38	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	59	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	50	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	74	26	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	18	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	18	0	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	78	14	4	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	20	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	18	5	14	5

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

The report does not comment on National Curriculum areas because the school has implemented curriculum materials that are specifically planned in areas of learning so that they reflect pupils' early stage of development. The report provides examples of what pupils of all ages know and can do.

Personal and social development.

79. Teaching and learning are good in the area of personal and social development. Pupils make good progress because learning opportunities are carefully embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. Activities are also well-planned to meet pupils' individual needs. Teaching is effective and pupils' achievements in their personal developments are well assessed and recorded, however, feeding plans and behaviour management plans do not contain targets to help pupils improve. Pupils make good progress in developing their independence because opportunities to practise these skills are well-planned for throughout the school day. For example, pupils practise dressing after physical activities. Teachers ensure that pupils learn to make choices and this effectively supports the development of their independence.
80. Teaching ensures that pupils develop good social skills. For example, a Year 8 pupil spends part of the week working in another classroom to help improve his social and communication skills. Two Year 11 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to be aware of each other by spending time together on the floor mat at break. A small number of pupils spend some time each week in a primary school but these opportunities are limited. In circle time, candle time, and group literacy, pupils work well together, and they are happy to take turns in familiar routines.
81. The curriculum is well established and provides teachers with a clear and suitable framework for planning and assessing the progress that individual pupils make. A fifth of the teaching time for primary age pupils, and nearly a quarter of the time for the secondary age pupils, is allocated appropriately to the promotion of their personal, social and health education, and the emphasis placed on this area of the curriculum helps pupils to make good progress.
82. The school has developed good assessment procedures to support curriculum plans and these, provide good evidence about pupils' progress. This information is used very well to report to parents about their child's achievements. The development and assessment of pupils' personal skills is effectively supported for the oldest pupils by the use of materials from the ALL curriculum. Provision for sex education and drugs education has been agreed by the governing body and is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. Staff do, however, need further guidance on the implementation of these two areas.

Communication, language and literacy

83. The school's provision for communication, language and literacy is good. Teaching is good because it is supported by good planning and assessment. Teachers use assessment very well to plan an individual programme of learning for each pupil and this enables them to achieve well and make good progress. The curriculum ensures that teachers are able to plan work so that pupils build successfully on what they have already achieved. The majority of pupils achieve good standards in early communication, speaking and listening and reading skills, and satisfactory progress in developing their writing.

84. Teachers plan effectively to meet pupils' needs. The learning outcomes from the reception year materials in the National Literacy Strategy have been adapted and implemented effectively and the school has established clear guidance about how the literacy hour will be used. Skills are clearly identified as learning outcomes and these are effectively reinforced across all the areas of learning of the curriculum. There is a very good emphasis on the development of pupils' basic skills in communication, language and literacy.
85. Assessment and the curriculum are very closely related. Learning outcomes identified in curriculum materials are used by teachers as targets for each pupil to achieve. This enables the majority of pupils to make good progress because teachers assess their achievement in relation to what has been taught and they use this information effectively to plan what pupils will learn next. Because teachers plan individual programmes of learning, the needs of those pupils who have additional special needs, such as visual impairment or physical needs, are met well and they make good progress.
86. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in developing early communication skills. Staff acknowledge the responses pupils make to activities and the sounds, facial expressions or body postures used by pupils are monitored effectively. Teachers provide pupils with good prompts which help them to understand where they are, what is expected of them and to make choices. The school has introduced the use of real objects as cues to help pupils understand what they are going to do now or next. For example, pupils have individual object 'cues' to help them understand that it is lunchtime or that they are going to look at a book during a story.
87. Teachers in the classes for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties sign key words and information to help support pupils' understanding further. The school has done a considerable amount of work on developing and implementing communication systems such as PECs. As a result teachers are placing less emphasis on signing, which is not as good as reported at the time of the last inspection. The school has already identified appropriate priorities to re-establish signing as part of the school's approaches to developing successful communication. The objects of reference used to help pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties develop early communication and reading skills are specific to each pupil but not consistent across the school. For example, the object of reference for story time is not necessarily the same in each class. This limits pupils' opportunities to communicate independently because the school is not using a universal language. All teachers use symbols to help pupils to understand what they are doing and what is required of them; however, there are some minor differences between classes as to which symbols are used and how.
88. Pupils capable of higher attainment who also have challenging behaviour develop their skills effectively and make themselves understood by using simple sentences, single words or by pointing or referring to symbols. Throughout the school day teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills. Well-planned activities enable pupils with limited speech in Years 8 to 10 show that they have listened well. The teacher reads the story "Follow the Kite" and pupils are expected to respond with appropriate actions, enabling the teacher to check their understanding and ensure that they listened and paid attention. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' achievement and realistic expectations of them. Pupils capable of higher attainment are expected to use clear words and gestures to answer questions. For example, a Year 9 pupil responds to a question about how an unhappy character in the story felt by saying, 'She was sad'. Many pupils also receive additional and effective support in the development of their communication skills through working with speech therapists.
89. Teachers have implemented suitable strategies to meet the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour including the provision of symbol timetables and low distraction areas in which to work. Teachers use their understanding of pupils' special needs and

their assessment effectively to match their verbal prompts and questions to pupils' abilities. This ensures that pupils who have difficulties interpreting the verbal demands made of them are not upset by having to understand too much language.

90. Teachers use simple communication aids such as single switches effectively to help pupils with little or no speech contribute to lessons. These switches, playing a pre-recorded phrase, are used consistently to enable pupils to participate in activities such as the literacy hour story. For example, the quacking of ducks is recorded onto a switch and pupils are encouraged to press the switch at the right point in the story 'Nice Weather for Ducks'. Teachers ensure that pupils with more complex communication aids are given good opportunities to contribute to lessons and there are high expectations that they will respond to the appropriately phrased questions asked of them.
91. Pupils make good progress in developing reading. Teachers ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have good opportunities to develop early reading skills. They are made aware of books when they look at pictures during a story and staff encourage them to turn pages. Teachers plan interesting activities which gain pupils' attention and resources are used effectively to encourage them to participate. Pupils clearly enjoy tactile stories and show enjoyment when they are encouraged to touch and smell the pages. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 respond enthusiastically to a good range of resources used by the teacher to reinforce the story 'Nice Weather for Ducks'. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to listen to stories and they clearly enjoy being read to and take pleasure in following a story guided by careful prompts. Teachers encourage pupils to take an interest in books during regular sessions in the recently re-established school library. Although the selection of books is small, they are well chosen to appeal to all ages and abilities.
92. Pupils capable of higher attainment and those with challenging behaviour match objects to objects and teachers effectively develop this skill further so that pupils match objects to symbols and symbols to symbols. Pupils in Years 7 to 12 match their symbol cards to the time of the day and the activities to be undertaken. The symbol communication system is used effectively by teachers to develop early reading skills because they ensure that pupils understand that pictures and symbols provide information.
93. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. Teachers plan a suitable range of experiences which enable pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties to acquire and practise early writing. Resources are used effectively by teachers to encourage pupils to explore different materials and to hold and let go of objects. For example, pupils in a foundation to Year 4 class are effectively supported to explore a good range of different materials when they make sensory pictures.
94. Pupils, including those with challenging behaviour, learn how to make purposeful marks on paper and teachers effectively develop these skills into early writing. Teachers provided pupils with suitably planned opportunities to make marks on paper and their spontaneous and random efforts are developed into more controlled and deliberate attempts at lines and circles. By providing pupils with a range of different materials such as black paper and chalk, teachers encourage them to participate and concentrate so they make satisfactory progress. A very small number of pupils capable of higher attainment in Years 7 to 12 produce meaningful print when they trace over and copy under the teacher's writing. One more able pupil in a Year 5 class spells his own name unaided and writes simple words correctly. Teachers do not plan sufficiently well to develop pupils' mark-making skills into the formation of letters because there is no overall plan for developing writing across the school. The school has suitable plans to address this area.
95. The area of communication, language and literacy is very well led and managed. The policy and plan of work to be undertaken provides good guidance for teachers.

Assessment and recording is thorough and it is easy to see the progress pupils are making. Although a programme of classroom monitoring by the co-ordinator has not been fully developed, literacy lessons have been videotaped to provide assessment information and teaching feedback for staff. The school has set a target of eighty per cent of pupils taking home a language based activity on a regular basis. This has been achieved for day pupils, but is underdeveloped for pupils in residence. The time allocated to communication, language and literacy is effectively used

Mathematical development

96. Standards of achievement in the area of mathematical development are good. Teachers use assessment very well to set targets and plan what pupils need to learn next. This enables the majority of pupils of primary and secondary age and those over sixteen to make good progress. The curriculum for mathematics has improved since the last inspection.
97. Pupils' opportunities to make progress are enhanced by the effective adaptation and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been implemented for pupils of all ages. Because the ACCESS curriculum is specifically developed to meet the needs of pupils who are at a very early stage of acquiring numeracy skills, teachers are well supported to plan for the development of pupils' skills, not only in the mathematical development area of the curriculum but also through the teaching of other areas of learning. Records show that the teaching is having a positive impact on standards. Teachers plan individual programmes of work for each pupil with learning outcomes which are drawn from the curriculum and Numeracy Strategy materials and reflect pupils' assessed levels of attainment. This ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with additional special needs are effectively supported to make progress.
98. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers use the curriculum effectively to plan mathematical activities which enable pupils to develop early mathematical concepts such as exploring through touch, sight and sound, reaching for objects and demonstrating preferences and using objects for their proper function. They effectively develop these concepts further by providing opportunities for pupils to show how they use their mathematical skills when they sort and match objects, compare objects by colour or size and talk about what they have done. Teachers plan well to ensure that pupils become familiar with number and activities enable them to develop an awareness of size. They count using everyday objects, recognise numerals and match them to the correct number of objects. Teachers use daily routines effectively to help pupils recognise mathematical patterns. 'Candle time' provides a marker to the start and end of sessions and symbol and verbal cues help pupils to learn that one thing has finished and another is about to begin. Activities provide good opportunities for pupils to learn to anticipate familiar events such as parts of a story or songs and rhymes used in activities such as the MOVE programme.
99. Teachers plan an interesting range of activities that encourages pupils to participate and this ensures that they have good opportunities to make progress. Primary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties concentrate well and enjoy exploring resources when they hold and mouth objects that roll and stack. Higher attaining pupils count independently from 1-5 and they count from 1-10 with support. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and teachers ensure that there are good opportunities for them to practise their skills in a variety of different situations. Pupils practise their counting skills again when they count 5 fingers during a number rhyme. Further activities enable pupils to record and practise their understanding of numbers to 10 when they use a work sheet to count and colour eight pictures. With verbal support, pupils match numerals to sets of pictures on the worksheet. Teachers make learning fun by using songs and action rhymes. Pupils join in enthusiastically with the actions for Five Little Ducks. Teachers make sure that pupils pay attention and this enables them to take part

effectively; pupils listen carefully and follow simple instructions when they take three boxes from a tray. There is a good emphasis on teaching appropriate vocabulary and pupils point to a long and short line correctly.

100. Secondary age pupils and those over sixteen build effectively on their past experiences and achievements. Teachers continue to plan good opportunities for them to handle and explore objects and their learning is extended effectively when they are asked to make choices between two objects for a specific purpose. For example, the teacher offers pupils a purse or a ball to roll down a ramp. Teachers ensure that pupils continue to develop an understanding of mathematical language when they are asked to place objects on and in and they correctly put gloves in a box. Teachers have high expectations of pupils informed by careful assessment and this is reflected in the tasks they set for them. Higher attaining pupils match by colour, they pair gloves, and complete simple interlocking jigsaws matching by shape. Pupils match dots to numerals and with support sort toy bears by colour and size.
101. The teacher plans a good range of mathematical tasks for younger pupils with challenging behaviour such as putting bottles into a bottle carrier, matching the number of bottles to the corresponding sections in the carrier. Activities are well planned to enable pupils to use their skills in different ways, matching objects such as a toy pig to a picture and matching cards of the same colour. Pupils touch and count objects to 5 and this skill is effectively reinforced when they match the number of counters indicated on a cue card. Pupils do not always make as much progress as they should because the approaches used to help manage their behaviour are not being implemented in a way that enables them to respond and participate.
102. Secondary age pupils and those over sixteen who have challenging behaviour respond well to the TEACCH approaches used because they are implemented in a way that enables them to understand what is required of them and complete the tasks they are given with a good level of independence. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of size and stack cups in order from the largest to the smallest. They complete a 20 piece jigsaw and match objects such as pencils to the number of holes in a pencil container. The teacher provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to record their work when they complete a work sheet. Pupils finish drawing shapes such as a square, triangle and circle. However, this activity has been done too often and is completed in exactly the same way each time, including mistakes. Work is not always planned to provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn new skills and make progress.
103. The subject is well led and managed and there are enough resources to support teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has appropriate plans to improve the level of resources now that the curriculum plan has been in place long enough to identify areas where they need to be developed further. The accommodation has an adverse impact on teaching and learning for the younger secondary age pupils with complex and challenging behaviour.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

104. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with additional special needs achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world (*Science*) Primary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to feel, taste and smell the ingredients for baking a cake and good teaching ensures that pupils recognise that when the cake is cooked the ingredients have changed. They are introduced to the idea of grouping and classifying materials by sorting packaging from supermarket goods according to their shapes, textures, smell and size. Secondary age pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties participate in preparing a Chinese meal to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They extend their experience of tasting foods,

communicate their preferences and observe changes in vegetables like bean sprouts and mushrooms when they are cooked.

105. Primary age pupils who are capable of higher attainment make particularly good progress. They understand simple scientific language like floating and sinking and push and pull. Teachers provide good opportunities for these pupils to learn how to group materials according to their properties. Pupils can distinguish between cardboard and metal and their understanding is extended well because the teacher uses good descriptions such as, hard, cold, shiny and bendy. In an electricity investigation, a Year 4 pupil makes very good progress, dictating what he wants to say. He then copies in good legible handwriting, 'We built a house and made the lights go on and off'. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to undertake simple investigations when they 'compare the suitability' of straw and brick for building the little pig's house. Pupils make decisions about materials when they find that they can blow the straw away easily. Pupils talk about their observations and make comments such as, 'Didn't move' when they are unable to blow the bricks down.
106. Pupils learn the names of fruit such as apples and bananas and teachers provide good opportunities for them to sort by colour, shape and smell. Activities such as these contribute well to the reinforcing the development of early mathematical skills. Secondary age pupils who are capable of higher attainment grow plants and collect leaves, roots, stems and seeds from the school grounds. They work sensibly, carrying the collecting tray carefully, taking care not to damage the specimens. Pupils recognise the different parts of a plant when they discuss what they have found. They are pleased to record what they have done in their home-school books so they can share their science work with people at home.
107. Older primary and younger secondary pupils with challenging behaviour only make small steps in developing scientific understanding and skills because their behaviour gets in the way of their learning. There is some photographic evidence of experiments they have done to fly paper helicopters. A Year 8 pupil helps to set up an investigation to grow cress seeds, but staff require some training in setting up a valid science investigation so that pupils can develop their investigative skills further and draw appropriate conclusions about what happens.
108. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan well for individual pupils using material designed to help pupils who are at an early stage of development acquire understanding and skills. Teachers use methods and materials which hold pupils' interest so pupils enjoy their lessons and persevere. They concentrate well and no time is wasted. Management of the science aspect of this area of learning is at an early stage of development and is appropriately focused on auditing science resources and monitoring the science curriculum plans each half term. The co-ordinator has appropriate plans to become more involved in developing the subject, especially the use of computers to support pupils' learning.
109. (*Design and technology*) Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Although very few activities were seen during the inspection, it is clear from samples of work, photographs and teachers' records, that pupils are involved in some ambitious projects and they are well supported to make good progress in their use and understanding of a range of materials. For example, in food technology activities pupils make snacks and meals and older pupils plan the food for special events. In other lessons pupils have well-planned opportunities to make useful and interesting objects ranging from 'carnival shakers', using dried beans and various containers, to large toy lorries and robots from cardboard. Older pupils make wooden bird boxes as part of a mini-enterprise scheme.

110. Pupils are successful with their projects and learn a lot from them. Teachers plan activities that are challenging, yet within pupils reach. Staff provide pupils with appropriate support and this enables them to make good progress. Teachers make every effort to ensure that pupils engage closely with the materials they are given to use. They provide pupils with good opportunities to explore resources using all of their senses. This enables all pupils, particularly those with additional special needs to take part in and make an effective contribution to lessons. Teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved in designing their products, by helping pupils who have little or no speech to communicate their choices. This enables pupils to select materials, colours and shapes, for example, by using signs, symbols or switches.
111. Although there is no member of staff with specific responsibility for promoting the design and technology aspects of the curriculum, teachers make good use of published curriculum materials to support their planning. The curriculum plans being used provide information about a good range of activities and they also contain examples of detailed learning outcomes for the subject. By careful assessment of pupils' achievement in relation to these learning outcomes teachers are able to clearly identify the progress that pupils have made.
112. (*History and geography*) Pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good and curriculum planning is effective. The youngest pupils are given good opportunities to investigate the school and the local environment. For example, they go to a local supermarket with their shopping list to buy food so that they can celebrate a class member's birthday. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are familiar with the classroom and school environment and they have visited a fire station as part of their studies into the wider community. Teachers and support staff work well in enabling pupils of all abilities to participate in lessons.
113. Pupils in Years 7 to 12 study the lifestyle of people in the local village. They construct a photographic map of the local area and label it with symbols and writing. More able pupils in Years 8 to 10 know the difference between concepts such as yesterday and today and they can sort old and new toys into appropriate groups. Lower attaining pupils show that they recognise the daily routines of the school and pupils in Years 10 to 13 recognise themselves and other people in pictures of the recent past. Pupils respond with enthusiasm in lessons because teachers provide them with an interesting range of activities and resources are used effectively to gain pupils' attention. The co-ordinator for this aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world has made satisfactory progress in developing the emphasis teachers place on planning suitable learning opportunities for pupils. Appropriate plans are in place to audit resources and improve the range of software and planned use of information and communication technology.
114. (*Information and communication technology*) Teaching and learning are good. Pupils make good progress using a wide range of equipment such as computers, audio-tapes, CD-ROMs, electronic communicators and switches. They acquire appropriate skills such as controlling the mouse and they develop an understanding of cause and effect by using computers. However, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use their computer skills to support their learning across all the subjects of the curriculum. This is an area for development that will require the purchase of software to support the development of understanding particularly in history, geography and science. Primary aged pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are achieving Level 1 on the baseline assessments for information and communication technology and secondary age pupils with similar needs have made good progress to Level 3 in the same assessment. Younger and older pupils capable of higher attainment and with little or no speech use their electronic communication aids effectively.

115. Teachers ensure that higher attaining primary pupils have good opportunities to use switches independently on computers, radios and various tape machines. Pupils demonstrate these skills when they confidently use the mouse to activate 'cause and effect' programmes on the computer. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties have appropriate opportunities to develop their understanding of cause and effect when they use the computer touch screens. Pupils develop a good range of skills when they use simple switches to activate toys and communication aids that play a pre-recorded phrase. Secondary age pupils thoroughly enjoy the messages that their parents send to the class on their single switch communicators.
116. Higher attaining pupils are given suitable opportunities to develop word processing skills and their reading is effectively supported when they identify words on the screen which have been spoken by the teacher. These pupils design multi-coloured pictures, and create designs out of repeating patterns using their skills with the mouse effectively to operate the software. In Year 9, pupils match words to the pictures on screen, for example, elephant, fire engine and clock. A pupil in Year 11 practises skills for using a roller ball mouse. Initial hand movements are too broad but they become more precise as the lesson progresses. Lower attaining pupils track an image on the computer screen. An older pupil manipulates the mouse to control events on screen, for example, stacking bricks. Pupils know when they have achieved and will respond positively smiling, or clapping their hands when they have finished a programme successfully.
117. Older primary and younger secondary pupils with challenging behaviour have used computers to design patterns for a T-shirt. They select and print their preferred designs. Teachers are providing good opportunities for higher attaining pupils with challenging behaviour to develop their reading and comprehension skills by using computer programmes which enable them to put photographs and text together, for example, a shopping trip. Pupils learning is effectively extended when they are asked to put the pictures into the correct order. Pupils' skills are not yet secure because their behaviour gets in the way of their learning. In one lesson, for example, which had been very well prepared, management of pupils' behaviour did not enable them to concentrate long enough to make progress.
118. Teachers make very effective use of assessment information to help them plan the next stages of learning for each pupil. Curriculum planning is very thorough and reflects pupils' early stage of development. The co-ordinator provides very good support for colleagues and has effectively identified strengths and areas for development in this aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

119. Standards of achievement in the area of physical development are good Teachers use assessment very well to set targets and plan what pupils need to learn next. This enables the majority of pupils of primary and secondary age and those over sixteen to make good progress. The curriculum for physical development has improved since the last inspection. The school has implemented the ACCESS curriculum for physical development which has been specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils who are at a very early stage of acquiring understanding and skill and the MOVE programme which is designed to meet the need of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and particularly physical difficulties.
120. Teachers plan individual programmes of work for each pupil with learning outcomes which are drawn from the curriculum and reflect pupils' assessed levels of attainment and ability. This ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with additional special needs are effectively supported to make progress. Younger secondary ages pupils who have challenging behaviour make only satisfactory progress because their behaviour and

learning is not being managed as effectively as it could be. The planning for these pupils is of good quality, activities and learning outcomes are well matched to their abilities and a good range of physical experiences are planned to enable pupils to achieve. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the activities that have been planned and this lessens their opportunities to make progress.

121. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and education care officers work effectively together, supporting pupils to participate and make progress. There is a good emphasis on personal development when pupils change for activities. Teachers have high expectations of pupils but ensure that pupils have good opportunities to achieve. Younger primary age pupils are expected to change independently but they are given enough support to enable them to be successful. Lesson planning is good and clearly identifies the activities, how they will be taught and what the learning outcomes are for each pupil. This enables the education care officers to effectively support teaching and learning because they are clear what their roles and responsibilities are. Teachers use assessments very well and the targets set for pupils are based on good knowledge of their achievement. These targets are written in a way that enables the teacher to effectively identify and measure progress.
122. Across the school teachers place a good emphasis on developing appropriate language during physical development lessons. This reinforces pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example when staff emphasize that they 'climb up', 'slide down' and 'go over' and 'under'. Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are supposed to do and prompts are used effectively to help pupils understand that lessons have finished or that they need to change activity; this enables pupils to respond well and be involved in the experiences planned for them.
123. Teachers, supported by their knowledge of pupils' achievements, challenge them well. Pupils capable of higher attainment are asked to hop and jump between the pieces of apparatus and to demonstrate different ways of coming down the slide. Teachers give clear instructions and pupils show that they listen well when they run around the hall and change direction when asked. Lessons are well paced and pupils are interested in the activities so they concentrate well. Staff provide good demonstrations and younger primary age pupils are able to participate fully in a dance lesson because staff model the movements for them. Teachers make sure there is an appropriate emphasis on warm up and cool down activities and pupils demonstrate a good response to the change of pace as they relax quietly to a calming tape.
124. Teachers are confident to carry out pupils' physiotherapy programmes and this helps them to maintain and further develop the mobility they have. The youngest pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are positioned daily in physiotherapy equipment such as side-lying boards and wedges. The teachers use these activities effectively to engage pupils in interesting activities such as looking in a mirror or watching the moving colours in a lamp. Teachers ensure that pupils with physical difficulties have good opportunities to work on skills such as sitting, moving from sitting to standing, balancing and stepping.
125. Pupils of all ages who have physical difficulties take part in a MOVE session once a week. The routine of the lesson is familiar to pupils and this enables them to anticipate 'what next'. Teachers use songs and games very effectively to encourage pupils to participate and it is clear from their responses that they enjoy the session. Pupils concentrate well and try really hard to do their exercises. It is clear that they have some understanding of their own targets and they are keen to have a go and show others what they can achieve. Staff work very effectively as a team to support all pupils to participate as well as they can. This enables them to make good progress. Teaching is lively, the pace of the lesson is good and staff are enthusiastic which gains pupils' attention and encourages them to participate. Good use of praise helps pupils to identify what they have achieved and it is clear that they are pleased when they do well.

126. Younger pupils with challenging behaviour find the transition to the school hall for physical development activities difficult and they do not respond well to the prompts they are given. Returning to the classroom can also be problematical and pupils often take too long because they do not respond to the prompts and staff are prepared to wait too long for them to comply because they do not want to trigger inappropriate behaviour. The activities planned for these pupils are appropriate and they have enough suitable experiences. Pupils climb confidently on apparatus and run around the hall but the way they interact with adults and apparatus is often in a random way. They are clearly following their own agenda rather than taking part in the planned learning. Staff work hard to involve pupils and they demonstrate that they can use a hockey stick to hit a puck, throw and catch a large ball, kick a small ball into a goal accurately and are developing accurate throwing skills, getting a bean bag into a target from a few feet away.
127. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in swimming. Teachers ensure that there is a good emphasis on developing skills and, for pupils capable of higher attainment developing stroke techniques. A very small number of pupils demonstrate emerging back and breast stroke techniques. Staff provide good levels of support which enable pupils to develop confidence. A pupil is happy to jump into the water with a member of staff. Teachers plan a good range of activities which enable pupils to build on their past experiences and achievement. They make good progress from developing water confidence such as putting their faces into the water to swimming three widths of the pool. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to join with other special school pupils for sporting activities such as swimming galas and during the week of the inspection three pupils were representing the school at such an event. The school makes good use of the community to enhance pupil' opportunities when they use the local swimming pool and walk in the countryside. The school hall is not large enough for older pupils to take part in physical activities safely. The school has adequate resources to support teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory.

Creative development

128. (*Art*) Pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory over time although there are examples of good work on display in the school. Only a very small number of art and design activities were seen and in these, pupils made good progress. Too few activities were seen to judge the quality of teaching and learning but the activities observed were well-planned and the content based on the units of work in the ACCESS curriculum. This is an improvement from the last inspection when planning was satisfactory. Good planning ensures that small group and individual work enables pupils to create using different materials and use different techniques such as collage and printing. Pupils are also given opportunities to experience different ways of drawing and painting. A small amount of three dimensional work is also planned. Displays around the school include winter patterns, using painted balls rolled across paper and snow flakes printed using potato blocks, good examples of three dimensional work in papier-mâché masks as well as two dimensional pieces using mixed media such as, painting and drawing. There are also examples of collage and printing. Finger painting has been used well to enable pupils to explore colour mixing.
129. Pupils develop satisfactory skills, but at an early level of development. They learn about colour, tone and line and there is work on display which shows that they have had appropriate opportunities to study the work of different artists. For example, one class have produced paintings based on the work of Picasso. Older pupils have produced designs for clothing to be printed during design and technology activities. In a lesson involving the production of printed scales for a Chinese dragon, the teacher understands the pupils' needs well and through careful management they are encouraged to successfully print the shapes.

130. The co-ordinator for this aspect of the curriculum provides advice and support for other staff and maintains the stock of materials appropriately. However, there is a clear need for further investment in the subject and for it to have a higher profile throughout the school. There is no specialist accommodation. There are sufficient resources for the work that is undertaken but these are limited in variety and restrict further development.
131. (*Music*) Pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory overtime although they frequently make good progress in lessons. Pupils participate well in music activities; they learn to anticipating sounds and words in songs. One group of older pupils with communication difficulties predict the words in the song 'Mud, mud, glorious mud' and are able to join in with the chorus. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to express preferences between different instruments when they use a range of percussion instruments to create 'sound effects.'
132. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well-planned and teachers clearly identify and describe what they want pupils to learn. Teachers maintain pupils' attention effectively by planning interesting changes to activities. Learning opportunities are based on materials from the ACCESS curriculum, but this planning is not consistently applied so pupils' progress over time is only satisfactory. The co-ordinator has no budget to support the development of resources but is planning for a greater emphasis on the subject in the future.

Religious Education.

133. Very few religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' work and teachers' records shows that there is good provision for the subject and that pupils achieve well and make good progress. Teachers follow a series of themes that provide a good focus for lessons and activities which pupils of all ages have access to. These themes provide a good range of learning opportunities which reflect the locally agreed syllabus, and are based on a published curriculum designed for pupils who are at an early stage of development.
134. Aspects of all world faiths are included in the themes and pupils have opportunities to gain a good understanding of different beliefs. These opportunities are enhanced when the school invites representatives from different faiths and groups into school and when teachers take pupils to visit places of worship. Teachers also provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to look at and handle a range of artefacts associated with the religions they study. For example, secondary age pupils dress in Indian clothing when the class studies Diwali. The traditions and festivals associated with different faiths are recognised and celebrated during the year. These are promoted further in the school by high quality displays in classrooms and public areas. These celebrations are remembered by pupils, who keep copies of their involvement in their personal achievement files.
135. The teaching of religious education is good. Teachers' records indicate that lessons are carefully planned so that activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and their level of understanding. This ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with additional special needs are effectively supported to make progress. In addition to formal lessons, pupils have a good opportunity to reflect quietly as a class group during 'candle-time', which is used to mark the beginning of each school session. The weekly school assembly also provides a good opportunity for shared worship and is used effectively to mark the celebration of religious and other festivals.

136. There are good plans to further develop the provision for religious education. At present the resources available are barely adequate. There are not enough to help pupils understand the traditions and objects associated with each faith studied.

