

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LIMINGTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

Basingstoke, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116614

Acting headteacher: Mr R Hendry

Reporting inspector: J Cook  
2351

Dates of inspection: 4 –7 February 2002

Inspection number: 191346

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community special
School category:	Severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties
Age range of pupils:	2 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Andrew's Road Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG22 6PS
Telephone number:	01256 322148
Fax number:	01256 358778
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Chris Eele
Date of previous inspection:	27 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31914	Colette Gribble	Team inspector	Music Post-16 Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20165	Alan Lemon	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs	
22391	Nick Smith	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Geography History	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a mixed, community, day special school for pupils aged 2 – 19 with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. The term 'pupil' will be used unless specifically referring to children of nursery or reception age or students older than Year 11. There are 80 pupils on roll, 54 boys and 26 girls, including nine part-time children in the nursery class. Almost all pupils are of white ethnicity and none has English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low at 21 per cent. Seventy-two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs; the remaining eight are in the process of assessment. Twenty per cent of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. A few pupils have additional special educational needs, including visual and hearing impairment. Attainment on entry is low and often very low.

Pupils travel to the school from the northern part of Hampshire. Since the last inspection the needs of the pupils have become more complex. The school is now based on one site only and the headteacher of many years retired in the term before the inspection. A temporary, acting headteacher has been appointed until the new headteacher joins the school in September 2002. There have been difficulties appointing temporary staff to replace staff on long-term sick leave.

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

Pupils at Limington House have very good attitudes towards their work and, on the whole, they are taught well. The school provides a sound education and, as a result, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. However, the progress is not consistent from class to class. Leadership and management are sound and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well. Their relationships with staff are excellent.
- Children of nursery and reception age make very good progress because they are taught very well.
- Pupils with the most difficult behaviour are helped to develop self-control through the knowledge and expertise of the specialist teacher and the positive way her staff respond to her guidance.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 10 and 11.
- The high levels of skill and expertise of the support staff and the very good teamwork of all staff are major factors in the quality of the teaching.

#### **What could be improved**

- The lack of consistency in the teaching of information and communication technology.
- A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning.
- The monitoring of the quality of the work of the school, including teaching.
- The time to enable senior staff to carry out their roles effectively.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Improvement since then has been satisfactory. In a number of instances, standards have been maintained, often at high levels. However, there are very few areas where there has been significant improvement and a few where progress is unsatisfactory. This is due largely to continuing weaknesses in monitoring the work of the school and to staffing difficulties. More recent and effective work by staff and the acting headteacher, and the appointment of the new headteacher, indicate a good capacity to improve successfully. The key issues from the last inspection, concerning accommodation and health and safety, have been satisfactorily improved largely through the school's moving to one site. Appropriate steps have been taken to deal with groupings of pupils, resulting in there being no separate classes for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school has improved provision for speech and language therapy, as far as it has been able, satisfactorily. For the remaining key issues, improvement is mixed. The curriculum is now suitable for all pupils and time has been agreed for each subject. Accreditation has been successfully introduced

for students in the further education classes. These improvements are satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory that religious education is not taught to students older than 16 and subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient time to carry out their roles. Senior staff do not have the time to carry out managerial roles effectively. These remain issues for this inspection. Steps have been successfully taken to ensure that support staff are included and kept informed, more notably since the appointment of the acting headteacher.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	A	B	B	B	very good A
Reading	A	B	B	B	good B
Writing	A	C	C	C	satisfactory C
Mathematics	A	C	C	D	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	B	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	B	B	B	

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

Targets have only recently been agreed for the school and it is too early to gauge whether they will be met. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately. Children in the nursery and reception class make very good progress because they are taught very well. The quality of teaching is an important factor in pupils making good progress in the class for pupils with very difficult behaviour, predominately Years 10 and 11 and in Years 1 and 2. Other pupils and the students make satisfactory progress. Staff expertise, the wide range of activities and particularly good facilities for hydrotherapy and swimming contribute towards the very good progress and achievement that pupils make in physical education. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in English, science, art and design, music and personal, social and health education. In other subjects, progress and achievement are satisfactory, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), where they are unsatisfactory. Last year, all students in their final year at the school achieved at least three awards. This year, the number of awards is set to increase but staff absence has caused elements of courses, including ICT, not being sufficiently included.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very high. Pupils with very difficult behaviour make great strides in learning to react in acceptable ways.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are happy to accept responsibility and they learn to co-operate well with each other. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality is good.



Pupils' very positive attitudes help them to learn effectively. They are considerate of each other and have notably good relationships with staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1–2	Years 3–6	Years 7–9	Years 10–11	Years 12–13
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very 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.*

On the whole, the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, it is not consistent. This is partly due to insufficient monitoring of lessons but also having to use temporary teachers to cover long-term staff sickness. As a result, there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning, and there are weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, science, and personal, social and health education. It is satisfactory in mathematics. Teaching is very good for physical education and unsatisfactory for ICT. The skills of communication and literacy are taught well and appropriately supported by the use of signing. As a result, pupils become more able to communicate effectively and they develop a real enjoyment of stories. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. The teamwork of teachers and support staff is a major factor in the overall good quality of teaching. This builds strong relationships with pupils, who do their best for the staff they work with. Almost all lessons are well planned and take appropriate account of the needs of all pupils. Staff are particularly good at dealing with the very difficult behaviour of a few of the pupils taught in the special class. These pupils improve their self-control and concentration and make good gains in their learning. Overall, the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is satisfactory. They are taught notably well in the classes for children of nursery and reception age and in Years 1, 2, 10 and 11. Often, pupils sustain levels of concentration for long periods because they are interested in activities. However, there are instances when there is not sufficient work planned for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. As a result pupils are not helped to make appropriate gains and interest is lost. Insufficient expertise in the teaching of ICT has led to unsatisfactory learning by pupils. Occasionally, the choice of activity is unsatisfactory and pupils find the work too easy.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory. There are now more subjects and greater content taught than at the last inspection. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception class is particularly good. Students in Year 11 and above study an increasing range of awards. Links with colleges are good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. It is very good for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff in the school place a strong emphasis on caring for the pupils. Personal and social development is monitored and evaluated well. Procedures for monitoring progress are satisfactory.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are appropriately included in what is taught. The personal, social and health education programme is good and plays an important part in developing pupils' attitudes and values. Students have a relevant curriculum that prepares them appropriately for when they leave school. It does not, however, include religious education at present. There is a good

range of specialist approaches to help meet special educational needs of pupils. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are not consistent. Some good work is developing in the use of 'P' scales as a basis for setting targets and gauging progress. Links with parents are good and they are supportive of the school and its aims. Steps are being taken to give parents more regular information about how their children are getting on at school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management are satisfactory, due largely to the work of the acting headteacher. Other key staff have too much to do and not enough time to carry out their roles. Staffing difficulties have exacerbated this.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors perform a satisfactory role. The chair of governors has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are a few statutory requirements not being met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There has been little monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school until recently. Plans to monitor teaching on a regular basis have not been carried out.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources satisfactorily but is overcautious in financial planning. There is now a clear recognition that funds need to be used to increase the number of teachers.

Successful steps have been taken by the acting headteacher to improve the work of the school, including establishing effective lines of communication with all the staff. The senior management team has been enlarged and time for monitoring work is planned. The accommodation is adequate for the needs of the pupils. There is good provision of a new hydrotherapy/swimming pool. Resources are satisfactory, although there are too few computers. The numbers of teaching and support staff were adequate at the time of the inspection to meet the needs of the pupils when all staff are present. There are indications that this is a temporary sufficiency because numbers in the nursery and reception class are due to rise; the class for pupils with challenging behaviour is at maximum capacity and the complexity of the needs of the pupils is steadily increasing. While the school tries to obtain good value in purchases, the principles of best value are not systematically applied.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Good quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and they are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them and they feel able to approach the school with suggestions or complaints.</li> <li>• The school provides a suitable range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant proportion are concerned about the provision of work to do at home.</li> <li>• A few considered they did not have sufficient information on their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agreed with the positive comments. They also agreed that communication procedures need to be improved and the provision of work at home needs to be more consistent. Work to be reinforced at home is recorded in a number of home-school books and work is set if parents ask. However, there is not a clear policy to guide staff.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately, which is a result of the high standard of most of the teaching but also reflects current staffing difficulties and a lack of consistency in ensuring that learning builds on what is learnt from one year to the next. While this represents an overall deterioration from judgements made against a narrow curriculum at the last inspection, it is not as clear cut as it may seem. There have been significant changes, including a considerable broadening of what is taught. Additionally, the progress made by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has improved significantly from poor to satisfactory by disbanding the classes where they were taught together and including pupils in their appropriate age range. Pupils with very difficult (challenging) behaviour taught in a special class represent most of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 and their progress has improved significantly. The progress of pupils in the nursery and reception class has improved to very good and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. However, progress remains at satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and, partly through changes in staff, falls to satisfactory between Years 3 and 6. While many improvements have been made for students in the further education classes, their progress has also been impeded through staffing difficulties. While they make good progress in a number of areas, their progress overall remains much the same as at the last inspection at satisfactory.
2. Work charting pupils' progress using performance (P) levels from a published scheme is developing well but is in the early stages. Pupils' levels are recorded in each of the elements of English, mathematics and personal and social education. Work is also being undertaken in science. For a number of pupils, small gains are significant but do not always raise levels so there is recognition that clearer and more detailed inter-level descriptions are needed. School targets for 75 per cent of the population to meet personal targets expressed in 'P' levels are not due to be evaluated until the end of the academic year. Pupils' progress against appropriately difficult targets on Individual Education Plans is good.
3. There is no measurable difference between the progress made by boys and girls or between that of the two non-white pupils and others. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with additional special educational needs are making satisfactory progress overall and most are making good progress in relation to targets on their Individual Education Plans. This is an improvement since the last inspection and illustrates the successful drive to include pupils in age-appropriate classes.
4. Children have a very good start to their education because of the very high quality of the provision in the class for nursery and reception children. They make very good progress in all the areas of learning. Their ability to concentrate and work with others is much improved. By the time they join class 2, their communication skills have developed very well and many identify colours and count by rote. They are well prepared to learn about National Curriculum subjects through the very good progress they have made in improving their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development. Students in the further education classes are making satisfactory progress towards awards from the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) National Skills Profile (NSP) and the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) scheme. Many of the students from Year 12 onwards have already achieved success in modules. Last year, all four students who left at the end of the year gained awards from either or both of the award bodies. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when no awards were gained. The number of awards the students study is increasing. It is not possible to make comparisons between the achievements of one year's leavers with the next. This is because there are very small numbers of students each year and the levels of their needs vary considerably.

5. Pupils' gains in literacy skills are good. They are making good progress in improving their speaking and listening and their reading skills. Staff are very good at taking time to develop communication skills and to improve understanding of vocabulary. Many pupils develop a basic signing vocabulary and the use of the Picture Exchange and Communication System (PECS) is being developed, although at present it is not used consistently in all classes. Regular reading sessions, including stories using the senses, whole-class sessions with a big book and individual or small group sessions develop an enjoyment of books. Pupils make satisfactory progress in improving their writing skills. This area receives less emphasis than other aspects of English and the support of ICT is not used sufficiently to help pupils. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are making only satisfactory progress in English because temporary staffing is beginning to slow progress. The oldest students communicate clearly and listen attentively, for example to instructions when at college, learning about painting and decorating. Reading skills continue to improve, including interest in pictures and sensory stories, interpreting symbols and reading simple text. More able students record information.
6. In mathematics, and in improving numeracy skills, pupils make satisfactory progress. However, students in the further education classes are making unsatisfactory progress because they are repeating work at the same level as they were set in Year 11. By the time they leave school, more able students count accurately and order numbers. Most know the days of the week, although some need help to sequence them accurately. Many know the value of coins. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education.
7. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in physical education. By the time they leave school students have an awareness of working with others and many have improved their physical skills and understanding of leisure opportunities. Pupils' progress is good in science, art and design, and music. Apart from students in the further education classes, pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. However, students in the further education classes cannot make progress because it is not taught. Pupils' progress is also satisfactory overall in design and technology, geography and history. Their achievement and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

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

8. Parents are confident that their children enjoy attending school. This is clear from pupils' smiling faces as they greet the staff in the mornings. When they cannot attend, parents comment, their children are upset. As at the last inspection, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They concentrate and listen well in lessons, often giving attention for longer periods of time than would be expected. For example, younger pupils, in physical education lessons, concentrate very well on what the teacher is saying and wait patiently for their turn during circuit training. They take a great delight in achieving their own personal best. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties try hard to follow instructions - for example, to lift their heads, to touch and feel textures or to watch a moving light. Pupils are proud of awards they gain from their efforts. Students are pleased to show their records of achievement, indicating why they have received awards and talking about photographs that are included.
9. Pupils' behaviour both in and out of class is very good and, at times, it is excellent. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when behaviour was good. There continue to be no exclusions and pupils that transfer to Limington House having been excluded from their previous schools make very good progress in improving their behaviour. Pupils with very challenging behaviour make significant gains in learning to develop self-control. They become more compliant to staff requests and moderate actions that would disturb other pupils' learning. They learn to sit with a group and listen carefully to what others are saying.
10. The quality of relationships throughout the school is excellent. There is no bullying. Indeed, the pupils go out of their way to help each other, often unbidden. They assist in completing jigsaws, help with lunch boxes and take care not to get in each other's way in, for example, physical education activities with parachutes. There are excellent relationships between pupils in the same class and between pupils of different ages and this contributes to the warm atmosphere of the

whole school. Pupils trust the staff who work with them and persevere to please them. They learn to share equipment and co-operate when, for example, producing a large piece of art work. Children with ASD in the nursery and reception class become more able to tolerate working with staff and other children. One pupil played happily with cars alongside another and, for a short period, with another child filled and emptied containers in the sand tray.

11. Older pupils and students develop more adult attitudes. They learn to cope well in new social settings such as the school dining rooms, at large sporting events or visits to such places as museums. Students relate well to adults and other young people during their visits to leisure centres, swimming pools and colleges. As they enter buildings, students are orderly and well mannered and conduct themselves in a mature, responsible manner, offering help and encouragement to less able students. They greet visitors to their classes appropriately. Pupils willingly accept responsibility. For example, they take registers to the secretary and help to prepare and serve drinks at break times. Even the youngest children help clear up what they have been doing. One reception age child was seen putting the recording notes made by the support assistant away in the correct place on a shelf.
12. Attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory. The rate of attendance has decreased since the last inspection but last year, at just over 91 percent, is in line with similar schools nationally. Absences are mainly due to illness and medical reasons, though a few parents take their children on holiday in term time. There is no unauthorised absence, reflecting the good relationships with parents resulting in their providing reasons for their children not being at school. The great majority of pupils arrive on time in the morning, though a few are late by up to five or ten minutes owing to traffic problems.

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

13. The high quality of teaching and learning has been broadly maintained since the last inspection. Amongst the overall good quality of teaching and learning there is a substantial amount that is very good and occasionally excellent. In lessons where it is good or excellent, they are planned exceptionally well to ensure that all the pupils in the class have appropriate and sufficiently difficult activities and they make very good gains in their learning. Expectations of what pupils will achieve are set at appropriately high levels so pupils consistently achieve very well. Although staff put in a great deal of hard work and care into preparing lessons, this does not always result in the high quality of teaching and learning they strive for: in a number of lessons, the teaching and learning are merely satisfactory and in a few they are unsatisfactory. This reflects the lack of monitoring and the consequent provision of appropriate help for staff to improve the quality of their work. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators have not had time to help colleagues improve their work adequately.
14. The best quality of the teaching and learning that is of consistently very high quality is in the classes for children of nursery age to Year 2 and the special class for pupils with challenging behaviour, which is predominately Year 10. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In these classes, there is very clear provision to ensure that the wide range of needs of the pupils is met very well. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are included in group activities through the effective use of resources that are colourful, tactile, make a noise or otherwise stimulate their senses. The use of appropriate equipment increases their active participation. For example, in music sessions, children make sounds using bells strapped to their wrists, by moving a 'necklace' of large wooden blocks, by drumming with their feet and feeling the vibrations of the large drum. The children understand they can make sounds and many put a great deal of effort into the activity. Staff are flexible in the way they work, at times on a one-to-one basis with a pupil or in a small or larger grouping. They are constantly checking for responses and they prompt, reinforce and ensure that pupils are able to gain sense of what is being learned. In a Year 10 science lesson, staff deftly turning off items being used consolidated pupils' understanding of the need for a piece of equipment to be switched on. Pupils knew to switch on at the plug and on the electric fan, tape-recorder and hairdryer they were using to make them work again. This activity was turned into a game with comments such as 'Oh no!' and much laughter when the power supply was interrupted. Pupils are skilfully given activities that they find interesting, exciting and, often, fun. As a result they learn well and make good progress.
15. Pupils' behaviour is almost always dealt with effectively. In the special class for pupils with challenging behaviour, staff draw up and invariably follow very effective behaviour plans.



Procedures are followed and expectations clearly stated. When a pupil persisted in trying to tell the teacher about an incident at lunchtime, the message was crystal clear and repeated three times that it would be discussed later. Then the teacher moved the class to the teaching area and started the lesson. The pupil had no option but to follow and join in. Staff remind pupils of their behaviour targets to help them to improve and this works well. Behaviour is also improved very well in the nursery and reception class and in the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Instructions are very clear, so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Staff also skilfully distract pupils from unacceptable activities. For example, demonstrating to a child a new and interesting construction kit capable of making creatures with very long and flexible necks successfully took his mind off the reading book he was clutching.

16. The very high quality of the team work of teaching and support staff is a major factor in pupils' effective learning. Support staff are very skilled; they are very clear about the needs and capabilities of the pupils they work with. They build excellent relationships with pupils, which leads pupils to try their best to please staff. Pupils rise to challenges because they are confident that they would not be asked to do something that was beyond their capacity. For example, a child in the nursery and reception class who had not been confident about the names of colours clearly identified the yellow truck accurately and placed his name on it. Staff are very skilled in communicating with the pupils. Many are proficient in signing, which helps to reinforce what they are saying to pupils. They are well briefed about the activities they are expected to do and many also record the progress that pupils are making with them. Very little time is wasted when pupils have to be moved from one activity to another. For example, at the beginning of a lesson, pupils are often taught together as a class, then often they divide into groups using different parts of the room. Staff work together, helping each other to move non-ambulant pupils. Effective classroom routines ensure that other pupils know what to do and with a minimum of direction. Occasionally, this does not work well. In one instance, all pupils had to move, which took time to achieve, and the classroom layout meant that pupils were too close together. Pupils were distracted by the actions of their neighbours and learning was slowed.
17. There has been an improvement in the teaching and the learning of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to satisfactory, since the last inspection. Staff use different techniques successfully to involve these pupils. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on 'large' and 'small', the teacher used a favourite toy, a large teddy bear, to gain and keep interest. During a Year 14 art lesson, a pupil was supported effectively to complete the same activity as the rest of the class, that of painting a mask. In a few instances, lessons are not planned to take into account the special needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils are inactive for long periods. For example, during a lesson on food technology in Years 8 and 9, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties had little support to participate and were not well positioned or prompted to watch the activities of others. Although this class has a wide range of ability to plan for, there is a lack of expertise in providing appropriate learning activities for these pupils. For instance, there was no provision or planned approach for support assistants to support particular pupils. There is also a lack of expertise in using ICT. While it is used well in a few classes, it is not used effectively in others. Staff have yet to complete necessary training. Staff are not confident in modifying the National Numeracy Strategy and it is not as effective as it should be in improving pupils' achievements. As a result, the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, whereas the teaching of literacy is good.
18. Teaching and support staff have gained expertise in the use of a modified Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Related Handicapped Children (TEACCH) approach, which is proving effective in many classes in helping pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Where it is used well, staff frequently refer pupils to their timetable or schedule and work is very strictly organised to give the support necessary. Pupils are comfortable with the routine, which provided the conditions for them to learn. The PECS is not used so well to help pupils. This has not been in use for long and staff are yet to feel confident using the system throughout their work, where it is appropriate for pupils. The PECS is often used at snack time but not consistently during other activities.

19. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to build pupils' self-esteem so they make greater strides in their learning. The few instances when negative comments are made by staff are usually the result of inappropriate work that does not sufficiently gain and/or keep the attention of the pupil or pupils concerned. Occasionally, too much time was spent on unexciting activities or there was no adequate link between the way in which the subject is taught and the real world - for example, using money to purchase items.

20. In the nursery and reception class there is detailed recording, notably in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, which is used to plan the next stage of teaching. Evaluations of progress, for example, following a music session recorded appropriate information to help children improve. Good use of check sheets and recording sheets by support staff in many lessons is used effectively, particularly to chart progress in relation to targets on Individual Education Plans.
21. Teaching and learning are very good in physical education because staff have high levels of expertise. As a result, pupils are able to participate in a wide range of activities. The grouping arrangements for pupils from Year 7 onwards for physical education and English are used well by teachers to plan work where pupils apply good levels of effort and concentration. Teaching and learning are good in English, science, art and design, geography, music, religious education and personal and social education. They are satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology and history. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in ICT.

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

22. The curriculum is satisfactory, overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the curriculum was too narrow and time spent on each subject was unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, an appropriate range of subjects is now taught with adequate time spent on each. At present, however, religious education is not taught to students over 16, as required.
23. Children in the nursery and reception class are taught a very good curriculum based on the areas of learning from the Foundation Curriculum. This gives them a good start to their education. Excellent learning programmes are devised for each child for communication, language and learning and for mathematical development, which are very effective in helping them all learn successfully. Topic work, currently on transport, provides very good opportunities for areas of learning to be taught together. Many children and pupils from Years 1 and 2 go horse riding with Riding for the Disabled. This is very effective in improving physical and personal and social development.
24. The curriculum for students in the further education classes is satisfactory, overall. However, at present, there is a lack of religious education teaching and the curriculum for mathematics is unsatisfactory because it does not build adequately on what students have learned in previous classes. The curriculum is relevant and well based on preparation for adulthood and related to the world of work. It includes a well-chosen range of accreditation based on the OCR National Skills Profile and the ALL awards. Vocational training is provided at a horticultural therapy centre. More able students attend a day a week during their final year at the school. All other final year students attend 'taster' sessions each term rather than having a regular commitment at the same centre. The centre provides work-related experiences successfully for a number of students. Every attempt is made to ensure that pupils' particular needs are met. For example, this is the third year one student has attended horticultural college because of his special interest. As a result he has gained a place at a horticultural college when he leaves school. Students in the further education classes attend college for a day a week for 20 weeks. They follow a rolling programme of painting and decorating this year, then car mechanics and then joinery. This is a further accredited course where students work towards a certificate in Key Skills. A new course, 'Moving On', is being piloted to broaden the range of accreditation further. The increase in accreditation and the further education links are an improvement since the last inspection. Students are given opportunities to join in activities at lunchtime, including pool and snooker competitions.
25. The school has good links with local schools as well as colleges. A special school uses the pool each week and students attend the Jubilee club at a mainstream school. The nursery and reception class have just established a connection with a playgroup for a few of their children to come to Limington House for a session and children from the school to go to the playgroup. No

pupils are being integrated into other schools at present, although this has occurred with some pupils, who benefit from the experience. Effective procedures to ease transition from one school to another have successfully helped three children transfer from the nursery and reception class to other schools recently.

26. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are appropriately included when planning what is to be taught. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have the requirement to study a modern foreign language removed in their Statements of Special Educational Needs. Their experiences are, however, widened by the occasional inclusion of such events as a 'French Day' where they sample French food, listen to French music and learn about the country. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and is a major improvement on the position at the time of the previous inspection. A newly introduced scheme of work provides a very good development of aspects such as attitudes, citizenship, health and relationships for all year groups. Pupils' development is particularly effective because of the continuous emphasis on teaching the subject. Each class has specific timetabled sessions as well as opportunities taken during other lessons and at times such as break and lunchtime. Sex education and education on drug misuse are taught mostly on an individual basis following careful consideration of individual needs. A full-time school nurse and a local police constable give additional help in these areas. There is appropriate support from the careers service both at and following the transitional reviews of progress.
27. Steps have been taken since the last inspection to provide appropriate and equal opportunities for all pupils. Virtually all pupils are now taught in age appropriate groupings. The occasional instance when, for example, a student may not be taught in the further education, classes this is because the improvement of challenging behaviours is the major objective. Plans are drawn up to gradually integrate such students into the further education provision
28. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory throughout the school. There is an appropriate range of strategies to help pupils learn. The use of TEACCH is proving beneficial for pupils with ASD to help them have a structure to their day. PECS has been recently introduced to help pupils begin to communicate. This works particularly well at snack times but is not yet used consistently in every class. Communication is further enhanced through the use of Makaton signing. Movement Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) programmes are devised for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and help them develop their physical skills effectively. The provision for pupils with very difficult behaviour is particularly good in a special class where the emphasis is on improving behaviour as part of learning. There is an increasing number of pupils throughout the school with profound and multiple learning difficulties that require teaching based on using the senses and appropriate additional specialist support to make progress. This is done very well in classes 1, 2 and 7. All teachers use the Snoozelen and soft play area effectively.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils attend class-based activities during lunch break and go to the local Jubilee Centre and a local comprehensive school for after-school activities such as climbing and discos. A local policeman organises rugby club practices. The caravan owned by the school and bought with funds raised by parents is visited regularly during the season. There is a good range of residential experiences including stays at Butlins and in the caravan in the New Forest and skiing trips abroad, last year to Austria. There are also visits to shows, local theatres and concerts. A number of visitors to the school have shown pupils and students how to create music from Africa and to make models and meals from other countries. A theatre group involved some pupils in every stage of a theatrical production. During extra-curricular activities, staff ensure that all pupils are included by providing appropriate help for those who need it.
30. The curriculum is enriched through links with the community. Facilities are used well to widen the range of experiences for pupils. For example, the use of a local bowling alley effectively develops good social skills and staff and friends from other local groups greet students warmly. They take part in good-natured competitions, which involve much excitement and genuine delight as they play to win and encourage each other without prompting. Local parks and shops are

used on a regular basis. The variety of activities available enhances the curriculum and makes it more relevant to their individual needs.

31. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is good and provision for pupils' moral and social education is very good.
32. Pupils take an active part in school assemblies, during which they take part in acts of collective worship, thanking God for his blessings and gifts. Time is allocated in assemblies and at the end of the school day to allow pupils and students to reflect on things that have occurred during the day. Music and candles are used well in creating a focus and a calm atmosphere. For example, following an energetic physical education lesson, a group of Year 4 pupils returned to class and settled, responding positively to the atmosphere created with very good behaviour and readiness to be quiet. There is a good celebration of how well they have done and the day ends with a song and a cheer. In the class for nursery and reception children, staff provide activities that surprise, amaze and excite pupils, for example exploring the beauty and colours of bubbles blown from the bubble machine. Other pupils are asked to think about the best things they did during the day and to appreciate the wonders of nature by reflecting on the beauty of a rose. The calm and caring environment of the school promotes in the pupils a respect for themselves and others.
33. The provision for moral education is very good. A clear moral code is provided as a basis for behaviour, which is promoted throughout the school. Nursery and reception age children are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong and are given good reasons for this behaviour, for example not to swing on the bead curtain because it is unsafe. Pupils are encouraged to move around the school unsupervised and to behave responsibly, carrying out tasks appropriately. Pupils are made aware of school rules and given a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. Staff provide very good role models for pupils and encourage them to be tolerant and caring towards each other. They praise positive attitudes, as they did, for example, when one lunchtime, pupils expressed concern when one of their group began to feel unwell. Certificates of achievement celebrate kindness and sharing as well as good work. In Year 10, targets include co-operating within a group, ignoring teasing and volunteering to wash up. Older pupils are also expected to evaluate honestly how they have completed jobs that they have volunteered to undertake. All pupils have been involved in raising funds for charities including Comic Relief and the Jesus for Lepers Appeal.
34. Pupils' social education is very good. They are expected to be courteous, considerate and polite to one another, to staff and to visitors. They are encouraged to show their work in class and to be proud of their achievements. Staff help pupils spend their breaks and lunchtimes in a friendly, relaxed way, either playing games in the playground or listening to music and chatting in classrooms. Pupils are given responsibility within classrooms to undertake various jobs. They collect coats, make drinks lists and prepare and distribute snacks. Lessons are planned with activities where pupils have to work co-operatively as part of a group. They are expected to borrow and lend equipment, which they do very well. There has also been rugby coaching where the pupils learn teamwork and co-operation. Social opportunities for older pupils are provided through work experience and college courses. More able students are often used as mentors for younger pupils in school. This not only sets a good example to younger pupils but also engenders responsibility and promotes self-worth among the students. The school has high expectations of how students conduct themselves in and out of school.
35. The school aims to make pupils aware of the multiracial society in which they live by providing practical activities that will enable them to develop understanding and respect for others. This is done particularly well as there are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups in the school. Cultural provision is good. In a Year 10 and 11 class, there are displays of African masks and Australian sand paintings. A Year 8 class has a display of paintings by Monet. The school has performed African music at the local theatre and celebrated this with an impressive wall display entitled "Limington House African Band". Music from a variety of cultures, including British, is played at assembly and during reflection time in classrooms. The nursery and reception class

currently listen to pieces including 'The Floral Dance' and 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles' at the end of their music sessions. The festivals of different faiths have also been celebrated in classes and assemblies. Last term, Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 went to Winchester Cathedral for the Christmas service.

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

36. Staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, which is seen as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and the monitoring of pupils' personal development makes a good contribution to raising pupils' achievement. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory. These findings are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
37. The school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The knowledge of the staff has improved since the last inspection, with all staff having up-to-date guidance on what to look for and how to deal with any situations that may arise. The school has carried out risk assessments on such areas as moving children and use of the swimming pool. The various weaknesses concerning health and safety in the last inspection report have been dealt with. However, others were noticed during the inspection and details passed to the headteacher. These included, for example, pupils being lifted or moved in an inappropriate way, a number of electrical items having no stickers to indicate they have been tested and, more importantly, the school could not find a copy of any whole-school risk assessment. The school recognises this needs to be dealt with quickly, and is seeking guidance from the local authority's health and safety adviser. The health and safety policy has not been reviewed since the school moved to one site.
38. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory but lack consistency throughout the school. There are very good procedures for assessing and recording children's progress in the different areas of learning in the nursery and reception class. A good assessment is recorded on entry to the school, which includes reference to Portage where this service is involved with the child. These are used very effectively to plan activities and to modify programmes of work for individual children. A booklet required to be completed by the local authority is unhelpful and rarely used to plan work. In other years the teachers make a good assessment of pupils' progress in numeracy and literacy. In particular, the school has refined the national scheme of assessment to have a sharper measure of progress between each 'P' level. These procedures are planned to be extended to all subject areas. It is planned to assess at the end of each term. In the meantime the way assessments are made varies. In some subjects, such as music, formal assessment may not take place at all. This reflects the lack of monitoring of developments. In the further education classes, students work towards a range of accreditation and, last year for example, all students received at least one award. Individual Education Plans are of good quality and directly related to the needs of the students. Overall, teachers make satisfactory use of the assessment information to decide how pupils should be grouped and as an aid to planning lessons so that more precise targeted support is provided to each pupil. The reports for the annual reviews provide a good summary of progress over the year and show the attainment level and clear forward plans for the next stage of development in literacy, numeracy, science and personal development. However, the statements of progress in other subjects often record experiences rather than improvements in learning.
39. The procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development are very good throughout the school and have improved since the last inspection. The Individual Education Plans include such aspects as attitudes, relationships and independence and the assessment of progress includes grades for this personal development. The teachers and support staff in the classroom have a good understanding of the abilities and needs of all the pupils. Lessons include a wide range of activities to improve personal qualities. These include helping pupils to acquire independence where possible by helping them to move around the school without direct

supervision, for example to go to the toilet or to take the register to the office. Co-operation develops through structured activities, with pupils working in small teams to, for example, make sandwiches and in larger groups in team games. An awareness of the wider world is encouraged through collections for charity and by visits around the local area and further afield.

40. For most pupils, the reviews of their Statements of Special Educational Needs takes place annually. The process is appropriate and brings together well information on progress and the views of parents, staff and other professionals who may be involved. However, in a few cases the dates have slipped and in one instance a two-year period separated reviews. This is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements.
41. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are very good and show improvement since the last inspection. The behaviour policy concentrates on praising appropriate behaviour. Throughout the school staff invariably use a consistent approach in their dealings with pupils. Discussions with older pupils and students showed that they are aware of class rules and can quote ones such as not fighting and using the computer properly. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with well. Individual behaviour plans are very effective in helping pupils with difficult behaviour to improve and records show an extremely high level of success. There are effective links with the educational psychology service, which gives very good support in helping to deal with pupils with challenging behaviour. They have also helped in the work on the 'P' scales.
42. As at the time of the last inspection, the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The good relationships established with parents result in pupils wanting to come to school and parents usually provide reasons if their children are not able to attend. Any unexplained absence causes the school to telephone home on the first day. The education social worker visits the school regularly to check the registers. Nevertheless, the school has not set any targets for improvement in the attendance and does not produce any statistics each half term, say, to provide early warning of any deterioration in the level.

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

43. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors almost all parents showed that they are very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments, which are similar to those made at the time of the previous inspection. Parents feel the school works closely with them and they are comfortable approaching the school with any questions. While many consider that they are well informed about how well their children are doing, a few commented they would like more regular information. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of homework and the inspectors conclude that the variation in the use of the home-school books leads to inconsistent opportunities for parents to know how to help their children at home. There is no policy to guide staff and to inform parents what to expect for their children.
44. At the time of the previous inspection the school had established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. In the nursery and reception class, the contacts with parents are very good. There is a good booklet for parents giving them useful information about the class. Home-school books are regularly written in by staff and usually by parents. Programmes showing what pupils will be learning over the next term are sent home so parents feel well informed and able to help their children. An annual report of each pupil's progress is sent to parents and this highlights the child's successes in school and at home effectively. Overall, throughout the rest of the school the amount of information that is sent home is satisfactory. The main source of regular information is the home-school book, the use of which varies considerably both between and within classes. At their best, they record a continuing dialogue between parents and teaching staff, with good information each day on what the student has and will be doing and provides guidance on how parents can help at home. A number of parents describe what their children have done over the weekend; this is useful to the teacher on the Monday morning to encourage pupils to talk about their news. However, while several classes use it well, some provide only

limited information, sometimes on only one or two days each week. Parents are also encouraged to telephone the school and each classroom has a telephone to facilitate contacting the teacher. Newsletters have gone home infrequently, though the school has recently started to send such general information more regularly. Meetings between parents and teacher take place once a year to review the Statement of Special Educational Needs and the Individual Education Plans. Information for parents concerning the progress of their children is good for the main subjects but unsatisfactory for the others because for these they concentrate more on what a pupil has experienced and what they like rather than the skills and understanding acquired. The school recently sent its own questionnaire to parents, the great majority of whom responded that overall the school's communication is good. As in the questionnaire for the inspection, a few parents suggested improvements. The school is already actively considering a second formal meeting each year between parents and teachers, a more consistent use of the home-school book and more frequent newsletters.

45. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the progress of the pupils. Pupils' positive attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. The review meetings are well attended by parents. The programme of activities from the nursery enables them to understand how they can help at home. Additionally, the planning section of the annual reviews also provides guidance for parents. The home-school books show that parents are keen to help their children. The Parent-Teacher Association is very supportive, arranging both fund-raising and social events. Two parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis.

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

46. Leadership and management reach the level of being satisfactory largely as a result of the positive influence of the recently appointed acting headteacher. The quality of communications with staff has improved because regular briefings have been introduced and staff are kept up to date on school developments. As a consequence they are more positive and their morale is better. Classroom assistants drew attention to this, saying that with the arrival of the acting headteacher they feel noticed and appreciated. At the time of the last inspection, communications and relationships between the senior managers were poor and this has now been remedied satisfactorily. However, the school has no better a sense of its educational direction, which was lacking at the time of the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's aims, which are not very refined in terms of the specific educational provisions that best serve the wide range of its pupils. Nor do the aims give sufficient cohesion to developing the inclusive curriculum for which there are relevant national guidelines. Some new provisions are being developed that relate to these guidelines. For example, in recognition of the increasing population of pupils with challenging behaviour a bid was prepared to offer an outreach facility using the expertise built up at the school. This is on hold at present. The monitoring of pupils' performance, based on attainment levels set out in 'P' scales and the National Curriculum, has generated useful information over three years but the school has been slow to translate these data into school performance targets, although it is now poised to do so. The co-ordinator for mathematics, for example, has done some impressive analysis highlighting a few pupils progressing less than expected and others progressing more. However, the co-ordinator has no time at present to investigate the circumstances giving rise to this and therefore no gain in terms of developing educational provision.
47. The scope for staff with management responsibilities to exercise them is too limited and unsatisfactory. It was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, so there has been too little improvement. Essentially, what is expected from managers lacks clarity and there is not a tight system of accountability for their areas of responsibility and the developments within them. There is too little pace for driving the school forward. The time needed to be a manager is frustrated by, for example, daily contingencies such as standing in for absent colleagues and being overloaded with other work. The deputy headteacher is, for instance, in charge of a class, and the lower school manager is responsible for the school's curriculum and co-ordinates mathematics throughout the school. The role of the deputy headteacher was problematic at the



time of the last inspection and the need seen then for a clear role in helping lead and manage the school has not been achieved. Managers of the upper and lower school are a recent refinement, which is working well, and these roles are taken seriously. With very limited time to do so, the upper school manager has worked hard in generating ideas and teamwork towards developing its identity as a secondary school. Governors received a report on the aims. However, proposals for improvement are not yet in the form of a development plan.

48. Following the last inspection, a number of changes have been made successfully that have improved standards. Much work has been done to increase regular sessions of speech and language therapy for pupils. Although there is still not as much as the school would wish, the lack of therapists restricts further expansion of time. The move to one site has helped to unify the school and provide much improved accessibility for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to all the further education classrooms. Decisions to teach pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in age appropriate groups to meet the requirements of a key issue concerning their lack of progress at the last inspection have been implemented satisfactorily.
49. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is unsatisfactory. It is an obvious casualty when too many priorities are competing for the limited time available to the senior staff. The school has also been unable to attach a greater priority to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. While much happens at an informal level between staff that counts reasonably as checks on how well the school is working, it is not systematic enough to guarantee that appropriate action will or can be taken where improvements are needed. A good and effective paper monitoring exercise carried out in 2001 has both helped staff to set tight targets on IEPs and led to the provision of a revised IEP form which is more teacher friendly. However, this took longer than expected to complete through other calls being made on staff time. As teaching is not observed, the requirements of the school's performance management policy cannot be met. The local education authority inspection and advisory service has been very supportive in auditing and reporting on key aspects of the school's provision. Several reports provide issues for action to improve provision but evidence shows that these have not been acted on effectively. In relation to pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, for example, they recommended a year ago, in order to overcome inconsistencies between teachers in providing for these pupils, focused observations to track autistic pupils, but these did not take place.
50. Governors play a satisfactory part in supporting the school and in meeting their statutory responsibilities, although there is an outstanding problem with the lack of religious education teaching for students in the further education classes. Additionally, a number of annual reviews have not been held within the required timescale. Governors have a good understanding of the school's current point of development and a high aspiration for the school to improve. They realise that this needs a strong leader in charge and are very optimistic that their recent appointment of a permanent headteacher is an important step. They know that the headteacher will need to inspire staff and create a shared sense of purpose in order to begin the process of moving the school forward. It is clear that the staff have achieved a great deal without adequate time. The governors were alerted to previous shortcomings in the leadership and management of the school from the process of the school's application for Investor in People status, although this only confirmed what was in the previous inspection report.
51. The day-to-day running of the school is smooth. Administrative staff are efficient and help to make the school welcoming and friendly. The school uses its resources satisfactorily. Budget setting is a cautious process, with the main priority on achieving balance at the end of each financial year. However, there is some over-caution involved in that the school has accumulated a sizeable surplus of funds, which it explains as having been left over from when the school changed from boarding to day provision. The school spends less than its income annually. Its surplus has grown in the last two years and is projected to increase again this year. While it is intended that the surplus be used to fund the developments set as priorities in the strategic development plan, this is not planned effectively. The shortcomings in the school's educational direction and in its aims take the sharp focus out of school development planning. There are too many objectives and many of them require a significant element of staff reviewing an aspect of the school's work, which the school is not well equipped to do. There is no priority for buying

additional staff time to complete the many reviews planned. Although, steps are now being taken to use funds to increase the number of teachers. The school's finances are administered well and information is readily available on the state of the budget at regular points throughout the year. The governors' finance committee is supplied with the information but only recently have the senior staff taken a sufficiently close interest in the figures. The detailed records on the disposal of additional grants received by the school show that they have been used effectively for their various purposes. Reasonable care is taken to obtain good value, particularly on costly items, and comparisons of costs for services are made before agreements are entered into. However, the principles of best value are not applied systematically to overall expenditure.

52. The school has an adequate number of teachers, when all are present, and support staff to match the demands of the curriculum for the school population at the time of the inspection. However, staff are fully stretched, notably in the nursery and reception class where more children are expected to be admitted soon, and in the class for pupils with challenging behaviour, which already has nine pupils. Indications are that the complexity of needs of the pupils is increasing and, as a result, there is a requirement for increased staffing to meet the needs. The range of teachers' qualifications is sufficient for the age range of pupils throughout the school. Teachers are supported well by classroom assistants and in general the school meets its aim of having two assistants in each classroom. This usually ensures that pupils are given sufficient attention, although occasionally, because a lesson plans lacks focus, some pupils are overlooked, especially pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Teachers and their assistants have been trained in meeting the range of special educational needs in the school, in, for example, approaches for teaching autistic pupils. This has been assimilated very effectively by some teachers, but not all. The school has a basic induction programme for new staff and new teachers receive a reasonable introduction to the school when they arrive.
53. The accommodation is satisfactory, which is an improvement on the last inspection. The classrooms are spacious and the staff work hard to provide attractive displays of pupils' work and appropriate information, though there is a lack of sensory material on display. Specialist areas provide extra experiences for the students, including a design and technology room, a Snoozelen and a soft play room and a very impressive new hydrotherapy/swimming pool. The further education block is separate from the main building and provides pleasant seating and games areas, which are well used by the oldest students at lunchtimes. However, the games area is planned to be used for the library. The shortage of storage areas for resources means that corridors have to contain cupboards and shelving units, making movement around the building more difficult. The outside areas provide both playgrounds and grassed areas and include climbing equipment and seating. Pupils and staff make efficient and effective use of the facilities available and there is good support from the premises staff in providing a pleasing and well-maintained environment.
54. Overall, the provision of resources is satisfactory, a position similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Resources for English are very good. The library books are distributed around the classrooms but each teacher knows which books are where. The resources for science, art, physical education, and religious education are good. However, resources for ICT are unsatisfactory.

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

55. In order to improve the quality of education and the pupils' progress the governors, acting headteacher, newly appointed headteacher and staff should:
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in ICT by:
    - improving the co-ordination of the subject;
    - developing policies for ICT and for safe Internet access;
    - developing a scheme of work that staff can use at appropriate levels for individual pupils;
    - providing a system to record achievements so that staff can build on what is already learnt;

- purchase more computers, appropriate software and peripherals.  
(Paragraphs 7, 17, 21, 54, 65, 68, 91, 95, 98, 102 – 109)
- Improve the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that monitoring procedures are carried out;
  - using the 'P' scales effectively to track pupils' progress.  
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 38, 46, 49, 50, 84, 98)
- Increase the monitoring of the work of the school by:
  - ensuring that it includes a regular programme of lesson observations;
  - enabling subject co-ordinators to have time to take an active role by increasing the level of staffing.  
(Paragraphs 13, 46, 47, 49, 50, 70, 80, 85, 91, 95, 115, 122)
- Increase the amount of time senior staff have to carry out their roles by
  - planning to meet financial costs of time needed for senior staff to undertake additional tasks;
  - reviewing the duties of senior staff in line with available time;
  - realising plans to appoint additional staffing (0.4 of a full-time equivalent teaching post) as soon as possible.  
(Paragraphs 1, 47, 49, 50)

In writing their action plan, the governors may wish to consider the following less important issues:

- The headteacher has been notified of a number of health and safety issues. (Paragraph 37)
- Development planning requires attention. (Paragraph 51)
- A number of policies require updating. (Paragraphs 37, 70, 109)
- A few reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs have not taken place annually. (Paragraph 40)
- Ensure religious education is taught for students in the further education classes. Paragraphs 24, 50, 131)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	28	23	11	3	0	0
Percentage	3	42	34	16	5	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 one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8.5	School data	0

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

## SWIMMING AWARDS FROM SEPTEMBER 2000

TYPE OF AWARD	LEVEL	Class	Numbers attained
Duckling	1	Nursery/	14
Duckling	2	reception and	6
Duckling	3	Years 1 - 2	4
Puffin		Years 3-6	3
Water skills	1	Years 7- 14 up	9
Water Skills	2		3
ASA National Plan (new scheme – just started Summer 2001)			4
Dolphin	1	all	4
Dolphin	2	all	2

## ACCREDITATION FOR STUDENTS LEAVING AT THE END OF ACADEMIC YEAR 2001

Total number of students - 4

### **Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts National Skills Profile**

Learning Skills – First Grade – 2 students gained awards

Number Skills – First Grade - 3 students gained awards

Communication Skills – First Grade – 3 students gained awards

### **Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts ALL (Accreditation for Life and Living)**

Life and Living Skills

The Environment – Introductory Grade - 2 students gained awards

The Community – Introductory Grade - 2 students gained awards

Leisure – Introductory Grade – 1 student gained an award

Key Skills

Communications Skills Module – Introductory Grade – 1 student gained an award

Numeracy Skills Module – Introductory Grade - 1 student gained an award

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	0
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: YN – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6/10.0*
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.1/7.6*
Average class size	9

\* Current figures as no supply teacher available for .6 maternity leave

#### Education support staff: YN – Y14

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	645

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	878963
Total expenditure	842352
Expenditure per pupil	11084
Balance brought forward from previous year	79315
Balance carried forward to next year	115926

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
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)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	79

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	58	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	49	3	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	22	19	12	33
The teaching is good.	58	35	1	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	4	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	3	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	45	1	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	46	41	7	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	42	39	3	0	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	42	4	1	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	25	9	3	29



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. The provision for children of nursery and reception age is very good, largely because of the very high quality of the teaching in all areas of learning. This is good improvement since the last inspection. There is now one full-time teacher, rather than two teachers sharing the role, and this has led to an even greater consistency in the way staff work with children. As a result, clear routines are quickly established that help the children to feel secure, develop a trusting relationship with staff and learn effectively.
57. When children join the nursery they often have very low levels of knowledge and understanding. Parents of many of the children will have been receiving support from the Portage service (a service that teaches parents to work with their pre-school children with special educational needs) that overlaps into the initial part-time attendance at the school. Reports of the Portage workers are used well to help form an initial assessment of children's levels of achievement. There is a wide range of ability but because of the very good teaching children make very good progress along the stepping-stones of the foundation curriculum. Recently a child transferred successfully to a mainstream school and two others to schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
58. The organisation and management of the nursery and reception provision are very good indeed. There are very effective links with the teacher in the next class, which ensures a smooth transition when children change groups. Staff are managed exceptionally well. They are given very good direction, have their opinions listened to and valued and work extremely effectively as a team. They are constantly aware of what the children are doing and intervene appropriately when necessary.

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

59. Children usually join the nursery part-time and gradually build up to full attendance as they gain in confidence and skills. They do very well in this area of learning because it underpins the way in which everything is taught and the effective modelling by staff of very caring and considerate attitudes. It is very noticeable how gentle the children are with each other. For example, when counting heads, they take position carefully to touch those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, lightly, on the arm. All children learn to make choices. They indicate whether to have a story or a massage first and whether to have crisps or fruit at snack time. Self-help skills are developed very well. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, for instance, allow staff to put their arms in straps on chairs. By the time they are of reception age, more able children take their shoes on and off, hang their coats up and eat and drink appropriately. Children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) make particularly good gains in doing what staff ask them to do rather than what they would wish to do. Gradually they join in group activities. Most children play alongside each other and learn to share equipment.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

60. Finely structured individual learning programmes specifically devised for each child provide the basis of excellent teaching. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties enjoy responding to stories and giggle in anticipation of endings they know. They respond to their names, lifting and turning their heads and learn to make good eye contact. Their communication skills develop very well. During greetings sessions they operate switches to add their greeting and are helped to use switches to make appropriate sounds during stories about topics they are studying. Likes and dislikes are clearly shown. Many children have little or no speech when they join the nursery and the frequent use of signing is very effective in helping them to indicate their needs and to reinforce their learning. This is further supported by the use of PECS, primarily at snack time where children develop an understanding of asking for their choice through using the system. More able children develop a word vocabulary and a few use short sentences. Children

with ASD are helped to check their timetables, so that by looking at the sequence of symbols or pictures they have a clear pattern to their sessions and they get used to the idea of changing activities. Most children know the symbol for 'toilet' and a few will collect a symbol when they need to go. Children enjoy listening to stories. Many learn to indicate the different characters or locate objects by selecting a picture or pointing to items on a page in response to effective questioning from staff. A few will suggest what will happen next. More able children turn pages of a book and will share books with other children pointing to the pictures. The white board is used well to encourage children to make marks and develop a scribble form of early writing.

### **Mathematical development**

61. The individual learning programmes in mathematical development are extremely effective in helping children make very good progress. During these sessions children learn to name colours accurately and to sort items by colour or shape. They begin to count, a few to beyond five. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties discover that objects can be hidden and explore shapes. They become aware of the sequence of events through following an established routine. Mathematical skills are reinforced and developed very well during lessons. At registration, children count the number present and names are placed on a selected coloured railway truck. During the topic session, the colour of the object retrieved from the box is explored and when asked, more able children are able to describe the shape of a wheel as a circle. When stacking bricks, staff count with the children and prompt them to pick up a certain colour of toy car. Mathematical language is taught well. Children learn the meaning of 'in', 'on', 'under', 'more', 'bigger' and 'smaller'.

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

62. A wealth of opportunities is devised for children to widen their understanding of the world. They learn that while some items float many do not and there is a big difference between wet and dry. Good questioning by the teacher helps a few more able children to begin to make predictions. While they thought the inflatable swimming band would float they were not so sure about the toy car. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to use switches to operate equipment. Skilful teaching begins to develop other skills. While operating a computer program a child was asked, 'What colour is it? Hit it (the switch) and see. It is red'. Children's awareness of their own bodies is enhanced through gentle massage sessions. They smile, laugh and make good eye contact with staff in response to light tapping and brushing. Skills in using equipment are increased. Children mould play dough and a few can apply sufficient pressure to roll it out flat. They spread butter with fingers or with a knife when making sandwiches, showing increasing control. They learn to operate a touch screen. A very good selection of different construction equipment helps children to learn to join pieces in various ways, including slot in, snap fit and twist and turn. They make model cars and houses and experiment with piling bricks to see how many they can stack before the construction topples. Visits outside the classroom widen children's experiences. They collect leaves and conkers in the park. They explored the sand and the water on a trip to the seaside, where a highlight was looking closely at the crabs they caught.

### **Physical development**

63. The teacher is very skilled in using effectively a wide variety of locations to develop children's physical skills very well. They increase their confidence in the water of the pool, learning to float with the assistance of rings and armbands. More able children propel themselves through the water on their fronts and their back, wearing armbands. Many gain the Duckling award at levels one to three. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties increase the movements they make, notably when in the ball pool. Many stretch out to touch objects. Large equipment including a tunnel and a wooden slide is used well by children in the classroom when the weather is unsuitable for outdoor play. During physical education lessons co-ordination improves considerably and by the time they are in Year 1 more able children climb on to low obstacles, go up stairs and, although without good control, they throw and kick a ball. The outside playground is small but gives sufficient space for children to move about on trikes and at times the larger

adventure equipment in the older pupils' playground is used, as well as facilities at local parks. Posture and confidence are developed well through sessions at the local Riding for the Disabled centre.

## Creative development

64. The exciting and stimulating classroom does much to help children develop creatively. They begin to develop imaginative play, making 'tea' in the little kitchen area and dressing up in an interesting collection of clothes and hats. They enjoy pretending to be the policeman from a story. They take turns wearing the policeman's helmet and putting their hands up to stop a little boy roaming into danger. Staff ensure that children with profound and multiple learning difficulties explore a wide range of materials. Children are encouraged to move their hands in circles through shaving foam and to tolerate and learn to enjoy the touch of materials such as velvet and chiffon. All children join in painting and printing, selecting colours and applying paint to paper. As part of the transport theme children print trains and wagons on a track. They use a range of materials to create interesting patterns, for example as a backdrop to a large jungle picture. Dropping paint soaked tennis balls onto blue painted paper in just the right position makes the effect of a bright yellow sun in a blue sky. Children wear the masks they have made, pretending to be animals in the jungle, and make edible trees, appropriately coloured from fondant. Musical instruments are used effectively to make sound effects for interesting stories.

## ENGLISH

Provision for English is good. This is because teaching is consistently good and because of the importance given to literacy in the school. This maintains standards from the last inspection.

### Strengths

- The good teaching leads to good progress.
- "P" Scales are being used for assessment and as a basis for planning work.
- The development of National Literacy Strategy planning throughout the school.
- Good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Reading is developed well.
- Groups organised for pupils from Year 7 onwards are effective for improving progress.

### Areas for improvement

- Library to be reinstated.
- There are too few opportunities for developing writing.
- The symbols communication system is inconsistently implemented.
- ICT is not used sufficiently.
- There is no time available to monitor and evaluate English teaching throughout the school.

65. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in English with the exception of pupils in Years 5 and 6, who make satisfactory progress. This is largely due to changes in staffing. The school makes a good effort to ensure that all of its pupils benefit from English lessons. In each class, pupils have a wide range of ability, so in literacy lessons, classes for pupils in Years 7 onwards are reorganised to form groups based on attainment. This leads to lesson planning being more closely focused and allows pupils to succeed at their own level. There are good resources, especially a good supply of books, including some made by pupils and staff. Pupils gain from the provision for the National Literacy Strategy, which has a good supply of books and equipment to teach it. However, the range and use of computer software is still not used effectively to support pupils' learning.
66. Overall, standards of speaking and listening are good. Throughout the school, pupils learn to listen carefully to questions asked by teachers and support staff. For example, during a Year 10 and 11 science lesson, pupils were introduced to a range of scientific vocabulary: 'circuits', 'magnets', 'metal', 'copper' and 'aluminium'. In all classes, pupils confidently respond to questions because teachers encourage and praise their contributions and, where appropriate, wait for them to make themselves understood. Students also have opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in a wider range of settings, including those at college and during work experience. By the time they leave school they listen attentively, have improved their levels of

comprehension and communicate well. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties make their needs and wishes clearly known. Signing has developed well and students are confident when communicating with people they meet. An improvement since the last inspection is that now pupils receive support in the development of communication skills and use of language through working with the speech and language therapist. However, this still is not fully incorporated into planning to support language improvement.

67. At all ages, pupils display a range of reading abilities. Teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy, effectively helping pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading. For example, by Year 2, pupils enjoy reading 'The Big Bear' and they follow the story with enthusiasm, anticipating events and relating them to objects that are distributed by the support staff. A Year 9 pupil reading 'Zoola's Box', which he chose himself, read fluently, using different strategies, phonic and contextual, when reading unfamiliar words. He could recall the main events of the story and describe the characters' roles. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 showed similar enthusiasm in literacy lessons and are given opportunities to develop reading skills according to their own abilities. More able pupils and students are able to select their own choice of book and read with understanding and comprehension. One more able pupil, using a contents page, can locate information by page numbers and words by initial letters. They develop an increasing number of words that they know and are keen to demonstrate these in lessons.
68. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. In a Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, pupils were encouraged to extend their communication by recording information in writing. In a Year 8 and 9 lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to touch letter shapes and to practise drawing them. More able pupils are able to copy over a model, making horizontal, vertical and circular lines. Less able pupils learn to make purposeful marks on paper. Pupils can copy writing with support and make labels for displays. In a Year 12 communication lesson, more able students recorded information on paper. Although pupils are given some chances to develop their individual writing skills, there are limited opportunities for pupils to write independently. There are few instances of pupils' writing skills being effectively supported through ICT, although some pupils used a word processing programme in a Year 12 communication lesson.
69. The importance given to literacy throughout the school is reflected in its good use throughout the curriculum. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on size, more able pupils were successfully able to label the objects with the words 'big' and 'small' written on card. Speaking and listening throughout the curriculum is good, as noted in a Year 8 and 9 science lesson, when the pupils were taught scientific language appropriately throughout the lesson. Words included 'air', 'float', 'oxygen', 'nitrogen' and 'carbon dioxide'.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good but dips to satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, because there are temporary teachers due to long-term absence. Lessons are planned well to make the best use of support assistants to support pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class, they are fully aware of pupils' Individual Education Plan targets and complete daily assessment sheets relating to the development of language and communication. Pupils are managed well through using a good range of activities and methods and praise and encouragement. This makes pupils want to learn and helps them to concentrate. Pupils rise to the high expectations set by staff, for example, remembering what comes next in a story with very little prompting. Most teachers have good expertise in teaching basic skills and in signing, but the PECS is not yet implemented consistently across the school. This is partly a reflection of a lack of time allocated to monitor and evaluate teaching the subject throughout the school. Also, the communication policy does not reflect the school's changed expectations and approach to communication. There is good work using the 'P' scales to plan lessons effectively. Information gathered about pupils' progress is used satisfactorily.
71. The library was recently closed and is set to reopen in the further education section of the school. This, however, lessens its accessibility to all pupils, especially in bad weather. Good use is made of the local resource library to supplement the school's stock of books.



## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- The progress of pupils in class 2 and class 7.

### Areas for improvement

- The progress of students in the further education classes.
- The amount of time available to the mathematics co-ordinator to monitor and develop the subject.

72. Overall, pupils throughout the school are achieving satisfactorily, although, as a result of the teachers' absence and an ongoing turnover of temporary teachers, the progress made by students in the further education department is unsatisfactory.
73. By the end of Year 2, because lessons are planned effectively and there are good methods that ensure they are learning well, pupils are making good progress. More able pupils count to 10 and recognise numerals, naming and placing them in the correct order up to as far as 15. One pupil put the numbers around a clock face and said what they were. When they were making a salad in a cookery activity, opportunities to practise counting were exploited effectively. In relation to their toys and equipment, they say which is smaller or bigger. In one lesson, for example, a more able pupil labelled the larger ball correctly with the word 'big'. Most pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not yet sorting objects, although they handle and look at textured numbers, shapes, and moving toys. Their good progress is evident in their actively looking for objects and when being given help putting them into boxes.
74. By the end of Year 6, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve well by paying close attention to instructions, making a good effort in following them and by enjoying participating. In one lesson, for example, two pupils working together reached into a bag, took out single objects and put them back into the bag. When asked, they chose their favourite object. In the same lesson, more able pupils counted to 5 reliably and some went on to 10. When asked 'How many?' they counted up the objects they had. In physical education their understanding and application of number are promoted well by having to make big and small jumps and counting their steps and jumps. A few pupils recognise numerals up to 100 and write each from 1 to 10. They place numbers in the correct order up to 20, recognise shapes such as a circle or triangle, identify all the coins to £1 and tell the time to the hour and half-hour.
75. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils continue to match numbers mostly up to 20 but the highest-attaining pupil works easily with numbers up to 100, for example saying with assurance what number is bigger than or smaller than 95. Pupils benefit by using a computer to play matching number games. In cookery lessons, pupils count out the bowls and the spoonfuls of ingredients they need. Work in science helps consolidate their understanding of lighter and heavier objects. Most name shapes such as square, triangle, circle and oblong and use words such as 'semi-circle,' 'cube' and 'cylinder' appropriately. In art, pupils imprinted repeating patterns into the surface of the clay pots they had modelled and one pupil worked hard to make the right size and circular shape of lid. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieved less well as a group in one lesson, because teaching strategies were not matched to their needs sufficiently well. The few that were more responsive achieved better results with individual attention. For example, one transferred counters one by one between trays while another, with help, selected and fitted cylinders inside the next size up. In an English lesson, they explored cause and effects by operating moving toys.
76. Pupils make good progress by the end of Year 11. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties put objects together of a similar colour and match objects with pictures. A few more responsive pupils count penny coins one by one up to 5 and write the correct number. They know that 5p is a silver coin. More able pupils, with some prompting, say which the brown, silver and gold coloured coins are. They know for each coin where its value is shown and set them out in

order of value. They solve simple addition and subtraction problems using numbers up to 10 with the help of counting aids such as a number line. Calculators are used for higher values. They recognise numbers up to 100 and make up small sums of money using combinations of coins. Skills in solving problems are developed in science lessons where, for example, more able pupils frame quiz questions involving number and go on to test if the answers are correct.

77. By the end of Year 13, students' attainments in recognising numbers and solving problems are at a similar level to those pupils in Year 11. Their skills with money are no better. Records of their mathematical attainment going back two years show they have barely moved forward. More able students were then ordering numbers correctly up to 100 and solving simple additions and subtractions, transferring these skills to work out, for example, how many needed lunches. Students are working towards the first grade of the National Skills Profile course. They recite the days of the week and read the days but have difficulty knowing the day before or after Wednesday, for example. They apply their knowledge of numbers to locate days and dates in their personal diaries, realising the 25<sup>th</sup> is further on in any month.
78. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has taken steps very recently to stabilise staffing for further education students in Class 9, with the result that the teaching they are now receiving is satisfactory. Teaching and learning in Classes 2 and 7 (Years 1 and 2 and primarily years 10 and 11) are very good. Lessons are thoroughly well planned; much is expected of pupils and consequently they sustain a good pace when working. In both cases teachers and support staff have formed very good relationships with pupils and manage them very effectively, so that pupils are settled for most of the time; they concentrate very well when working and persevere well with tasks. In one lesson they were actively engaged in number games and consolidated their skills in counting up to 10 and back down again. In Class 2, very effective use is made of good resources and a variety of activities to promote learning and fully include pupils of all abilities. Lively interactions using balls of different sizes, labels for 'big' and 'small' and constant questioning help more able pupils grasp the idea of the different scale of objects. In both classes teaching assistants are well deployed with small groups of pupils or individuals. They are very much included in the teachers' plans and use their good expertise to promote learning.
79. In other classes, lesson planning is more often good rather than very good and sets out clearly the objectives that are appropriate for the widely different abilities of pupils in each group. However, these are not always followed through well in the activities devised. Sometimes there is not enough interaction with the group to get them energetically involved. Also, the limited variety of resources and the approaches used result in less concentration and a slow pace. In particular, little use is made of ICT. In one lesson, while resources were interesting and the interaction lively, far too much in terms of learning was being covered for pupils to benefit. They were rapidly taken through exercises on 'heavier or lighter', 'more or less', 'bigger and smaller', 'taller and shorter', when each needed more time in order for pupils to consolidate the needed knowledge and understanding. It shows that while a strategy for numeracy has been implemented it is not understood sufficiently by a few teachers. This was apparent in the teaching of Year 12 students about knowing and using money. There was not enough carefully thought out practical activity through which students could encounter and solve the problems of recognising money and using it to buy goods.
80. Improvement in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The satisfactory standards pupils achieved then and the sound teaching have been maintained. The provision made for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is better, representing satisfactory progress. Mathematics is more firmly established in the teaching timetable and broadly reflects the National Numeracy Strategy. The strategy has not moved on sufficiently and been refined and this shows in a few teachers' lack of expertise in teaching mathematics. The mathematics co-ordinator had no time to manage the subject at the time of the last inspection and this remains the case. There have been some good developments in relation to curricular planning and analysis of pupils' progress, which detects pupils who are not making the expected progress and others who are doing better than expected. However, the issues this gives rise to are not being followed up because of the lack of time to monitor mathematics throughout the school.





## SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is good.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good overall. It is often very good when practical activities are planned.
- Development of 'P' levels.

### Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluative elements of the co-ordinator's role.
- The use of ICT to improve further the teaching and learning.

81. Since the last inspection the teaching and learning of science have improved. Overall, the subject provides for the needs of the pupils well and their achievement and progress are good. Pupils in Year 2 achieve very well. The subject has been further improved in terms of increased time and provision of resources, the development of schemes of work and the introduction of new levels of assessment. This has contributed to higher standards.
82. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to learn about the growth of plants. Many can name colours and flowers that they have studied. All pupils investigate materials and a range of living things, such as frogs. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties become aware of their immediate environment through touch and smell and sound. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to develop their experience and understanding of science, making satisfactory progress. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties work hard at creating sounds by moving to and fro in and out of a sound beam. In this way, they make clear connections between cause and effect. Other pupils work diligently, producing shadows of familiar objects onto a large screen; they identify these and draw results. These pupils understand that shadows can be projected. During the topic 'finding out about me', they decide which tastes they like best.
83. By the end of Year 9, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Every one experiences activities based on floating and sinking. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties develop good eye contact when working with balloons; they feel the movement of air and track and reach out for feathers floating down. More able pupils understand that air blown through water creates bubbles and that helium balloons float higher in the air than ordinary balloons. Pupils make simple comparisons on the capacity of containers. At the end of Year 11, pupils' achievements are good. Most understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy diets. They work with magnets, trying to decide what will be attracted and what will not. All pupils know that items can be switched on and off, including tape recorders, electric fans and foot spas. They explore batteries as sources of power and the most able put together a simple circuit with a bulb. Many pupils remember the work they did on volcanoes. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development because pupils begin to appreciate differences and how to make choices. This is particularly evident in the work on diet.
84. Teaching and learning are good overall, although there are differences between year groups, reflecting the quality of the planning. Teaching and learning are very good for Years 1 and 2, satisfactory for Years 3 to 9 and good for Years 10 and 11. Teachers use a range of activities to consolidate learning and to develop basic skills for all pupils. The teachers and support staff co-operate closely and ensure that all pupils learn effectively. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and work planned to specifically help them achieve their targets. Practical approaches in which pupils do things mean that pupils test their answers and develop an understanding of the basics of science - for example, exploring a mini-beast population when on a walk. Teachers have good expectations of pupils; each stresses the need for attention and safety. The most effective teaching methods use as many of the senses as possible. In one lesson on plant growth, pupils experienced a range of textures and materials when potting seeds. Teachers understand the need for good working relationships: this enables pupils to relax and become ready to learn. Praise and encouragement are used very effectively, which helps improve pupils' concentration, and they want to take part as fully as possible. Pupils' work is assessed and matched to the

curriculum through use of the recently introduced and refined 'P' levels. These assessments and recording of academic and behaviour targets help pupils make good progress overall. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils respond by being polite and interested.

85. The subject has improved because of good co-ordination and management. The resources include lots of interesting scientific activities and advice on lesson planning. There has been an improvement in teaching but this is due largely to the hard work of the staff because the co-ordinator has no opportunities to observe and monitor teaching and learning. This is an area for immediate development. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the provision for art is good.

### Strengths

- Pupils are achieving well but pupils in Class 7 (largely years 10 and 11) are achieving very well because of the very good teaching they receive.
- The curriculum makes good connections with European art and deals equally well with art from different cultures throughout the world.

### Areas for improvement

- Time allocated for monitoring and supporting colleagues.

86. Pupils are achieving well throughout the school in learning about art and using art to extend their learning skills. Their progress in Class 7 is very good because the teacher has good expertise and uses this very effectively to get pupils involved in developing techniques and ideas to a high standard.
87. By the end of Year 2, pupils gain considerably from their experience and creative work with a range of materials from mixing and moulding papier-mâché into sculpture to visiting nearby woodland to find and collect leaves, twigs, grasses and cones. This develops their awareness of what lies around them and helps more able pupils to see the visual and textural properties in natural materials. They are shown the ingenuity used by Picasso and Goldsworthy in working with natural materials to create their art and pupils go on to make their own collages. By the end of Year 6, pupils explore repeating patterns by arranging coloured blocks and beads in series and also by printing series - for example, two red squares followed by two yellow triangles. They explore the warm colours of honeysuckle flowers by experimenting with mixes of red, yellow and white paint. More able pupils make observational drawings of the honeysuckle plant. The bridge between exploring paint and making imagery is made when pupils use and arrange a circle of their handprints to represent the petals of a daisy flower.
88. By the end of Year 9, pupils continue to explore visual effects such as the patterns created using marbling. More able pupils work clay into pot shapes using simple pinch and coil techniques. They confidently explore how clay can be shaped and work up surface textures and patterns in various ways to make their pots ornate. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show enjoyment and become actively involved in swirling and splashing liquid paints. By the end of Year 11, more able pupils investigate a wide range of art such as Chinese painting techniques, Native Australian sand painting and Native North American dream catchers. They make effective use of Chinese wash effects, free brush work and contrasting colours in large scale wall hangings.
89. By the end of Year 13, from looking at Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers,' students make paintings on the same theme. These show students' good skills of observation, drawing an image and controlling brushes and paints. They observe the composition of Van Gogh's work carefully and recreate foreground, middle and background in their paintings. Details of flower heads, petals, leaves and stems are drawn in proportion.

90. Teaching is good overall and very good in Class 7, where the teacher who co-ordinates the subject throughout the school, has a good knowledge of art. Otherwise, teachers' expertise is satisfactory, and they gain effectively by using the ideas developed by the co-ordinator. Pupils with a wide range of attainments are kept fully involved through good planning and careful choice of resources. For example, teachers put primary colours of paint in a sealed plastic bag, which pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to handle, press and rub to make the colours mix, and they see orange emerging from red and yellow. Teachers have a good understanding of the strengths of the sensory elements in art and exploit these well to involve pupils in developing their attention and interest. A perfect example is a Year 8 boy who spent a lesson absorbed completely with modelling a block of clay into a pot. It involved him in deep concentration and sustained effort in very carefully manipulating the clay with his fingers to pinch it into a good pot shape.
91. There has been a good improvement in art since the last inspection. While the overall good progress pupils made has been maintained, incidence of poor progress has been eliminated. There is much less variance in the quality of teaching now and the strengths described in the last report are still very evident today. The art curriculum is now better and, in particular, the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has improved well. It reflects recent national guidance on art. Artists and work from a wide range of cultures are included effectively in curricular plans. Resources for art have improved well and while ICT is not used effectively generally, in Class 7 digital cameras and imagery are included in pupils' investigations of the expression of movement in imagery. The co-ordination of art is good because much works well at an informal level. It has to be informal because the co-ordinator does not have time to monitor and support colleagues on a regular basis.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the provision for design and technology, including food studies, is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- The very good teaching in Class 2 resulting in pupils achieving very well.
- The contribution of design and technology lessons to developing a range of skills essential for pupils and students.

### Areas for improvement

- The level of planning in some lessons to ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are fully involved in learning.
- The contribution of design and technology to support pupils' learning in the use of ICT.
- The provision of adequate time to carry out the role of co-ordinator effectively.

92. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall. Recently, an updated curriculum has introduced a wider range of materials and resources. A workshop where pupils can use wood and other resistant materials was set up recently. The designing and making activities pupils engage in make a constructive contribution to their learning to communicate and to developing mathematical, physical, personal and social skills. In all of these respects pupils, by the end of Year 2, are achieving very well because of the very effective teaching they receive. In making a salad, pupils took an immediate interest in the fruit and vegetables from handling them and naming those that they knew. They know that clean hands are important and have them washed without complaint. Most pupils are helped to peel and slice ingredients and they add them to the salad bowl. They hold the bowl and stir with a spoon. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils have investigated the methods of fixing sections of card together to make Joseph's multicoloured coat. They test the effectiveness of glue, adhesive tapes and other means of joining the sections.
93. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils read the recipe for making biscuits and set out the number of bowls required, counting up to six. They measure the spoonfuls of ingredients needed. With help, they blend these with an electric mixer. Pupils with profound and multiple learning

difficulties are not helped to participate as much as they could do and as a consequence do not achieve as well as they ought to. By the end of Year 11, pupils are achieving well as a consequence of effective teaching. They have, for example, found out about the 'dream catchers' made by Native North Americans and, using bicycle wheels as their framework, attach and weave a variety of materials to make their own 'dream-catcher'. This demands the fine manipulation of delicate materials and much concentration. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties in the further education department experience making bread rolls and have a good level of awareness, showing they are anticipating the activity as it proceeds. They, for example, hold eye contact with the teacher as she moves and introduces equipment and ingredients. Their hands being washed is an enjoyable experience and a few students smile and splash. They react strongly to flour being sprinkled by touching, moving it around and tasting it. The students are interested and happy to handle the dough, investing effort and concentration when doing so.

94. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it is very good in Class 2 (Years 1 and 2) because the learning opportunities (for example, in making a salad) are fully understood. By very careful planning these are expertly exploited by the teacher and her classroom assistants. Communication with the pupils is direct, clear and lively. It involves signing and many questions to draw responses from the group. Pupils are carefully introduced to different fruit and vegetables; they handle them, name the ones they know and learn new names. For example, one boy repeated 'celery' after the teacher had introduced it. The group is tightly managed, which keeps the pace of the lesson very brisk. The variety of resources and tasks sustains pupils' interest and curiosity. The pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are included very effectively in that class and they learn very well as a consequence. Pupils and students in other lessons are learning as well as expected largely because they are engaged in experiencing, handling and shaping malleable materials like bread dough and biscuit mix. This stimulates their attention, interest and concentration and is contributing to pupils extending their physical skills in seeing, reaching, holding and manipulating materials. The flour on the table encouraged students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to deliberately control the movement of their arms, hands and head. Occasionally, in other groups, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not effectively challenged to respond. The planning of lessons and the time needed to support these pupils are not sufficient to encourage a higher and more appropriate level of involvement.
95. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Pupils were achieving more than and the quality of teaching now is less effective. At the time of the last inspection the subject co-ordinator had little time for managing design and technology and this remains the case and accounts for the fact that the subject has not improved. Currently, the management of design and technology is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has held this responsibility for just over one year and in that time has worked hard to develop resources and the breadth of what should be taught. There is determination to widen the scope of lessons, which is reflected in the recent establishment of a workshop. There is sound evidence that teachers have moved away from food being the predominant focus of design and technology learning, although ICT is still not a part of pupils' learning in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

The provision for geography is satisfactory and improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Strengths**

- Recent development in planning.
- Recording of pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Shared commitment to improvement.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.

- Use of ICT.
- Current resources, which are inadequate.

96. Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography. By Year 2, pupils look at different areas of the school. Their mapping skills are encouraged through laying out and following trails in and around school, providing opportunities for them to investigate the physical nature of their immediate environment. They know familiar places and people and what they are there for. By Year 6, pupils have learnt about weather conditions and use all of their senses to explore what clothes and footwear should be worn in different weather conditions. In a very good Year 4 lesson, lower ability pupils responded with enthusiasm when experiencing different weather conditions created by the teacher's using hairdryers, ice packs, ice cream and water sprays. When shown an item of clothing, they could all contribute to a wall chart, 'Hot and Cold', by making a mark on the correct side of the board. They could choose what objects they would use on a sunny day or a wet day and express a preference for certain weather conditions.
97. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are able to understand directional language such as 'near' and 'far' and can record key features of a place using written words or symbols. They follow certain routes around the school and retrace their movements on simple school plans. They all know the name of the place where they live. In a Year 7 lesson, skilful questioning by the teacher and regular praise for their good effort resulted in pupils acquiring new knowledge of the type of houses people live in, in New York. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop an awareness of each other's home environment. They can associate activities with areas of the school. More able pupils use simple geographical language to communicate their ideas about various locations, features and roles. For example, pupils have produced, with a digital camera, a book on 'Places around the School' and a video film demonstrating turning 'left' and 'right' around the school.
98. Teaching and learning in geography are good. Teachers have high expectations and this leads to good learning. Careful grouping of pupils and the deployment and teamwork of support staff are particularly effective in ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to succeed. There is, however, no monitoring of teaching and opportunities to use ICT to improve teaching and learning are missed.
99. Recent planning is satisfactory and supports pupils' needs. However, the subject co-ordinator acknowledges the need for further detailed plans for some topics. Current resources are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has identified the additional resources required if the teaching and learning in the subject are to continue to improve and pupils' progress is to match the quality of the teaching.

## HISTORY

The provision for history is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- Recent development in planning.
- Enthusiasm of the co-ordinator.

### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.
- Improvement of resources and artefacts.
- Use of ICT.

100. Owing to timetabling arrangements, in which history rotates with geography, only one lesson was observed being taught; this was for pupils in Years 8 and 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been studying geography. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of work and interviews with staff and pupils indicate that pupils throughout the school acquire a satisfactory range of historical knowledge.

101. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the passage of time through daily routines and can anticipate events of the day and sequence events of the recent past. Through studying canals, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have learnt historical vocabulary such as 'then', 'now', 'past' and 'present'. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have constructed a 'canal' using cardboard, water and sand where, for example, they can feel different textures and experience wetness and dryness. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn about time in relation to themselves and growing up by being shown a range of clothes ranging from baby items through to what the class would wear now. They study photographs of staff and themselves when very young children and now. Local facilities are used well. Pupils visited the Milestones Museum and looked at the different cars from the past to the present and what happened before they were invented.
102. Improvement in history since the last inspection has been satisfactory and statutory requirements are now met. There has been no improvement in the stock of historical artefacts since the last inspection, but this lack is recognised by the co-ordinator, who has only had responsibility for the subject since January. There is an awareness of the need to incorporate the use of ICT into lessons and to purchase appropriate software.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

### Strengths

- Teaching and planning in Year 10.
- Planning in Year 1.
- Enthusiasm of staff to improve provision in the school.

### Areas for improvement

- Naming of a co-ordinator during the long-term sick leave of present co-ordinator.
- Formation of subject development plan and action plan.
- Updating of ICT policy to include acceptable use of the Internet.
- Awareness of health and safety issues when using ICT.
- Means of recording progress to enable teaching to be effective in raising standards.
- Improvement of the range of suitable software for literacy, numeracy and other subjects.

103. Evidence from instances of ICT being used, teachers' planning and discussion with staff indicates that pupils' achievements are currently unsatisfactory overall. There has been little progress since the previous inspection. Pupils are making unsatisfactory progress in ICT, although the rate of learning in the one session seen during the inspection was good. Learning and progress are inconsistent throughout the school. It is left to individual teachers to plan what to teach and when and pupils' progress is therefore not assured in all aspects of the subject. The ratio of computers to pupils is too low and pupils have too few opportunities to gain skills and knowledge.
104. Too little specific teaching and learning was seen to make an overall judgment about the quality. However, good teaching was seen as part of a geography lesson when a small group of two pupils were using a pixie (a programmable toy) on a large squared grid. The pupils understood how to program the pixie to move forwards and to turn left and right and one pupil could identify a right angle. The teacher gave clear instructions, which helped the pupils to achieve well, and as a result they were able to enter a program by sequencing instructions for the pixie to land on a specific square and were also able to predict where it would end up. Scrutiny of work in this class showed that there was good use of the digital camera to encourage pupils to record their achievements and experiences.
105. There is insufficient use of ICT during lessons to develop pupils' skills, although there are instances of good practice, including the use of switches to aid communication during registration, to operate cause and effect programs on the computer and to turn music or talking stories on and off independently. Opportunities are missed for pupils to use computers to assist their learning. While in one class a Year 4 pupil used 'Sentence Maker' (a writing program) well

to produce written work, more able older pupils in another class found it difficult to maintain interest in mundane activities ideally suited to exciting computer work. Examples of use during English lessons include a Year 7 pupil operating an interactive reading program independently to find words beginning with a certain letter and Year 10 pupils being successfully encouraged to write their names on the keyboard without help. In the further education classes, a student improved her independent writing by using the word processor with help and in another lesson on communication skills, a student responded using an Alpha Talker (a specialist communication aid). The use of an appropriate mathematics program for pupils in a Year 8 mathematics lesson was well pitched to consolidate their work. Pupils reacted to events on screen accurately and with understanding and there was good use of the mouse to select similar numbers on screen. A sound beam is used to create interesting and exciting effects in science and music.

106. Less able pupils use the sensory room but are not able to control the switches there that operate bubble tubes and fibre-optic displays. Use of very simple communication aids, such as switch technology, has improved since the previous inspection, but remains an area for further development in order to improve pupils' learning in all subjects. More able pupils are able to use simple literacy and numeracy programs and to enhance their work by using a word processor. Writing with symbols is available on all computers. Year 10 pupils with help use the Internet to get information on mathematics. However, it is used rarely elsewhere and there is no school policy for acceptable use to help staff plan to use it.
107. The use of ICT in the further education classes is unsatisfactory. There is appropriate accreditation available but in the absence of the co-ordinator no staff are undertaking courses. However, during a Year 14 literacy lesson on communication skills, good use of the program resulted in one student's making progress. The Alpha Talker aids communication effectively in this class and helps to ensure parental involvement.
108. There is no discrete teaching of ICT and teachers lack knowledge of how it can be taught through other subjects. Overall, the planning and assessment of ICT are unsatisfactory, although there is some good practice. For example, in Years 1 and 2, a unit 'Using basic skills' supports literacy and numeracy learning. In Years 3 and 4, the use of ICT is identified in the weekly planning. In Year 7, a published scheme is used for planning in the use of simple multimedia. Year 10 is using a unit on 'Controlling and Modelling' and previous units have been 'Communicating Information' and 'Handling Information'. Some satisfactory assessment of switch skills is used in Year 7. However, there is no consistent program for ICT throughout the school.
109. The management of ICT is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is on long-term sick leave and at present there is no co-ordinator in the school. This has led to standards not improving since the previous unsatisfactory level. Prolonged problems with the networking were not resolved until recently. Training through the New Opportunities Fund has begun but there is no named person in the school to assist staff. However, when this is completed, the course is expected to provide all staff with good expertise and confidence in the future. There is no current policy for ICT. There is no formal, whole-school process for determining pupils' needs and equipment and as a result there is insufficient software and peripherals. The subject continues to be a key issue for development.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

110. Modern foreign languages are not studied.

## **MUSIC**

The provision for music is good overall.

Strengths · High quality teaching and teamwork of the staff.
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- Pupils experience a good range of music from other countries.
- Opportunities are taken for pupils to see music performed.

Areas for improvement

- Time for the co-ordinator to look at the work of Years 1 to 6.
- Procedures for assessing and recording progress.

111. Pupils' good progress in music has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good for all pupils and, at times, very good. Their class teachers teach pupils up to Year 6 for music lessons. Older pupils have a joint session with all their teachers taking part in the teaching and led by the co-ordinator. Both methods are equally effective and good use is made of the expertise of staff. The teamwork of the teachers and support assistants is very good. This ensures that all pupils are participating to the best of their abilities in activities.
112. During Years 1 and 2, pupils learn how to hold instruments still when directed and how to play louder and softer (crescendo and decrescendo). Frequent changes of activity ensure that pupils' attention is maintained and, as a result, they participate well. Many correctly name instruments such as drum, maracas and bells. They accompany a taped lesson well by following instructions to play. Staff take care to ensure that pupils with visual impairment do as well as their peers. For example, they make sure that equipment is sufficiently close. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are given appropriate levels of support and encouragement to help them participate and enjoy sessions. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with very well. If a pupil becomes distracted, support staff work with them to allow the rest of the group to continue listening and responding. There is a very good level of interpretation of musical story that helps all pupils to learn something new.
113. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils listen and attend to musical activities as they identify instruments by name and sound. They imitate loud and soft using arm span and thoroughly enjoy the 'game' as they watch the teacher and assistant carefully to avoid missing the response. The use of games is a very effective teaching method. Pupils make very good progress in starting playing and ending on time. The lessons are planned well to ensure that pupils have the right amount of difficulty to help them improve but not to make it too hard so they lose interest.
114. Older pupils learn how to control increasing levels of sound. Teaching and support staff provide appropriate levels of help so pupils are able to improve their listening skills. Many join in with the words of familiar songs and appreciate and enjoy different types of music. They perform well using instruments and their voices. Music from a wide range of countries and cultures is used effectively. The beat of an African song calmed and soothed but also provided an opportunity to release tension as the music reached a crescendo.
115. The subject is led by an experienced and well-qualified co-ordinator. She has limited time to check the progress pupils make from year group to year group. Assessment and recording procedures are satisfactory, but do not provide detailed information. Nevertheless, most pupils are developing musical skills well. Music is used in other subjects to help teach communication skills effectively. Good use is made of a sound beam in the sensory area for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The enticing Sound and Light board in the corridor attracts all pupils, who squeal with delight as they successfully demonstrate cause and effect linked to sound. Pupils' experience of music is broadened through visiting performers and attending concerts. For example, a band from another school played in assembly, a college group recently demonstrated how to play their instruments and members of the school participated in a symphony performance locally.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is very good.

Strengths

- Very good expertise of teachers and support staff leads to very high quality of teaching.
- Grouping arrangements for pupils from Year 7 onwards.
- Social and personal development improved through the attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- Strong outside links, rugby, swimming, skiing, cricket. Opportunities for a wide range of sports and athletics.
- Very good provision of a hydrotherapy/swimming pool leads to very good development of pupils' water skills.
- Good range of swimming awards.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

112. Pupils' achievements in physical education are very good overall. Pupils' sheer enjoyment of the subject contributes significantly to the progress they make. By the end of Year 2, pupils show confidence in the water; the more able jump in and work hard to achieve success and certificates. Those who are unable to swim and relax, lay back in their floats, try to kick and blow bubbles. Their progress is recorded. They achieve very well. The very good progress in swimming is continued and by the end of Year 6, awards follow: pupils can travel at least five metres in the water and climb in and out of the pool. A good range of awards gives pupils goals to aim for. The youngest work towards Duckling Awards, then there are Puffin, Dolphin and Water Skills. A new scheme from the Amateur Swimming Association has recently been adopted for older pupils.

113. By the end of Year 9, pupils continue to make very good progress across a range of physical activities. They warmup, stretch and reach higher and higher. They take part in circuits against their own targets. A visually impaired pupil works very hard in climbing. The most able find their own spaces, remember their teams, and play basketball. They understand the rules and keep to them. Every pupil experiences the circus activity, where they balance and juggle. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties increase their range of movements, taking part in lessons with the whole group. Pupils are given appropriately difficult things to do in every session; they take part in paired work and in team games. Their ball skills improve.
114. At the end of Year 11, pupils are maintaining the very high standards. They take part in excellent work with parachutes, where they develop motor and social skills. The group understands the need for co-operation. They listen and develop basic skill and trust. Those with the profound and multiple learning difficulties take part in sensory sessions; they learn to wait their turn. These pupils also take part in parachute activities and gain much from being included. Older pupils follow carefully graded target plans. They can take part in fitness training and are aware of the effects of exercise. Every pupil makes progress in controlling movement; they can identify body parts and understand the language of team games. The further education students join in many of these activities, providing good models of keen participation for the younger pupils. Many of the students go to the bowling alley as part of their physical education and social and personal development.
115. Teaching and learning are very good overall and occasionally they are excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and involve the pupils in stimulating and exciting activities. These activities are planned very well to meet individual targets for personal and physical development. In the very best teaching there are very clear directions and instructions to reinforce learning from previous lessons. Progress is planned through a range of activities. Support staff often demonstrate skills and techniques enthusiastically and activities are frequently accompanied by music, which helps pupils to keep in time. A very good understanding of pupils' needs ensures that every pupil takes part. Staff deal with any behavioural difficulties very well indeed and as a result, pupils are fully involved in activities. Teachers use signing effectively so that the whole group can take part and communication skills are extended. Pupils are expected to work hard and contribute well to their fitness and the raising of their self-esteem. Pupils working in the multi-sensory and soft rooms are treated with dignity and respect as they stretch and reach out in programmes that are well planned to develop their individual reactions.
116. Support assistants contribute significantly to learning and the high quality of the teamwork is very effective. The assistants work particularly hard during swimming sessions to ensure that individual pupils feel comfortable in the water and achieve their targets. Assessment of individual progress is very well organised between teachers and support staff: however, the aspects of play, enjoyment and fun in a group are not lost in the search for assessment. Health and safety feature highly in all lessons. Pupils and staff develop awareness of the needs of others and the dangers inherent in a pool or a gymnasium.
117. The management of physical education is very good. There is clear planning to ensure that pupils make progress from one year to the next. Physiotherapy targets are worked towards in physical education sessions. The hall does not make life easy for teachers. It is constantly in use but staff are very aware of the problems it causes. The equipment in the hall is good, the swimming pool excellent. The pupils would welcome showers after their exertions. There are none suitable for this. Good use is made of facilities in the community, such as pools and leisure centres, particularly for the students in the further education classes. The range of experiences available is outstanding. Pupils take part in athletics events across the county, in cricket matches, in rugby skills training and horse riding. Older pupils go bowling. There have been trips to Italy and Austria to ski and a number of pupils use a dry slope regularly. There are teachers and administrative staff who are appropriately qualified to coach swimming and skiing.
118. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Progress has been maintained at high levels and recreational facilities have improved. This is largely due to the work of individual staff

because the role of the co-ordinator remains underdeveloped and there is no time to monitor teaching and learning except on an informal basis.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the provision for religious education is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- Positive attitudes and response of pupils.
- Quality of teaching is good overall.
- Improved resources, new and well chosen, covering all aspects.

### Areas for improvement

- The role of the co-ordinator is not established. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not developed.
- The provision for religious education and the progress of students in the further education classes.

119. It was possible to observe only a few lessons of religious education. However, discussions with staff and a scrutiny of documents indicate that all pupils, except students in the further education classes, achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an awareness of a number of festivals. They enjoy moral tales and nativity stories. At the end of Year 2, pupils know about Noah and the ark. They have listened to Bible stories told in such a way as to use their senses and have opportunities to reflect. Pupils in Year 9 can explain how they might help people in distress after listening to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties focus on their immediate environment, moods and reflection. They experience the sense of occasion around ceremonies such as baptism and marriage. More able pupils know what happens during these ceremonies. By the end of Year 11, pupils take part in school themes and have developed an awareness and, in a number of instances, an understanding of what makes special places and people. They sensitively explore the feelings discussed when they sit in a circle and talk about things that may be worrying them.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is particularly good for pupils in Years 8 and 9, where many examples are used to illustrate the point of the lessons. There is a sharp focus on the topics being studied and well-planned lessons have clear targets so that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils are all included. In one session pupils who were able got up and moved around, shaking hands and welcoming pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
121. The schemes of work appropriately include aspects of Christianity and other religions, focusing on stories, special people, symbols and festivals. They are planned throughout the year. Assemblies make a significant contribution to learning. Festivals of the major world religions are celebrated - for example, Yom Kippur, Ramadan and Divali. Assemblies also reinforce spiritual and moral values by discussion of topics such as 'valuing each other' and 'our differences'. Every Christmas there is a nativity play to reinforce the understanding of the Christmas story. All the activities help to improve pupils' learning. The subject is seen by staff as being crucial in informally underpinning the school's philosophy and pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
122. Plans for what is to be taught in each class and schemes of work have yet to be reviewed by the new co-ordinator. The post is new and the existing plans and syllabus are still in use. The co-ordinator has not been able to develop any monitoring system to develop consistency in teaching the subject, especially in the further education department. Resources are good, with a range of artefacts, books and displays. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Religious education continues to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The improved resources and time allowances have made it possible for pupils to be more aware of other cultures. Teaching is improved but yearly progress is not fully developed, owing largely to a number of changes in staffing and co-ordination. This results in pupils' progress over time not being as good as the quality of the teaching would suggest.

## COURSES FOR STUDENTS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION CLASSES

The provision for students who are over the age of compulsory schooling is satisfactory overall.

### Strengths

- Students are prepared well for when they leave school.
- Work related experiences enrich the curriculum.
- There is now an increasing range of accreditation for students.
- Links with other institutions are good.
- There is very good teamwork by the staff.

### Areas for improvement

- Religious education is not taught at present.
- Lack of monitoring of what is taught.
- Insufficient use of ICT.

123. Students make satisfactory progress towards a range of accreditation including ALL and aspects from the National Skills Profile. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when one of the key issues was to provide accreditation. Year 12 students are making good progress in an accredited personal and social skills programme, Moving On, which is planned to be extended. As part of the home management course they learn to plan, shop for, prepare and serve a range of meals and snacks. These are served to staff, students and invited guests. Students learn about healthy living. Literacy skills are improved using personal programmes, which are designed to meet individual needs. More able students read with improved confidence. All students enjoy listening to stories and the use of an Alpha Talker for one student helps to improve listening and speaking skills for many others as they contribute to his recorded home news. Clear objectives are set in English sessions and students improve their understanding of vocabulary; for example, their comprehension of prepositions increases through watching the teacher demonstrate 'before' and 'after' using interesting props. Most students can correctly match symbols they have cut out in the correct order by the end of the lesson. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties improve their modelling skills. They clearly enjoy the activity and concentrate well in response to the praise and encouragement of staff. Students' numeracy skills are not improved sufficiently. Students use diaries to locate birthdays and consolidate their understanding of days of the week and numerical order. They use money to pay for purchases when on shopping trips.
124. Students show their pride in their achievements as they look at their awards or show visitors newspaper cuttings of these and other successes in sport and entertainment. Records of Achievement are maintained for every student and detail their achievements over time. A few students can discuss the displays of photographs articulately and show good comprehension skills as they recount the events leading up to a recent school production, including their individual contributions.
125. Older students make satisfactory progress learning vocational skills. They enjoy attending college and are currently improving their knowledge and understanding of painting and decorating. Students learn how to use tools and safety equipment appropriately. The range of techniques they use increases, including sanding and painting, marbling and stencilling. At a local horticultural college three students gain work experience, planning, designing and maintaining plots of land. During the 'taster' sessions that all further education students attend at the college, students learn to pot and plant out. They also make good use of the varied gardens, such as the sensory garden and the Japanese water garden. Students learn a great deal about mixing with people, dealing with any difficulties and coping with new experiences. Work experience at local shops and hotels and work related activities ensure that they are prepared effectively for when they leave school.
126. At present, teaching and learning are good overall but difficulties have been caused through long-term sickness and temporary staffing arrangements. The most effective teaching is planned in detail with clear objectives for individual students. Activities are chosen well to gain interest and

as a result, students are enthusiastic and very keen to do their work. Work is not confined to the classroom but, appropriately for students preparing for the adult world, good use is made of other facilities in the wider community. On a trip to the local bowling alley, all students were keen to show their independence and were encouraged by staff to mix with other groups and individuals. The improvement of basic skills is included effectively in project work. For example, one group is producing a newspaper using ICT. This improves confidence as well as literacy skills. Other use of ICT is limited, partly because equipment is unsatisfactory. However, the Alpha Talker is used effectively. Links with parents are good, as they record information about weekend activities, which then becomes the contribution of the student during the morning news session. Staff work effectively as cohesive teams. They are consistent and very clear about their high expectations of behaviour, co-operation and independence. Relationships are excellent between staff and students. As a result, there is a calm atmosphere in which pupils work hard. Students follow the example set by staff and are very well mannered and supportive of each other. Weaknesses in teaching stem from a failure to ensure that current work builds on what has been learnt before. Although there are good arrangements for monitoring and tracking students' progress, they have not been consistently followed, as a result of the changes in staff and reorganisation of accommodation and resources.

127. Despite improvements to the curriculum for students, the statutory requirement to teach religious education is currently not met. Since the last inspection a good improvement has been moving the further education provision to the main school site. Physical access is much improved, as there are single storey buildings, ceiling hoists and well-equipped minibuses. Recent re-organisation of classrooms has caused some disruption to accommodation but good use is made of space as a recreation area for students.