

INSPECTION REPORT

OXFORDSHIRE HOSPITAL SCHOOL

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123337

Headteacher: Mr Barry Jackson

Reporting inspector: Hilary Gannaway
21527

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th March 2002

Inspection number: 191738

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Headington Oxford
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Boulton
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

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9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers.
10678	Margaret Paull	Team inspector	Art and design. Special educational needs	
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	Design and technology Religious education Equal opportunities	Quality and range of learning opportunities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the needs of five hospitals across Oxford. It is a very complex establishment with many different groups of pupils who can be long, medium or short stay patients in the hospitals. There are two distinct sectors. The acute psychiatric sector consists of the Highfield Adolescent Unit and The Park Hospital, while the general sector comprises the John Radcliffe Hospital, Radcliffe Infirmary and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre. Some pupils in this second sector have life threatening illnesses and are regularly re-admitted. Pupils of all abilities enter the school anytime between the ages of five to sixteen. Foundation Stage children and Sixth Form students are also given educational support. Only fifty percent of pupils come from the surrounding area with the rest coming from further afield and sometimes from abroad. The school caters for sixty pupils but frequently has up to seventy on roll. During the inspection there were fifty nine pupils of whom thirteen were in receipt of statements of special educational need. Of the three ethnic minority pupils, two had English as an additional language. On average over two thousand pupils pass through the school in a year. There is a huge range of attainment on entry with many pupils not fulfilling their potential because of long periods of non-attendance through illness and interrupted patterns of education due to re-admissions to hospital.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which is effective in rapidly responding to pupils' educational needs so that interruptions to learning are minimised. All pupils achieve well because they are successfully taught by teachers who are experienced in teaching in a variety of hospital settings. This ensures that pupils behave well, are motivated and continue to learn. Leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. This has a positive effect on personal development and the very good attitudes to learning shown by pupils.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and very good in English. It is a significant factor in the pupils' good learning and progress.
- There are very effective links with parents, and teachers often include them in their children's learning.
- Good leadership and management ensure that school priorities are effectively met.
- Links with partner institutions are very strong and support continuous education for pupils during their time in hospital and during transition back to their mainstream school.
- Relationships are very good. Pupils quickly respond to very effective support and encouragement from staff by demonstrating high levels of involvement in learning activities.

What could be improved

- There is inconsistency in the balance of the curriculum. This is because the clarity of lesson objectives vary and staff do not always monitor what has actually been taught to assist them in providing a balanced coverage across subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching is not always systematically undertaken.
- There is no overall school behaviour management policy to ensure consistent practice across the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in January 1997 when the main issues were the curriculum and monitoring. Curriculum co-ordinators are now in place and monitoring their subjects. Schemes of work are based on the National Curriculum and are reflected in planning. Teaching time has been extended. Good self-review procedures that involve all staff also contribute well to monitoring and reviewing of the school. The school is now taking into account guidance on the education of children and young people with medical needs. However, the continuing lack of suitable storage and facilities for some curricular areas is still affecting the range of activities teachers can teach.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Judging progress and achievement over long periods of time is difficult in a school where pupils stay for lengths of time varying from a few days to several months. However, a range of first hand evidence, including lesson observations, demonstrates that pupils achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets and individual education plans (IEPs) when in this school. They achieve well overall in English and very well in speaking and listening. This is because of the many opportunities across the curriculum to practise these skills. Pupils' achievement in literacy is very good due to work being very well planned to fill in gaps caused by a disrupted education. Pupils achieve well in mathematics across the school with the development of numeracy work being the main focus for younger pupils. In science, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory owing to the lack of facilities for investigative work. Achievement is good in all other subjects observed except physical education where it is satisfactory. This is because opportunities to take part in physical activities are restricted for some pupils who would benefit from them. Achievement is similar for all pupils irrespective of age, ethnicity or ability because teachers successfully adapt work for individual needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, work hard, concentrate and persevere. They are keen to resume activities as soon as they come back from treatment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and is a significant factor in pupils' progress in lessons. There is occasional unsettled behaviour by younger pupils but they quickly calm down and begin work.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Relationships are very good and pupils are keen to share each other's successes. They make positive comments on the work of others.
Attendance	It is difficult to judge attendance in a school of this complexity. Most pupils have little opportunity to absent themselves and respond positively to the teaching. Non-attendance is mainly as a result of pupils receiving treatment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 - 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is consistently good across all ages and all school sectors. It meets the needs of all pupils well. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching is very good in English and good in mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). It is good in all other subjects in which it was possible to make a judgement. The teaching of literacy is very good because teachers have been well trained. They quickly assess pupils' needs ensuring that they maintain a continuous education. Teaching of numeracy is only just being developed and is satisfactory. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in all subjects and pupils use it confidently and independently for research. Teachers have a good understanding of the problems faced by pupils. They teach well in a wide variety of circumstances ranging from class teaching to individual teaching on the ward. This ensures that pupils continue to acquire a good range of skills. However, a minority of lessons are weakened when pupils are not challenged to extend learning due to the pace of the lesson slowing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although the curriculum is satisfactory, and based on the National Curriculum, it lacks balance. However, learning opportunities are good with community links providing a good range of activities to extend learning. There is also a strong commitment to continuity of education with pupils' own schools. Careers guidance and the work related curriculum is very good for pupils who stay longer in the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school does not have provision for pupils with English as an additional language but has access to Local Education Authority (LEA) provision when appropriate.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	This is satisfactory. Pupils with IEPs are regularly, and effectively, monitored and this helps to ensure that good progress is made.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good and well supported by a good PSHE programme. There are many planned opportunities for pupils' personal development including assemblies, opportunities to reflect on, and discuss, issues and a range of visitors including artists.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for ensuring the welfare of pupils. Regular meetings with hospital staff are used to discuss pupils' well-being and promote good support and guidance. However, the school has no overall behaviour policy to support the varying needs in each sector.

The school has very effective links with parents. Information provided for parents is very good and is varied to suit the length of stay of the pupil. Very good relationships ensure that parents are involved in their child's learning, making a positive contribution to continuous education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good. The role of the senior management team is developing well. There are clear strategies to implement change.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	At present this is satisfactory although there is a developing understanding of school needs. Governors are now well placed to monitor, review and help the school move forward and further raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory. The school has a very good school improvement plan and there is detailed self-evaluation of outcomes. However, monitoring of the curriculum and teaching are still inconsistent.
The strategic use of resources	The school's educational priorities for improvement are well supported through good financial planning.

The number, qualifications and experience of staff are well matched to the curriculum. While resources are adequate, a lack of storage space makes buying more problematic. Specialist accommodation for practical aspects of subjects such as science, art and design technology are unsatisfactory. However, staff use their skills well to minimise the effect of this on learning. The school is developing procedures to ensure that the principles of best value are applied consistently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased with, and value, the way the school works closely with them to support their children. • They consider that the school is managed well. • Their children behave well and make progress despite being in hospital. • The teaching their children receive is good. 	<p>There were no significant criticisms.</p>

No parents attended the meeting which is understandable as many parents would be with their children on the wards. However, twenty seven questionnaires were returned and discussions held with parents during the inspection. Many parents feel that the school provides them and their children with a lifeline during difficult times. Inspectors agree with these positive comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This is a very complex hospital school over five sites, where pupils are admitted with a range of, often acute, psychiatric and medical conditions. Pupils are admitted for periods of time varying from several days to several months and most take work completed with them when they leave. This makes judgement of progress and achievement over time difficult. It is also often not possible to refer to variations in progress between pupils of different ages. This is because progress in this setting is affected by a wide range of medical and psychological illnesses, some of which can be regressive, rather than provision. Nevertheless, where possible judgements have been made from the range of evidence available. This evidence includes a scrutiny of the work of pupils who have spent the longest time in hospital, portfolios of work, the work of pupils presently in the school, displays, records, lesson observations and discussions with pupils, parents and staff. The school is beginning to implement a range of non-standard school targets to measure the achievement of short stay pupils. These were also scrutinised. Examples of what pupils of different ages are achieving are given where possible.

2. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with achievement of pupils now being good. Achievement is good for all pupils irrespective of ethnicity, gender or ability. There is no difference between the achievement of pupils in different key stages. Those taught in classrooms and individually on the wards also achieve equally well. This is possible because the school has an inclusive aim of continuous education for all, supported by good teaching. Progress towards individual targets set for longer stay pupils, is good because they follow planned programmes that use the National Curriculum as their basis. This also aids pupils who stay longer at Highfield to gain GCSE accreditation where appropriate. Short stay pupils achieve well due to the rapid response of the school to ensuring that their education is only minimally interrupted. Several good examples were seen where teachers made quick, accurate assessments of educational need, which involved parents and the pupil. This ensured appropriate work was set as soon as possible. The achievement of readmitted pupils is good because the school liaises well with their mainstream school to ensure work is continuous and builds on previous learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their IEPs due to well thought out individual work.

3. Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets in English. Achievement is very good in speaking and listening and in pupils' basic literacy skills. This is due to all aspects of English being developed and practiced across the curriculum. Most pupils listen carefully. They join in discussions, taking turns appropriately and developing the skills of argument. Pupils of all ages enjoy listening to stories and poems. From Years 1 to 6 they develop a good range of reading strategies, while older pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, and those with special needs, successfully progress in their letter formation. By Year 6 most understand the use of punctuation. Between Years 7 and 11 pupils draft and redraft and complete extended writing, often using ICT to present their completed work.

4. Pupils achieve well in mathematics with number work being the main focus for younger pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 add and subtract three digit numbers and do sums involving long division. The introduction of the numeracy strategy to this age range has aided the development of all pupils' mental strategies. By Year 11 many pupils use scale to calculate distance. They extend their ability to handle and interpret data, often using

appropriate ICT software. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing numeracy skills across the curriculum.

5. Although pupils' achievement in science was good in the lessons observed, it is only satisfactory over time. This is because pupils do not always have enough opportunities to improve their investigative skills due to restrictions in facilities and storage. Younger pupils develop their understanding of sound, vibration and the different things that make sound. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have been completing work on the senses. These older pupils often follow an individual plan of learning on the wards. Recently this has included work on food chains, nutrition and diet.

6. Achievement in PSHE is good throughout the school and this is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes to school despite illness.

7. Achievement by pupils in all other subjects is good with the exception of physical education where it is satisfactory. In religious education and modern foreign languages there was not enough evidence for a judgement. However, languages including French, Spanish, Italian and Latin are taught to individuals where it is appropriate. Support for pupils by teachers with a suitable command of the language ensures they continue to make progress. Music is not a regular feature of the timetable, but where taught pupils develop skills well.

8. Achievement is often very good in art, particularly for older pupils. This is due to the ability of pupils to use a wide range of media in lessons and their use of ICT to enhance and extend their design and illustration.

9. In design and technology pupils plan, discuss and make items such as containers for money, follow recipes when cooking and instructions when using technics lego. They evaluate and modify their work.

10. In humanities, younger pupils develop an understanding of chronology and mapping skills. Older pupils identify and name rivers, knowing what a river basin is and the events leading to World War 2. Their investigative skills are being well developed. This helps them to prepare well for external accreditation.

11. Pupils make good use of their ICT skills across the curriculum. They are confident in basic computer skills and have a wide understanding of the programs they use. They practise and extend skills with assurance. Most use the internet well for information and send emails to their mainstream schools and schools abroad.

12. Although achievement is satisfactory in physical education, pupils who participate in activities make good progress in their attitude to sports and exercise. However, while it is appropriate that some pupils do not do physical education there are times, for example for younger, long stay pupils where activities could be valuably undertaken.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good which is a further improvement since the last inspection. Parents say that their children like the fact that they continue with work even though they are ill and report that their children like and respond very well to their teachers.

14. Teachers quickly get to know their pupils when they arrive in hospital and use very good praise, support and humour to encourage them and motivate them to work. As a result, pupils work hard, concentrate well and are highly interested in what they are doing, even though some are experiencing considerable discomfort or distress. Pupils respond very

enthusiastically to interesting activities. For example, Year 2 pupils at the Radcliffe Infirmary investigated vibration through the use of cup and string 'telephones'. They were excited to be able to feel the vibrations as the sound passed along the string. Throughout the school, pupils respond very positively to art. They concentrate hard and pay attention to detail. Pupils persevere with their work even when they are tired or unwell and are keen to resume activities as soon as they come back from treatment.

15. Pupils' behaviour continues to be good in lessons and there is an absence of oppressive behaviour. They are polite and respectful to teachers and staff and are willing to listen and to try and participate in tasks given to them. They treat the school's resources well and are careful when using equipment such as laptop computers when they are working in bed. Pupils accept each other's difficulties well and often ignore pupils who have the potential to distract them from their learning. When working in the hospital day rooms, they attend well to their work even though there may be considerable noise from other children and adults playing and talking nearby. Older pupils, based at Highfield, are clear about the protocols for behaviour in lessons and respond very positively to instructions and guidance from teachers. However, younger pupils at The Park have more potential to be disruptive. They often take a long time to settle when arriving in lessons in the morning and after break and lunchtimes. Teachers manage this well and, once engaged in learning, pupils calm down and behave well.

16. Personal development is good. Pupils have very good relationships with one another and respond very well to the encouragement and support of staff. When there are suitable opportunities, pupils are able to work together well. They share in each other's successes and comment positively on each other's efforts. For example, a pupil at Highfield watched another working on a piece of clay sculpture and said, "Well done, that's coming on really well." In the daily reading sessions at The Park, pupils make positive and encouraging comments to each other about their progress. They show good levels of initiative when using the Internet for research. Pupils quickly learn to accept and value one another. They get on well, sometimes with relative strangers, because the school promotes an inclusive environment and encourages them to think, not just of themselves, but others around them and in the wider world.

17. It is not possible to quote attendance figures for a school where over 2000 pupils are admitted and leave during the year. Most pupils respond positively to teaching whenever they can either in bed, in small groups or in classrooms, depending upon where they are based.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching continues to be challenging for all teachers but with significant differences between the general and psychiatric sectors. In the general sector, most teaching is on the ward and usually takes place by the bedside where teachers have to cope with the constant interruptions of a busy hospital, or in the playroom which is used by other adults, staff and young children. While teachers in the psychiatric sector deal with more difficult behaviours, pupils stay longer in purpose built accommodation and there are more opportunities for continuous planning to meet individual needs.

19. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now consistently good across all subjects and age groups. Teaching is good or better in eight out of ten lessons and very good in three out of ten. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers are now fully focused on ensuring that pupils receive the best possible education given the circumstances. This is due to better planning based on aspects of the National Curriculum and good links with pupils' mainstream schools to ensure a continuous education where possible. Basic skills are taught well and reinforced throughout the school. This particularly supports the

learning of pupils who have breaks in their education due to illness. There has been a good focus on making sure that teachers have a well-developed understanding of the literacy skills needed by pupils. This was evident in the high standards of literacy teaching seen across the school and is presently being extended to numeracy. A further improvement since the last inspection is that teachers now achieve an effective balance between the personal needs of pupils and their academic achievement. This has a positive effect on learning.

20. In the general sector, where they often see pupils for short periods of time, teachers quickly assess pupils and use this information to set targets. Pupils appreciate this and respond by working hard and with interest. For example, in one lesson at the Nuffield, carefully targeted questioning of a pupil and parent led to the pupil enthusiastically beginning work on a well chosen activity soon after admittance. For pupils who are frequently readmitted, most teachers try to ensure that work parallels their mainstream work. This helps to minimise gaps in learning and keeps pupils motivated. Teachers are adept at devising methods of taking lessons to the bedside. For example, to overcome storage problems, trolleys are often loaded with resources and moved around as needed so no lesson time is lost. Most teachers, except those at Highfield where pupils are only of secondary age, confidently teach pupils of all ages well. They have good subject knowledge, and use this well to teach a wide range of subjects. They are supported in this by monitoring and advice from subject co-ordinators and LEA advisers. Teachers spend time taking advice from the pupils' mainstream schools to make sure that work is appropriate. For instance, the teacher of one pupil in the general sector, who was shortly to take an examination, spent time on the phone checking the best way to prepare the pupil. This was appreciated by the pupil who felt confident that the work set did meet his needs.

21. Teachers use a good range of methods to match the lesson to the circumstances pupils find themselves in. They work very well with support staff to ensure individual needs, particularly those of pupils with special educational needs, are met. Independent learning is encouraged such as at the Radcliffe Infirmary where discussion and negotiation, for example about how work is to be prioritised, is used successfully to facilitate progress and maintain concentration.

22. Good relationships and expectations by teachers, particularly of behaviour, mean pupils concentrate well on the wards, despite distractions around them. In the psychiatric sector potentially disruptive behaviour at the start of lessons is dealt with effectively so little teaching time is lost. All staff manage individual teaching very well allowing for the needs of sick pupils. ICT is used in a wide variety of ways so that pupils are confident to effectively access information needed for their work. Teachers have a good knowledge of appropriate programs and rarely miss an opportunity to reinforce or extend pupils' learning in this way.

23. What weakens a few lessons is the occasional lack of challenge and pace. At these times pupils lose concentration and do not complete work. While some very good examples of lesson planning were seen, in a few cases planning is inconsistent and leave pupils unsure of their objectives. However teachers do carefully assess so that they can plan future work.

24. Teaching in English is very good and pupils respond by being enthusiastic learners. Teachers are highly skilled at including pupils of all abilities by adapting questions so that all are able to be involved. They use work from the mainstream school effectively, changing it to suit the needs of pupils in hospital while, at the same time, making sure that it is challenging.

25. Teaching in mathematics is good because teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a range of activities that build on prior learning. Good relationships result in teachers managing mixed age classes well. The carefully targeted individual number work

ensures that all pupils make progress and remain interested. Praise and encouragement are also used well to motivate pupils.

26. Despite difficulties with facilities, teaching in science is good. Teachers plan relevant, practical lessons which reinforce pupils' investigative skills as far as is possible.

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

27. Overall, the curriculum is reasonably broad, and is well matched to pupils' individual needs. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that there is continuity of education with pupils' mainstream schools, and the school is successful in making sure that, wherever possible, pupils are able to reintegrate into their mainstream school, or are included in an alternative education setting. As this is a priority, the curriculum from the pupils' mainstream schools is also a priority when programmes are being planned. The curriculum which has been developed by the hospital school is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study, and there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in planning for this. In all the settings there is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy, with literacy strategies being particularly effective. The pupils in the units at Highfield and The Park have a planned timetable, which covers most aspects of the curriculum, with subjects such as modern foreign languages being taught when they are part of a pupils' mainstream school curriculum. Pupils in the general sector often do not have access to all subjects because medical interventions break into their timetables, with the result that subjects such as science, history, and geography are not always taught. In these situations, the curriculum lacks balance. While plans are monitored, the school does not yet check what pupils have actually done and re-adjust work accordingly in order to ensure a balanced curriculum. Limited accommodation for practical subjects across the school also affects the range of activities planned. For example, there are some aspects of investigative science that cannot be taught but would benefit longer stay pupils. At the Radcliffe Infirmary useful joint planning for some activities with the play specialists enhances pupils' opportunities.

28. Policies are in place for all subjects and schemes of work have now been developed. While a thematic approach is still used as a basis for planning, the modules are based on the National Curriculum and on the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The thematic approach gives an opportunity for staff to work together on developing the curriculum, and for resources to be targeted as each theme is introduced. Clarity in planning for what pupils are to learn is variable between subjects. This affects teachers' planning for lessons and can also lead to an imbalance in what is taught. Where there are not clear lesson objectives, plans often become just lists of activities.

29. The importance of providing good equal opportunities underpins the school's provision, and care is taken to ensure that all have access to the curriculum and are able to make progress. This represents an improvement on the last inspection. Those for whom English is an additional language are helped to develop their knowledge of English, where this is needed, through LEA support. Work has been done to ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils who are in bed can do as much as possible for themselves. The Code of Practice for those with special educational needs is implemented when, for example, a pupil has a statement of special educational needs. All pupils who are in hospital for more than fifteen days also have an IEP, with targets for each subject, which helps to ensure that good progress is made.

30. The programme for PSHE is good. There is a taught curriculum which pays attention to issues such as drugs awareness and sex education. The schemes of work that have been developed also include reference to citizenship, which links into topics such as rights and

responsibilities. In addition, the personal development of pupils underpins much of the work of the school, with stated aims to develop pupils' self esteem and self-confidence. Many of the pupils have personal development targets in their IEPs which help them to make progress in this area. Care is taken to ensure that modules are appropriate. Staff deal sensitively with topics, for example, talking about healthy eating when a pupil has an eating disorder.

31. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities which support the curriculum well. The context of the school does not allow for extra curricular activities, since pupils are the responsibility of the Health Authority outside school hours. However, for pupils at Highfield, there is a range of visits which gives support to their learning in different areas of the curriculum. For example, they have visited Blenheim Palace, Nuneham Courtney Arboretum, the canal at Thrupp, various colleges and parks, the botanical gardens and University College farm. Pupils at The Park have visited local parks and farms. These visits have helped to develop knowledge and ideas in history, geography, science and art, as well as supporting personal development.

32. Within the limits imposed in a hospital school, provision for careers and work related education is very good, particularly for those at Highfield. Careers education is included within the PSHE programme and aims both to develop pupils' self awareness and to enable them to investigate opportunities and to develop career plans. There are close links with the local careers adviser (now the Personal Adviser under the Connexions scheme) who visits the school to interview pupils, and will visit pupils in the other sites if necessary. The Connexions service covers a wide area, and this enables links to be made with pupils' mainstream schools and careers advisers. The few pupils for whom it is appropriate undertake work experience, for which they are well prepared and which is carefully monitored. This, together with the taught sessions, helps to give pupils an understanding of life outside school and prepare them for the transition to further education, work or training.

33. The school has good links with the community, which contribute well to pupils' learning. Most of the curriculum related visits which pupils undertake are within the local area. Visitors from the community are involved, for example, in working with pupils on creative writing and in music and art workshops. They contribute to subjects such as personal, social and health education in, for example, talking about drugs awareness. Collections from museums are borrowed to support work in subjects such as art and design. Facilities such as the hospital gym and the local swimming pool are used to extend the curriculum.

34. Links with partner institutions are very good, in particular those which help to maintain pupils' links with their mainstream schools. There is liaison with these schools as soon as a hospital admission is planned, or when an emergency admission takes place. These links are, initially, to obtain information from the mainstream schools about pupils' learning and the subjects which they are studying, and to obtain work from the schools. In many cases, support is also provided for pupils to maintain social links with their friends through the use of facilities such as emails. For many pupils who will be returning to their mainstream schools there are supported visits back to their schools, and gradual reintegration if needed. A report is sent to the mainstream school about what they have studied and achieved during their stay at the hospital. The aim of these procedures is to ensure that pupils stay included in their mainstream school whenever this is possible. Where pupils are moving to a different school, links are set up to provide a smooth transition. In addition, the school has established links with many local schools, with a view to linking staff who are able to work with mainstream colleagues to support curriculum development. There are links with other hospital schools in England and, through the Comenius project, in Italy and Spain. The European link has also

provided a useful contact for pupils, who now have an opportunity of corresponding by email with their counterparts in these hospitals.

35. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development through its provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is one of the most positive aspects of the school and has a very good impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, in spite of the many difficulties that they face. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

36. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and is central to the school's work. In discussions with teachers and through their work, pupils are given time to think about the situation that they are in, the changes that may be occurring in their lives due to illness and the impact that this may have on others. In personal, social and health education lessons in the psychiatric sector, pupils are encouraged to think about what is happening to them, for example in pieces of writing entitled 'Thoughts of Life'. Planned assemblies for groups of pupils, mainly at Highfield, provide very good opportunities for pupils to understand themselves, their relationships to others and to reflect on the meaning of their lives. In one example, following the very good role model set by the teacher, pupils reflected calmly and quietly on something that they would like to improve either in their own or other's lives. There are very good quality displays throughout the whole school which makes all pupils feel valued and which celebrate their achievements.

37. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school has a strong caring ethos and promotes a socially inclusive community in which pupils learn how to care and show concern for others. Moral and social issues are considered within personal, social and health education lessons. For example, pupils at Highfield are given very good opportunities to discuss the dilemmas faced by young people of their age when subjected to peer group pressure to take drugs. The school is socially and culturally inclusive and teaches pupils to value and respect all faiths and beliefs. At the John Radcliffe, teachers use current affairs well in discussions with pupils, for example, the events of 11 September 2001. This helps pupils to maintain contact with what is going on in the outside world and to consider other peoples' lives as well as their own.

38. There are very good opportunities for social development. Pupils are encouraged to work together in small groups in hospital day rooms or during meetings at Highfield when pupils are asked to contribute positive and negative comments about issues which affect the whole group. At The Park, short daily reading sessions are used very well to develop co-operative and social skills. Pupils are encouraged to comment positively on each other's efforts. Teachers are skilful at encouraging reluctant pupils to join groups and to talk things over without being intrusive. This gives pupils confidence, raises their self-esteem and promotes a sense of worth.

39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. They are provided with many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures in literature, music, and art. These elements of the curriculum make a very important contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and social development. For example, pupils explore the moods and feelings engendered by looking at the work of Paul Klee or Picasso's painting of Guernica. The school makes good use of visiting artists where possible, such as creative writers and musicians, and makes good use of opportunities to work with leaders from different faiths. The school is culturally inclusive and teaches pupils to value and respect all faiths and beliefs. The school's recent involvement in the Member of European Schools in Hospitals project gives pupils the opportunity to communicate with other pupils who are facing the same difficulties in hospitals abroad.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide pupils with a good standard of care and welfare and provides them with good educational and personal support and guidance. Parents appreciate the way in which teaching staff get to know their children and their difficulties and support them well with their learning. They say that it is easy to approach staff if they have any concerns.

41. The school has good procedures for ensuring the welfare of pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a whole school policy for child protection and ensures that its staff are trained appropriately in the procedures as set out by the local child protection committee. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that staff are aware of the procedures to report any concerns. Regular pastoral team meetings are held to discuss pupils' general welfare and well-being. There is a good health and safety policy in place which follows the local authority and hospital guidelines. Staff receive regular health authority training in fire evacuation procedures.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Daily and weekly registers are kept and records collated to monitor overall attendance at the school. Teachers work well with hospital staff to provide as much education as possible, even when pupils are receiving frequent treatment during the day.

43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and preventing oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. In all units of the school, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and promote a caring and positive environment. Pupils respond well to this and learn how they are expected to behave. Behaviour management policies in place for the school at Highfield and The Park give guidance to teaching staff. However, there is no whole school behaviour policy to clearly set out to both teaching and hospital staff the overall approach to the consistent management of pupils' behaviour within the educational setting of the hospital school. As a result, there is some inconsistency of approach between hospital and teaching staff, particularly in the psychiatric sector. At The Park, this results in some disruption as pupils take a long time to settle in lessons in the morning and after break and at lunchtime. As there is no behaviour policy, there is no clear statement about the adopted procedures for control and restraint or whether these follow hospital or LEA guidelines. There has been very little formal training for staff in control and restraint procedures or how to diffuse conflict.

44. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are good. Regular planning sessions and meetings with other teachers and hospital staff ensure that all pupils' various needs are kept under review.

45. The school has effective arrangements for assessing pupils' achievements. A range of information from the mainstream school, parents and other agencies is appropriately used to set initial targets and plan the curriculum for pupils. Where applicable, statements of special educational needs and existing IEP's and school records are obtained. These IEPs are integrated into the assessment system with further IEPs written for pupils where medical assessment indicates they will remain in hospital for over fifteen days. These are regularly monitored. On the basis of effective initial assessment, individual target setting is realistic and well matched to individual learning needs in literacy, mathematics, science and art.

46. Records are detailed and similar across the school but are adjusted or adapted according to the needs and circumstances within the sectors. For example, records of what pupils know, understand and can do are used appropriately for short stay pupils, or pupils with specific disabilities or needs. Pupil self-evaluation is part of the assessment process,

and this successfully motivates pupils and aids them in acquiring an understanding of their own learning needs.

47. Teachers maintain daily and weekly records of achievement across all curriculum subjects, ensuring continuity of learning, even in the acute general sectors of the school. They make good use of non-statutory target records with evaluation against these. This information is then used well to inform future planning for individual pupils.

48. There is good support and guidance, for both educational progress and personal development. This is closely monitored by staff and supported by good mainstream school and parent links, both before admission where possible, and via thorough arrangements at discharge which include a progress report. This greatly assists pupils who are frequently re-admitted to continue education with as little disruption as possible. Teachers are sensitive to changes in pupils and skilled at adapting work accordingly. Personal development is well supported through social links, where possible, with the mainstream school. The good PSHE programme gives opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and maturity. This is also supported at Highfield through access to careers advice and work experience via the Connexions service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened the effectiveness of its links with parents and, as a result, parents have very good views of the school. In the questionnaires and in letters to the registered inspector, parents were particularly positive about the way in which the school works closely with them and the ease with which they can talk to staff about any concerns that they may have. Parents feel that the school is managed well and that their children make good progress.

50. Many parents express the view that the school is a 'lifeline' for them when their children are ill. It helps them to feel very involved in maintaining the continuity of their children's education. They appreciate the way in which they are made to feel welcome and they value the quality of support that is given to both their children and the family. Parents made no significant criticism of any areas of the school's work.

51. The quality of information that is provided for parents is very good. The school's leaflet and prospectus explain the role of the different sectors to parents and help them to understand what will be provided for their children during their stay in hospital. The length of time that pupils are in hospital varies widely and this is reflected in the amount of written information that is given to parents about their children's progress. Brief accounts of work that has been covered for short-stay pupils and more detailed academic reports for pupils who have longer stays, for example in the psychiatric sector, are helpful both to parents and to the pupils' schools.

52. Teachers are in regular contact with parents, either because they see them frequently at their children's bedsides, or through telephone contact and letters. Parents often provide a vital link between their children's schools and the hospital teachers in providing information about work that has been studied and the levels at which pupils are working. The involvement of parents in this way has a good impact on the work of the school. It helps teachers to plan work which matches that being provided in schools and this enables pupils to continue to make progress even though their education is being disrupted.

53. Teachers have very good relationships with all parents and try to include them as much as possible in their children's work. They take time to explain their role to parents for whom English is an additional language and to involve them in the work that their children are

doing in hospital. Teachers work closely with parents and have positive, respectful relationships with them. As a result, parents are keen to encourage their children to work even when they may be reluctant to do so. They hear their children read and work alongside them, for example during art activities in the day rooms in the general sector. For longer stay patients in the psychiatric sector, parents are invited to reviews and meetings to plan for their children's future. Parents of pupils at Highfield are full of praise for the way in which teachers keep them fully informed about their children's academic progress and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. Leadership and management of the school are good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the leadership and management were satisfactory. There were a number of reasons for this earlier judgement. These included concerns that school aims were not then being subscribed to by all and that curricular developments, and the pace of change needed to ensure improvement, were not happening quickly enough. These issues have now been resolved and staff work together well to provide an appropriate curriculum based on the National Curriculum. These developments are now having a positive effect on learning and support well the aim that pupils receive a continuing, and inclusive, education while in hospital. This improvement has been aided by the school now being designated a school, rather than a service.

55. The headteacher has a clear view of the educational direction the school needs to take and the developments needed to support this. These are in line with the recent Access to Education circular on the education of pupils with medical needs. In support of this, the school has recently set up a pilot project based at Horton Hospital in Banbury to increase educational opportunities for pupils. Improvements are increasingly promoted by the management structure that is now in place. This consists of a senior management team who represent all areas of the school and between them provide a good overview. Although they have a range of appropriate roles in their sectors, the headteacher is aware of the need for them to begin to take on more strategic whole school roles. The implementation of subject co-ordinators, while not yet completely established in all subjects, has suitably aided the development of the curriculum. Delegation of responsibilities has helped staff to work increasingly co-operatively together. They have a good commitment to improvement and to providing good learning opportunities for pupils.

56. There are clear strategies to implement change. The very well constructed, detailed school improvement plan has a very good focus on developing areas of the curriculum and self-evaluation as well as good links to the LEA Education Development Plan. This is helping to drive improvement forward in all areas of the school.

57. There have recently been changes in the governing body including a new chair of governors who is very supportive. He has spent time in school and already has a suitable understanding of issues the school needs to tackle. Governors are kept well informed by regular reports that include reviews of areas of the school. They have an appropriate range of committees within which to discuss aspects of the school. There is an increased involvement in school development planning by governors. This is beginning to assist them in developing an understanding of strengths, weaknesses and the way forward for the school. They are now well placed to begin to monitor, review and aid the school in order to further raise standards.

58. The school has begun to implement self-review and is supported in its quality assurance by the LEA. Regular, minuted teacher discussions, yearly interviews with the headteacher and the writing of evaluative reports by coordinators and those in senior

management ensures a strong evaluative contribution from staff. This builds up a good picture of the school which is then used to help form school improvement priorities. Subject co-ordinators have begun to monitor their subject, including teaching. This is also proving a valuable tool for improvement. It not only gives them an overview of their subject across the school, but enables them to support staff teaching that subject. The headteacher knows his staff well and there has been an improvement in overall monitoring through the good quality systems already in place. However, monitoring of teaching is mainly informal as is monitoring of curriculum planning to ensure suitable learning objectives and appropriate coverage of subjects.

59. The range of qualifications and experience of the teaching staff enables the school to meet the wide and diverse needs of its pupils well. They are well supported by learning support assistants. The school's induction policy and practice prepares new staff very well for working in these challenging circumstances and the subsequent review with the headteacher evaluates the effectiveness of the process. The school has effective procedures for teachers' performance management and review and these arrangements help to drive forward the school in meeting its aim of enabling pupils to continue their learning by maintaining continuity of education. This aim is further supported by the school's approach to the continuing professional development of its staff through planned training opportunities that relate to its priorities as identified in the school improvement plan. This positive approach to all aspects of staff training and professional development is recognised in the school's recent accreditation as an Investors in People organisation.

60. As the improvement plan is an effective working document with priorities clearly identified, the school is able to effectively link budgeting and spending to these targets. Careful financial planning is supported very well by day-to-day financial management and administration, with well established procedures. As a result of these efficient systems the school is able to monitor spending and to plan strategically for money to be carried forward. These careful arrangements have enabled the school to plan, fund and support new initiatives such as the development of the Horton provision. Specific grants that the school receives are used for their designated purpose and this spending is tracked and audited well. The school is developing procedures to ensure that the principles of best value are applied in all its transactions and current arrangements are satisfactory in this respect. New technology is used satisfactorily in all areas of school administration.

61. Although the school's facilities are good at Highfield and satisfactory at The Park, its accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. Resources although adequate overall, are limited due to insufficient storage. There are inadequate facilities for teaching the practical aspects of science, art, and design and technology and the overall accommodation in the general sector is particularly unsatisfactory. In this sector teaching rooms are multi-purpose and that means that the areas are not always available for lessons and when they are used there are frequent disruptions. In addition, storage facilities are totally inadequate and therefore even though the sector has money available to buy learning resources it cannot do so because there is nowhere to store them. Teachers work hard and often successfully overcome these difficulties. However, accommodation problems and associated difficulty with resources reduce learning opportunities particularly in science, art, physical education, and design and technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The headteacher, governors and staff need to:

- (1) Improve the balance of the curriculum by:

- ensuring that staff regularly check what has been taught and adjust work so that all subjects they teach receive an appropriate allocation of time;
- ensuring that all subject modules have clear learning objectives that can be consistently translated into specific lesson targets;
- monitoring to ensure appropriate coverage of the whole curriculum throughout the age range taught.

(Paragraphs: 27,28,58,83,91,96)

- (2) Further strengthen school monitoring and self-review by implementing systematic regular monitoring of teaching.

(Paragraph: 58)

- (3) Develop a consistent behaviour policy that is:

- responsive to the needs of each of the school sectors;
- Contains a clear statement on the procedures for control and restraint.

And is supported by behaviour management training that includes:

- strategies for avoiding conflict;
- the identification of situations where restraint may need to be used;
- risk assessments;
- a range of behaviour management responses.

(Paragraphs: 15,43,70)

63. The following minor areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Continue to work closely with the Heath Authority to improve storage and accommodation in order to widen learning opportunities and provide an even more effective learning environment.

(Paragraphs: 5,27,61,72,78,81,83,84,87,91,96,100,107,112,113)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	21	36	14	0	0	0
Percentage	0	30	50	20	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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	59*
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2*

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2137
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2137

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	N/A	School data	N/A

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

- Week of inspection only

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	56
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Week of inspection only

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.1
Average class size	5

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	551728
Total expenditure	524016
Expenditure per pupil	7381
Balance brought forward from previous year	371898
Balance carried forward to next year	64898

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.8
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	48
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	32	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	60	20	0	10
The teaching is good.	74	22	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	36	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	11	7	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	33	43	0	0	24
The school works closely with parents.	69	27	0	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	19	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	33	0	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	29	5	0	0

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

ENGLISH

65. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when progress and teaching were mainly satisfactory. Teaching is now very good and overall pupils achieve well in English. In the speaking and listening element of English, achievement is very good. Achievement is good overall because pupils of all abilities are very well taught, relationships are positive and teachers ensure that, as far as is possible, all work builds on pupils' previous learning at their mainstream schools.

66. Careful attention is given to encouraging speaking and listening with many planned opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in lessons across the curriculum. Most pupils listen carefully in class and individual lessons. They are keen to join in discussion and patiently take turns to exchange ideas. Pupils become involved in oral lessons because teachers are skilled at including pupils of all abilities by effectively adapting questions and activities to suit all needs. For example, in a history lesson, pupils engaged in a lively discussion with staff about their parents' reactions to fashions in the 1960s. In drama, older pupils who have limited skills in oral communication, or who are reluctant to join in group activities, act out short dramas. They suggest future activities such as a drama production. Older pupils also sensibly discuss their work with both teachers and other pupils. They become more confident to speak out because they know their contributions will be valued.

67. Achievement in reading is good. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy stories and poetry. In this they take their cue from teachers' expressive reading and enthusiasm for books. Between Years 1 and 6 most pupils develop a good range of reading strategies, including an understanding of the use of contextual cues. They use prediction to make sensible guesses when reading unfamiliar texts. Increasingly pupils read with fluency and expression, paying due regard to punctuation. Teachers introduce literacy terms very effectively so that younger pupils confidently use words such as 'author', 'illustrator' and 'adjective' when discussing the books they read. All pupils widen their knowledge and use of vocabulary, and increase their understanding of different types of text, including non-fiction. The older pupils have a growing awareness of a wide range of writers such as William Golding, Sylvia Plath and Shakespeare. Many use reference books and the Internet to seek information in a range of subjects.

68. Achievement in writing is good. Younger pupils, and those with learning difficulties, are effectively supported by the use of shared writing, where they watch the teacher write down their ideas and then copy over or beneath it. Pupils are encouraged to form letters correctly and teachers take time to ensure their own writing presents a good model. By Year 6, most pupils understand the importance of using punctuation to clarify meaning in their writing, and they check their spellings by using dictionaries. They write in different styles for a range of purposes, such as rewriting fairy tales and expressing their feelings through poetry. Throughout the school, the pupils draft, redraft and edit their work, and make good use of ICT to present the final versions. This results in work of a high quality and is a significant factor in promoting pupils' confidence and self esteem. During Years 7 to 11 pupils write for many purposes and audiences, and plan and complete extended pieces of written work. This is clearly seen in their expressive autobiographical work, and in the perceptive character studies based on 'Lord of the Flies'.

69. The school has very successfully adapted the National Literacy Strategy for use in a range of teaching situations. Medium and short term planning is closely linked to the strategy

and promotes inclusion well as pupils benefit from lessons which follow the same structure as those in their mainstream schools. Teachers are skilled at assessing pupils' literacy needs when they enter the school and identify appropriate programmes of work with a minimum loss of time. This supports continuity in the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, very effectively.

70. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. It is never less than satisfactory. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection, particularly with regard to the level of challenge in the work and the expectations teachers have of pupils. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has supported improvements in both these areas. Teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants is very good and pupils are managed calmly and consistently. This ensures that very positive relationships are established between adults and pupils, and promotes very good behaviour in lessons. There is very good use of resources and a wide variety of teaching methods which keep lessons moving at a brisk pace, and motivate pupils to learn. On occasions, pupils at The Park arrive late for lessons and are unsettled. Teachers work hard to make up lost time by ensuring pupils fully concentrate on their learning tasks. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of sick or troubled pupils and frequently maximise their opportunities for learning by adapting lessons to enable pupils to contribute positively, even when they are tired or in pain.

71. The co-ordination of English, at both primary and secondary levels, is very good. Both co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and the school benefits from their expertise. The recently appointed primary co-ordinator has further developed existing planning and recording procedures and supports colleagues well. The co-ordinator for the secondary department has led training sessions on extending the National Literacy Strategy to include older pupils, and is planning work to further raise the standards of reading and writing. Planning, assessment and recording procedures are thorough. Teaching and learning in English is monitored and priorities for development have been identified. Literacy development is well promoted in subjects across the curriculum through discussion and through opportunities for reading and writing for a wide range of purposes.

72. Although the range of books and other resources is satisfactory overall, storage facilities are limited in the general sector and a wider range of texts is needed for primary aged pupils. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils study a wide range of texts which illustrate many cultures, beliefs and moral dilemmas, and are given opportunities to talk and write about their own feelings in an atmosphere of trust.

MATHEMATICS

73. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in the school's provision for teaching mathematics. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching or learning and there is a far higher proportion of good teaching so that pupils achieve well across the school.

74. Number work is the main focus for pupils at The Park but there is also an appropriate emphasis on oral work, developing mental strategies, and extending pupils' mathematical vocabulary. The higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 add and subtract three digit numbers and do sums involving long multiplication and division. Pupils have a good understanding of place value. They change seven digit numbers to words and vice versa, convert fractions to decimals and round up to two decimal places. They solve simple algebraic equations and understand the concept of powers such as squared.

75. Pupils at Highfield continue with number work but they also study aspects of shape and space so that by Year 11 they use scale to calculate the distance between towns and to draw shapes on a grid. They calculate angles, such as the angles between the fingers of a clock, and determine the perimeter of regular shapes by measuring the sides. Pupils also extend their ability to handle and interpret data. This gives the higher attaining pupils the confidence to calculate total travel times by extracting information from charts, such as the arrival and departure times from an airline flight timetable. They also read graphs that plot time against distance travelled.

76. Mathematics is well taught across all ages and sectors as teachers have good subject knowledge. Therefore, teachers are able to provide a variety of activities that are generally at an appropriate level to build on pupils' prior learning, although occasionally activities do not always challenge the highest attaining pupils. Teachers' careful use of praise and encouragement, and their good understanding of pupils' needs, results in good pupil management based on very good and well-established relationships. The few instances of disruptive behaviour are dealt with calmly ensuring pupils are soon back on task. Staff provide excellent role models of courteous respectful behaviour and consequently pupils are polite and friendly to adults and each other. As a result of such strong relationships, a mixed age class of pupils were able to make very good progress in applying the four basic rules to problems involving decimals. The teacher was particularly skilful at meeting pupils' individual needs through carefully chosen activities that matched their age and ability, and targeted questioning that extended their understanding and improved their presentation. The activities were interesting and supported by equally good resources that motivated pupils to work accurately and enthusiastically.

77. Staff try hard to ensure continuity of learning in both sectors. In the general sector this positive approach to inclusion is achieved through individual programmes that relate as much as possible to topics that pupils would be studying in their schools. Teachers also integrate IEP targets for pupils with special educational needs well. This ensures that disruption to learning is minimised. Teachers in the psychiatric sector try to do this by retaining pupils' familiarity with the structure of lessons in line with the format of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has the advantages of smoothing transitions from one key stage to another and also better prepares pupils for their return to mainstream schools. Current strategies for promoting these numeracy skills are satisfactory but they have only been implemented recently and are not yet always applied consistently throughout the curriculum.

78. There are two subject co-ordinators and although one is newly appointed they are beginning to work effectively together with good support from the LEA advisory service. Consequently, although current management of the subject is satisfactory there is good recognition of the areas that need developing and a joint commitment to move the subject forward with a good capacity to succeed. They have made a good start through developing medium and short term planning but because this is relatively new it is only just beginning to make a significant impact on the subject curriculum. However, changes that have been made now ensure that pupils have satisfactory broad and balanced mathematical experiences. Good quality procedures are used in both the general and psychiatric sectors to assess and record pupils' achievements. New technology supports this well as teachers use a variety of CD ROMs to help initial and ongoing assessments of what pupils can do, know and understand. ICT is also used appropriately to provide alternative learning opportunities for pupils and this helps to maintain pupils' interest and to extend their understanding. Other learning resources are satisfactory but the variety that is accessible in the general sector is restricted by the inadequate storage facilities and the lack of a dedicated teaching area.

SCIENCE

79. Although the achievement of pupils in science during the inspection was good, over time achievement is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous report. This is because pupils do not always have enough opportunities to improve their investigative skills due to restrictions in practical facilities.

80. The pupils who are in for short periods tend to follow the work that they would be doing in their own schools, as far as practicable. Alternatively, pupils will learn about the current topic that the hospital school has focused on for the half term, such as “Communication”, or “The Earth and Beyond”. During their time on the wards, pupils develop their understanding of sound, vibration and the different things that make sounds. One lesson with two young pupils, for instance, involved making “telephones” out of string and plastic cups. The pupils held a cup at each end of the string, and could hear each other speaking when the string was pulled tightly. They were both delighted at this discovery, and could feel the string vibrating slightly.

81. During the week of the inspection, several pupils on the wards learned about the nature of plant and animal cells, and others learned to use a digital microscope attached to a computer. Pupils who are admitted for longer periods learn in a more structured and planned way, particularly at the Highfield Unit. Their progress in lessons is good. For example, pupils from Years 7 to 11 have recently learned about the five basic senses, how we use them to communicate, and how modern communications have developed through history. Other pupils have learned that plants and animals are made of cells, and that the internal structure of the cells is different, and cells serve different purposes. Each pupil largely follows an individual plan of learning, and so some pupils have learned about food chains in natural environments, and others have studied nutrition and diet. Sometimes, the needs and interests of the pupils coincide, and lessons can be taught in groups. Pupils who stay longer do not develop a wide range of investigative skills because of a lack of specialist accommodation.

82. Teaching and learning are good in lessons. Where teachers plan and organise science lessons, they generally find an appropriate way to run practical, relevant and challenging lessons. This is despite the difficulties presented in some situations in the school. Lessons are well planned, especially for the older pupils at Highfield and the teachers have very good relationships with the pupils in their groups. Teachers motivate pupils to make good efforts, whether in a classroom, or in bed in a ward. Lessons have well-focused aims, with activities that take place in a clear sequence, so helping pupils’ learning whatever their ability. Pupils learn more readily when the lessons include simple equipment, and the use of computers. In one very good lesson with the older long-stay pupils, the teacher used a wide range of equipment such as fibre-optic lights, Morse code lights, semaphore flags and a video film to get the pupils to examine and discuss different ways of communicating with each other, now and in the past. Although several pupils were reluctant at first, the teacher’s very good relationships and interesting approach saw all pupils taking part well by the end of the lesson. A satisfactory lesson with younger children at The Park, involved studying the way sounds are made by blowing across the tops of tubes containing different levels of water. However, despite good relationships, the activities did not challenge the pupils to think or predict what might happen during the experiment and the pupils completed a worksheet without any review of what they had learned at the end of the lesson.

83. There are two co-ordinators for science who provide satisfactory leadership and management. However, the one for the older pupils is currently absent on long-term sick leave. The co-ordinator for the younger pupils has a positive and enthusiastic view, and has fully developed the units of work for each half term. She is assembling small boxes of equipment for each theme, such as sound, or light, or magnetism, and these are being increasingly used on the wards with the short-stay pupils. She has taken some responsibility

for the older pupils, and she teaches them with an enthusiasm that is based on very good subject knowledge as well as very good awareness of what pupils can do if they are challenged. This is despite the lack of space in which to teach the subject and in which to store equipment. There is scope to monitor the amount of science that pupils are actually taught by keeping a timetable or record of which lessons took place, rather than which were planned.

84. There have been satisfactory developments since the last inspection in the new units of work for each half term, but other developments have been delayed by the absence of the co-ordinator responsible for the senior school, and by the continued lack of accommodation for practical work.

ART AND DESIGN

85. There has been significant improvement in art since the last inspection. Art is now strongly represented across the school. Achievement is consistently good and often very good for older pupils. Further evidence of the level of achievement by all pupils is found in the quality of the displays and artwork to be seen around the school, in the classrooms and other areas such as corridors and entrances. The quality and variety of the skills shown is always impressive with pupils of all abilities progressing in their use of a wide and varied range of media. Of particular note is the use by pupils of computer technology to enhance and extend design, illustration, and pattern making; and digital photography in relation to computer graphics in art. One senior pupil has produced a whole series of subtle colour and shade changes in paintings in the style of Georgia O'Keefe, photographed and digitally computerised for the purpose. A group of younger pupils produced Mothering Sunday cards, some using collage and paint on card, and others painting ceramic tile cards. One Year 4 pupil decorated a glass jar with a dolphin design she had planned herself, carefully transferring her design onto glass with translucent paint. Cultural aspects of art are evident in the making of African masks and clay pots.

86. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective introductions to lessons ensure that there is a good understanding of the planned activities. Appropriate advice and comments are offered to pupils, for example on the possible choices of glaze. A good balance is maintained between demonstration and allowing pupil to develop their own ideas. This motivates pupils to experiment. Tasks are appropriate for a wide range of age and ability and involve all pupils in successfully producing some artwork. However, there are times when the pace slackens towards the end of the lesson and pupils do not achieve all they could. Occasional silly behaviour is dealt with promptly and pupils are soon working again. The competence with which art is taught across the school shows in the quality and range of work produced, and in the absorption and interest in the subject that is so evident in the response of the pupils. The co-ordinator has built up links and contacts outside the school, including local museums and art galleries, so that pupils can experience a wide range of techniques and media.

87. The co-ordination of art across the whole school is not, as yet, fully in place, and further development of a written art policy is planned. The one co-ordinator has a great depth and breadth of knowledge of her subject. Resources are available generally, but resource storage is a problem in some areas of the school, as is accommodation, restricting the scope and development of art in the school curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Achievement in design and technology is good, and in the two lessons seen, pupils made good progress towards targets set. Judgements are based on pupils' records, photographic evidence, discussions and teachers' planning.

89. Pupils plan for making items such as containers for money from card, clay or papier mache. They discuss their designs and are able to modify them. By Year 6, they build a structure from newspaper and tape, with the challenge to make it support a 1 Kg weight. Pupils in Year 9 discuss different types of structures and their purposes, and show understanding by completing information sheets. By Year 11 pupils are able to follow the instructions for building technics lego and, having completed the model of a vehicle, one pupil was able to test it on a hill climb and then modify it to climb a steeper slope. Pupils have some experiences of food technology. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make biscuits for their visitors. Older pupils are able to follow recipes for items such as cakes and scones.

90. In the two lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good. Clear explanations of tasks were given, so that pupils knew what they had to do. Questioning was well used to check pupils' understanding and the work was targeted well to pupils' individual needs. The skill with which a wide range of abilities are taught ensures that, regardless of ability, pupils are able to enhance their practical skills effectively. Pupils who are in bed are encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves. Consequently, pupils enjoy the tasks, and show interest in them. They concentrate very hard, for example, on making a musical instrument such as a simple guitar.

91. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing a scheme of work which is based on the National Curriculum. This provides a good basis for teachers to plan lessons, although there are some modules in which what pupils are to learn is not fully clear. There are two co-ordinators, one for the primary and the other the secondary phase. They are responsible for writing the policy and the scheme of work. Some monitoring of design and technology takes place. However, for some pupils, there is irregular access to the subject because their timetables are interrupted by medical interventions. This lack of design and technology is not presently corrected because there is little monitoring of the activities that pupils have experienced, rather than what is planned. Pupils in the general sector have a limited range of curriculum experiences in design and technology because of the difficulties with storing resources on those sites. As at the time of the last inspection, secondary age pupils have no access to suitable accommodation, and so they are unable to use all the tools and materials needed for full coverage of the curriculum. Teachers continue to make good use of the resources available and give pupils as wide a curriculum as possible and, for all pupils, the use of ICT is an integral part of the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

92. Only one lesson in each of geography and history were observed during the inspection, and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. Evidence obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school, planning documents, discussion with the humanities co-ordinator and the two lessons seen indicate that pupils of all abilities achieve well in both aspects of humanities, and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection.

93. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are developing mapping skills and have learned to identify the continents and major countries of the world, using atlases and globes. They understand that there are similarities and differences in environments across the world, and make comparisons between their own life styles and those of children in Brazil. When discussing the water cycle a younger pupil used appropriate vocabulary and made effective use of ICT in presenting her work. Older pupils identify the main rivers of England and Wales

on a map and know the features of a river basin. They understand that land is eroded by elements such as ice, water and wind, and know how river valleys are worn down. Pupils study the causes and effects of volcanic eruptions and relate their learning to the recent devastation in Goma. Pupils' investigative skills are being well developed, and they learn to search for information through a wide range of material.

94. In the history aspect of humanities, pupils develop an understanding of chronology and of how people and events in the past influence the present. By Year 6 they know that children in Tudor and Victorian times lived lives that were much less comfortable than their own, but nevertheless had similarities with the present time. Older pupils understand that Florence Nightingale's work prompted many changes in hospital practices. Pupils build up a picture of what life was like for children during the Second World War. They know of the problems that poor people faced in England at the time of Henry VIII, following the closure of the monasteries, and about the changing face of agriculture and industry. Pupils preparing for public examinations are well supported in completing their course work on the Russian Revolution, and the events leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War and the Holocaust. Pupils make good use of source material, including the Internet, for their research. They present their work well, using ICT for writing and the presentation of data.

95. In the two lessons seen with pupils from Years 3 to 6, work was generally well planned. Lessons started with questions that helped pupils recall previous work on the same theme. For example, one pupil recalled the rain cycle sequence she had worked on the previous lesson. Teachers then use previous work to introduce the lesson. This ensures pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to do and can tackle their work with confidence. Praise and encouragement keep pupils interested and keen to complete the work. In one lesson the plenary session was used well for pupils to discuss their work, and they responded by making positive comments on the efforts of others.

96. The co-ordination of humanities has improved well since the last inspection. The subject is now guided by a good policy, and by modules of work that are relevant to the hospital teaching situation. The modules include advice on activities and resources for pupils of different abilities, and are frequently used to supplement work that pupils bring from their mainstream schools. Although well planned, there is little monitoring of what has been taught to make sure that enough time is spent on humanities. Resources are satisfactory overall but storage facilities, particularly in the general sector, are limited. Humanities make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education by promoting empathy and widening their understanding of a range of countries and cultures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. Pupils achieve well when taught discrete ICT and when using it throughout the curriculum. Whether long stay or short stay, pupils gain skills and knowledge in how to use computers for different purposes. They also learn to use associated equipment such as a digital camera, a scanner, an electronic microscope and printers. Pupils make good use of their skills in lessons in other subjects such as English, mathematics, science and art. Some of the pupils' learning is through specific lessons which are directly aimed at learning how for example, to use the Powerpoint program to create and assemble pictures, text and sounds into an electronic "booklet" of several pages.

98. Other such lessons help pupils to make good progress in making alterations to their writing. They correct their spelling mistakes, for instance, as well as alter the colour, print style and size of lettering. They learn to put decorative borders around their writing, or to add ornate titles using Word Art. Pupils use art programs such as Colour Magic or Paint to make pictures and patterns, and they find out how to bring clip art pictures into their work. In using

ICT in other subjects, they practise these skills, and extend them well. For example, one pupil sent and received emails from her own school, in Malta, whilst other pupils have communicated with schools in Italy, Portugal and Spain. The Internet is well used for finding out information about different subjects. For example, in history pupils search for forms of communication through the ages while in geography they look for information on volcanoes. In each aspect, the pupils are well taught how to use the equipment or programs, and then they are given many opportunities to use and reinforce their skills. In mathematics and English, there are many programs on CD ROMs that pupils frequently use to improve their reading, spelling and numeracy skills. This all builds up to a good technological environment throughout the school.

99. The teaching of ICT is good in both discrete lessons and those in other subjects where ICT is used. Teachers choose which programs are most appropriate, and they have good knowledge of how to use them for particular purposes. Teachers and learning support staff are good at motivating pupils to use the equipment, including small "GeoSafari" computers that have coloured overlay pages instead of keyboards. They plan their lessons well, whether on the wards or in the classrooms for the longer-stay pupils. Teachers generally link the work well with other subjects or with the current theme for the half term. As a result pupils are keen to use ICT wherever possible. Sometimes, the computers are used for very specific purposes, such as in one lesson where a teacher on a ward was using a word-processing program to get a pupil with severe head injuries to start to write again. At Highfield, a pupil was being guided through a program that would help him to think about possibilities for his future career. Pupils learn well because ICT is used effectively by teachers to ensure all pupils have access to appropriate programs, regardless of ability. Pupils are keen and interested as a rule, and enjoy using the equipment in positive ways. Teachers on the wards often discuss pupils' interests and work with parents, and they are very good at getting parents to help and support their children during lessons that involve computers.

100. The subject is led and managed well because the co-ordinator is very experienced. She has a clear view of how ICT is being taught across the school, and how well pupils are progressing. There have been several positive developments since the last inspection, especially in the good training that most staff have undertaken. This has raised their skills and knowledge considerably, and they are well able to teach the subject now. The long term plan of what should be taught is well based on guidelines and suggestions issued by the government, and by the LEA. The resources are satisfactory, with some new computers and laptops being used now, as well as a few older machines which run programs that are still popular with pupils and staff. There is still, however, a lack of storage space in some areas of the school. This limits the number of computers and the type of other equipment that can be used. A large amount of money from government grants has been well spent recently, although the budget from in-school funds is limited. At present not all pupils have ready access to the Internet because of difficulties within the hospital, particularly at the John Radcliffe.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

101. Although modern foreign languages are not systematically taught, they are available for pupils who wish to continue them. This is an improvement on the last inspection when little evidence of modern foreign languages was seen. There are good procedures, and appropriate resources in place for teaching Spanish, Italian and German, while French can be taught on any site. Although not a modern language, Latin is also taught where required. There is a co-ordinator in place and a suitable policy and modules of work. Observation of a short session where a teacher was assessing a new pupil's French showed that the teacher was a fluent French speaker with very good subject knowledge. Appropriate work was set for

the pupil and the target language used wherever possible. Pupils are enthusiastic and behave well during lessons because they are keen to learn a language.

102. The school is developing links with hospital schools in Italy and Spain. The co-ordinator hopes to use these to support teaching and learning.

MUSIC

103. Music is not a regular feature of the timetable in either the general or the psychiatric sector but music lessons were seen in both sectors. Overall, pupils achieve well in lessons in developing new skills and understanding compared with their previous knowledge, although pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve particularly well. This improvement in the quality of learning represents satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. However, pupils' progress over time is more variable because lessons are not taught regularly and consistently in either sector.

104. Lessons enable pupils to appreciate the qualities and characteristics of sound, to improve their compositional skills, and to practice and improve their performance, through both singing and playing untuned and tuned instruments. By Year 6, pupils have investigated different sounds they can make and hear in their surroundings. They carry out experiments using simple resources such as stretched elastic bands, a rule over the edge of a desk, and humming with their lips pressed against a balloon. Therefore, they know that sounds can be made by banging, blowing, plucking and shaking and that musical instruments operate by using these different forms of producing sounds. They play percussion instruments and sing to accompany the teacher who plays guitar.

105. By Year 11, some pupils at Highfield use tuned instruments such as guitars and keyboards and work on notation. They use appropriate musical and technical vocabulary and demonstrate compositional skills such as adding the bass element to a piece they have composed as part of their GCSE coursework. Pupils also develop knowledge of their particular musical interests, such as the history of electronic music, through research on websites.

106. Music is taught well in both sectors but particularly well in the psychiatric sector because of teachers' subject knowledge and technical competence. Activities are age appropriate and match pupils' needs and there is sufficient variety within lessons to promote pupils' learning of new ideas and skills. The range of activities and resources maintains pupils' interest and participation and therefore they respond and participate well, listening and watching carefully. Music lessons at The Park also make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. A carefully and sensitively managed lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6 resulted in them having the confidence to lie on their backs with their eyes closed and listen to a ballad sung by The Beatles. This was a particularly effective period of calm and quiet reflection that prepared them very well for the next activity when they supplied the rhythm to support the teacher's playing of the same tune on the guitar.

107. Aspects of the management of music are unsatisfactory. There is still no overall co-ordinator and there is no planning in place to ensure that pupils are taught music regularly and consistently. However, the school recognises the need to improve provision for the subject and consultation with the LEA's music service is already taking place. Provision for music in the general sector is limited by the inadequacy of the accommodation, and lack of storage facilities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. There has been good improvement in physical education since the time of the last inspection. The teaching is still good, but with better planning for the long term, as well as for individual lessons. The lessons are more clearly aimed at improving pupils' skills, as well as providing a range of leisure activities, as they were previously.

109. Pupils achieve satisfactorily through the different age groups in this subject. Pupils from Years 7 to 11 who are admitted for extended periods, such as at Highfield, make good progress in several aspects of this subject. They develop their attitudes well and improve their skills in games such as hockey, netball and "Kwik" cricket. Pupils learn to play together as partners and in teams. They take part in throwing, catching, hitting, tackling and passing in practice exercises as well as in full games. They also improve well in other physical activities such as climbing up and across a special wall at a local leisure centre; using a multi-gym for fitness activities; dancing and ice-skating. Some of these activities are regular and others are less frequent. In swimming, higher attaining pupils have very good water confidence. They swim for several hundred metres, have good style at different strokes and play games such as water volleyball. The lower attaining pupils do not swim with confidence, and need persuasion to join in games.

110. Many pupils make particularly good progress in their attitude to sports and exercises, becoming much more willing to try things out, and to join in. They overcome their reluctance to exert themselves or to co-operate with their classmates. Pupils behave well, and enjoy their various activities. The younger pupils who are admitted for long periods, and those who stay for fairly short periods on the various wards do not take part in organised physical activities. They do not therefore make any progress. This is often appropriate, but there are times when physical activities could valuably be undertaken with many pupils, given some imagination and willingness on the part of the teaching staff.

111. Teaching is good and pupils learn well in these lessons. Teachers' plans and preparations are thorough, and they have good knowledge of the subject, as well as of the pupils. They use small equipment imaginatively to enliven pupils' learning. The lessons are well structured: they begin with an introduction and warm up before the main series of activities, and they end with a cool down. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils, and are able to motivate them to try hard to improve particular skills, as well as to enjoy their activities, and perhaps continue with them when they leave the school. Teachers work successfully as part of a team with learning support assistants and non-education staff. They take note of the progress that pupils are making in order to tailor their future lessons to be equally challenging to the pupils. This ensures that pupils continue to build upon skills already learnt.

112. The leadership and management of physical education is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the provision and pupils' progress. There is a comprehensive policy in place now and the curriculum is sound for the long-stay pupils. The activities are varied and are particularly relevant to the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. Many activities are well related to nationally approved guidelines, and they are planned well for each year, as well as for each term, or season of the year for outdoor activities. The budget is small, but sufficient to replace the small equipment that pupils use most. Large equipment is not bought because there is nowhere to store it safely. There is very little storage space, and only limited areas in which to teach lessons. The school does, however, make very good use of facilities away from the school, such as swimming pools, a leisure centre, a local college, tennis courts and an ice rink. The school has clear plans to develop the subject further. These begin with a new all-weather play area to be built and equipped in the near future.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Religious education is provided for pupils and is based on the locally agreed syllabus. There is little evidence on which to base a judgement about pupils' attainment, but in the one lesson seen pupils made good progress. A scheme of work has been developed to teach pupils about Christianity and other world religions, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Modules are based on topics such as festivals and places of worship. Use is made of pupils' home school curricula in selecting the religions on which to focus. Development of further modules would be useful as many of the home schools do not send in information about religious education. There are close links between religious education and personal and social education and discussions often provide good support for pupils' personal development. Some resources have been acquired, but difficulty with storage in the general sector means that there is a shortage of artefacts to help pupils' understanding of the subject.