

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIMBLE HILL SCHOOL

Park North, Swindon

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126556

Headteacher: Mr. R. K. Walker

Reporting inspector: Janet Bond
2642

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 26th April 2002

Inspection number: 191845

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, Severe learning difficulties/autistic

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lyndhurst Crescent
Park North
Swindon

Postcode: SN3 2RW

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: D. Easter

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2642	Janet Bond	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Curriculum	How high are standards?
31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1987	George Davies	Team inspector	Information and communication technology English as a second language	Special educational needs How well does the school care for its pupils?
10781	Robert Thompson	Team inspector	Religious Education Music	How well is the school led and managed?
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Science Art and design	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development Equal opportunities
3055	Clive Tombs	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Design and technology	How well are pupils taught?
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brimble Hill is a mixed special school for pupils between the ages of two and 11, with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently there are 72 pupils on roll including 12 part-time children of nursery age. Pupils have a range of complex learning needs; 50 pupils use Augmentative Communication, 14 pupils have a visual impairment and many use wheelchairs or walking aids. There are 14 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. On entry, pupils' attainments are well below national expectations and all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. There are very few pupils from ethnic backgrounds. Twenty-five pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is high in comparison to similar schools. The Local Education Authority follows an inclusion policy and is currently reviewing the provision it makes for Special Educational Needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brimble Hill is a good school with many very good features. Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors use the available resources very efficiently, and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets because teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their learning needs and teaching is consistently good. Education support assistants provide very effective pupil support.
- Provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good and effectively supports pupils' learning.
- All pupils have full a good quality and range of learning opportunities and the school supports inclusion well.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their relationships with staff are very good.
- Provision for pupils' social, personal and moral development is very good because appropriate opportunities for learning are provided through the school day.
- The school is well led and managed; it has a clear educational direction supported by very good financial management.

What could be improved

- The Child Protection policy is out of date and not all staff are aware of the procedures they need to follow to meet statutory requirements.
- The planning of work for writing, Religious Education and art and design.
- The time given to teaching subjects in topic work to ensure effective coverage.
- The approach the school takes to homework.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. All but one of the key and minor issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed and there are significant improvements in these areas. Standards achieved by the pupils have significantly improved in English, communication and in mathematics. Teaching has significantly improved resulting in improved learning. The curriculum and curriculum planning has improved and now supports pupils building on their earlier learning. Teaching of pupils with more complex needs is very good because staff have received effective training and because teachers with appropriate expertise have been appointed. Leadership and management have improved and as a result significant improvements have been achieved since the last inspection. Following the last inspection the Child Protection policy was updated but now requires further updating.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	Key	
speaking and listening	B	A	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	C	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	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

Standards have risen significantly in communication, speaking and listening because of the very good and effective provision for Augmentative and Alternative Communication within the school. This has supported pupils well in accessing all areas of the curriculum. Standards achieved by pupils with visual, physical, sensory and autistic complex needs have improved because appropriate provision is now available. Younger children in the nursery and reception class achieve well across all areas of their curriculum because teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of younger children. Standards are now very good in communication, good in literacy, mathematics, science, design and technology and information and communication technology. Pupils achieve high standards in music and physical education because teaching is very good. Standards are satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils' achievements in personal and social education are very good because teachers place a strong emphasis on encouraging social interaction and personal development. All pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Appropriate and challenging whole school targets are now in place and the analysis of data is helping the school know how effective it is.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils want to come to school and have very good attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well and understand what is acceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The very good relationships pupils have with staff effectively supports their concentration and effort in lessons. Those who can are confident to make choices and take responsibilities.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and do not want to stay away.

Pupils enjoy the interesting range of activities and achieve success. They work hard and concentrate well in lessons because they know their work and contributions are valued. The good inclusion

opportunities and links with the community contribute significantly to pupils' social and personal development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6
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.

The consistently good teaching for all ages and abilities is a strength of the school. This has had a significant impact upon pupils' learning and pupils now achieve well. Teaching is good for children in the nursery and reception class because teachers and support assistants have a good knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of children of this age and of their particular individual special needs. Good team work with specialist teachers and support services ensures children's needs are well met. Teaching is very good in music and in physical education because teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and pupils' special needs. The improved teaching in literacy and in communication is a result of the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The school has not yet developed a consistent approach to writing. Teaching is good in numeracy because teachers are skilled at adapting the National Numeracy Strategy to meet pupil's individual needs and mathematical learning is reinforced in other lessons. Teaching is good in science, design and technology and information and communication technology because activities are made relevant to pupils. Teaching is good in personal and social development where all opportunities are taken for pupils to use their skills through the school day. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects but the lack of completed planned programmes of work in writing, religious education and art and design impedes teachers' planning for developing pupils' skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Teachers plan lessons very well to support each pupil in learning at an appropriate level, have high expectations and effectively encourage pupils to do their best. Very good teamwork between teachers and support assistants is particularly effective in meeting individual needs. Very occasionally, the organisation of the lesson and the management of challenging behaviour are not effective and pupils do not achieve as well as they can. In addition, teachers do not always spend the full amount of time given on the timetable for the lesson and learning time is lost.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils receive a rich curriculum that is made relevant to their learning needs. Topic planning does not always give enough time to each subject and not all subject plans are complete.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupil's individual needs are met well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' personal, moral and social development are very good because many opportunities are taken during the school day for pupils to make choices and be as independent as possible. Opportunities for learning about other cultures are limited.
How well the school cares	Good. The school provides a very safe and caring environment where all

for its pupils	are valued. Staff know pupils well and plan effectively for their personal and learning needs. However, Child Protection procedures are out of date.
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Parents are kept well informed and have a high opinion of the school. Although parents help with out of school activities such as swimming few help in school. Pupils receive a rich and relevant curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on each pupil's particular needs. In most subjects, where planning documents are in place, pupils consistently build on earlier learning. The time given to subjects in topic work is variable. Occasionally learning time is not fully used as when extra time is given to outdoor play. The good range of out of school activities, including the opportunities for inclusion and the good links with the community effectively enriches pupils' learning. Systems for knowing what pupils can do and for recording pupils' progress are good and the information is used well in lesson planning and teaching. Individual Education Plans are well used to ensure pupils have appropriate work. Achievements are recognised and celebrated.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership and management are good although the headteacher carries a heavy workload, as there is no deputy headteacher. The school has developed well to meet the change in pupil needs and resources have been used very effectively to support these developments.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The supportive governing body are clear about the school priorities for development. They are well informed and are increasingly using the information to monitor how effective the school is.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Effective systems are in place for monitoring, evaluating and using data to inform planning and set school targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Good use is made of resources to raise standards. The principles of best value are well applied.

There is a commitment to improve among staff and governors, which is clearly demonstrated in the many new developments to meet the changing needs of pupils. Although co-ordinators fulfil their roles well the headteacher carries too heavy a workload and does not delegate responsibilities, such as for performance management, sufficiently. There are an appropriate number of teaching staff to support the curriculum and an appropriate number of highly skilled support staff to support individual learning needs. The well-maintained accommodation effectively supports individual learning needs by providing specialist rooms such as a sensory room and a dark room. Resources are good and well used to support learning. Very well planned financial management effectively supports the school in seeking best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress • Teaching is good and they are kept well informed • The school is well led and managed and staff are approachable • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and amount of homework children receive

Inspectors confirm the views of parents. Although some pupils receive work to do at home this is not consistent and as a result inspectors agree with the concerns about homework expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Pupils enter school with very low levels of attainment, particularly in their communication, physical and personal and social skills. In these areas, as a result of good quality teaching directed at individual pupil's needs, appropriate and effective specialist support and a well-planned and relevant curriculum, pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well. This is an improvement on achievements since the previous inspection. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils of differing abilities or in those of pupils with English as a second language. The good opportunities for pupils to work in mainstream schools and alongside mainstream peers have contributed well to pupils' improved achievements in personal and social development.
- 2 There have been significant changes in the achievements of pupils in literacy and communication skills, numeracy, music and physical education since the last inspection. At all ages, pupils' achievements in these areas have improved significantly. This is because teachers have adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well to make them relevant to pupils. Teachers are now more skilled in providing Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies to meet individual needs. For those pupils for whom it is appropriate, progress and achievement at all ages in writing is satisfactory. All pupils make good progress and achieve well in numeracy because of the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and skilful teaching. Pupils make good progress in science because it is made relevant to them. Pupils make very good progress overall in physical education where there is good support in planning from physiotherapists, teachers plan very carefully for individual needs and there is effective support in lessons from education support assistants. In music and in physical education pupils' achievements are very good. Music is used well to support other subjects, particularly communication, and teachers are confident and well supported in their teaching and planning for music. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in design and technology and in information and communication technology where new equipment enables better access for pupils and where training has supported teachers in being more proficient. Children in the nursery and reception class make good progress and achieve well across all areas of their curriculum because activities are made appropriate to their needs. In art, history, geography and religious education pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory. Across the curriculum progress and achievements overall have improved because in teachers' lesson plans there is a very good focus on what each pupil will learn during each lesson to enable their skills, knowledge and understanding to be built on and developed systematically.
- 3 Pupils with significant additional special educational needs, such as visual difficulties, sensory difficulties, autism, speech, language and communication difficulties and physical difficulties make very good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Staff are well trained in skills, knowledge and understanding of appropriate

approaches to meet very exceptional needs. This can be clearly seen in planning and teaching and supports all pupils having full access to the curriculum. At all ages pupils learn how to relate well to their classmates, respond to familiar objects, activities and places and begin to communicate their needs and make choices. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development. For example, many pupils have developed much greater independence in feeding themselves, making choices and finding their way around the school. The personal and social development of pupils with additional learning needs benefits from the many good opportunities provided throughout the school day for them to socialise and learn alongside other pupils.

- 4 There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls or of pupils from different cultural backgrounds. At all ages, pupils, including those with more complex learning needs, make good progress in most lessons because teaching is consistently good. Progress over time is improving and is good because teaching and learning are effectively focused to ensure pupils build steadily upon their achievements. Progress against targets in pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEP) is good. Lesson planning effectively focuses on individual targets in all lessons. The school now sets targets for whole school improvement which reflect teacher targets. These are now providing a more directed focus on raising pupils' standards in subjects. A good start has been made by the school's appropriate use of "P" level data as part of the information they are gathering on pupil progress and achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 5 Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and are reflected in the cheerful and friendly greetings they have for staff when they arrive in the morning. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. The very good attitudes and personal development of pupils is an improvement since the last inspection. This is due in part to improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now more effective in encouraging pupils' interest and involvement in activities. There is also a much better emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop independence to which they respond very positively.
- 6 Pupils respond well to the very good family atmosphere in the school and they show enthusiasm in lessons. They are keen to contribute and want to take part in activities, for example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 taste food and make a pizza during a topic lesson. Pupils pay attention, listen carefully and display an eagerness for their work. The enjoyment and obvious enthusiasm shown by pupils during a Year 6 science lesson making and testing sailing boats was a pleasure to observe. Many of the pupils sustain good levels of concentration and with sensitive support from adults they are able to work well with each other during group and paired activities. Pupils settle down quickly at the start of lessons. They respond well to teachers' questions and are clearly motivated to participate because of the good range of appropriate teaching strategies used in the school. These encourage pupils to take an active part in the experiences they have.
- 7 Pupils' behaviour is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the high expectation staff have of them. Pupils respond well to the guidance they are given because staff deal swiftly and consistently with any inappropriate behaviour. There are very few incidents of misbehaviour even from those pupils who have behaviour problems as part of their special needs. Pupils clearly feel valued by staff and consequently behave well. They show by their actions that they know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Pupils behave very well when they are on

visits and when they are involved in activities with children from other schools. For example, pupils in Year 2 behave particularly well when they visit a local school for a morning and work with mainstream pupils. At the beginning and end of the school day, when pupils come from or go to their transport, the school remains an orderly community. No incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying were seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions since the last inspection.

- 8 A major strength of the school are the very good relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and adults, which ensures that everybody feels comfortable in the school community. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Positive relationships enable pupils to work effectively, individually and together, and to get the best out of the learning opportunities provided. Pupils are friendly and considerate towards staff and visitors and they show a natural sensitivity and awareness to each other's needs. In lessons, around the school and in the playground many examples were seen of pupils helping each other. For example, during a registration session pupils help each other put the symbols onto the timetable. Good relationships also help pupils to develop self-confidence and this enables them to be confident to share what they know and try new activities.
- 9 Pupils' personal development is very good. As they get older pupils are increasingly able to take responsibility and act independently. Pupils take a pride in performing any jobs they are given to the best of their ability, for example a pupil in Year 2 fetches a cloth and helps the teacher wipe down the table after a cookery lesson. With sensitive guidance from staff pupils learn to make choices and they respond confidently to the opportunities provided for them to make decisions. Pupils grow in maturity during their time at the school and develop very good social skills. They learn how to work and play together and they develop skills in personal care which enable them to be as independent as possible.
- 10 Attendance has remained very similar to that reported in the previous inspection when it was just below 92% with very low levels of unauthorised absences. Last year the whole school attendance rate was 92.7% with no unauthorised absences, which is very good overall. This is a much better figure than similar special schools nationally and particularly when considering the complex medical and health needs of a number of pupils. A very small minority of pupils has unavoidably been away from school with medical or health problems. Punctuality is very good and full time pupils arrive very promptly in the mornings in transport provided by the authority. Nursery age and part time pupils are usually brought to school by their parents and they too arrive on time at the beginning of the morning or afternoon session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 11 Teaching is consistently good across the school and as a result pupils achieve well and make good progress. This represents a very significant improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- 12 A number of important developments have led to this improvement. The more rigorous monitoring and evaluating of teaching and the introduction of performance management and appraisal have had a positive effect. This has resulted in teachers having targets with a more directed focus on raising pupils' standards in lessons. There has been significant and effective training of staff and improved resources to meet the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, communication disorders and visual impairment, along with the appointment of co-ordinators to take

responsibility for these different groups of pupils. As a result these groups of pupils receive appropriate approaches that are used effectively to sustain their interest and involvement in lessons and they achieve well. Communication skills are very well promoted by the effective use of picture systems and the use of information technology switches and communication aids which allows all pupils greater access to learning. In addition the school has introduced more finely graded monitoring procedures and teachers are now able to set meaningful targets and measure pupils' progress more accurately. Within the subject learning targets of every lesson teachers also plan for individual pupil targets. These ensure a real focus for teaching, there are high expectations and pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. The school has successfully implemented and adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, along with staff training and improved resources, so that there is greater consistency of structure in these subjects and basic skills are well taught. There have been improvements in long term planning with the adoption of the Equals curriculum, a nationally produced curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, and in the greater use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

- 13 The good and very good teaching in the school is characterised by well planned lessons with clear learning targets so that lessons proceed at a good pace. Thorough preparation beforehand and good classroom organisation supports pupils' interest, concentration and effort and allows all to be involved at their own level. A good example of this was a literacy lesson in the reception class where all children participated fully and at an appropriate level. In swimming, good organisation means that pupils make full use of the time in the water, pool space is well used and staff are clear about their roles in supporting certain pupils. Good questioning, for example, in food technology, "Have the sausages changed now that they have been cooked?" encourages pupils to look closely and helps their understanding of the process of cooking. Resources are good, well stored and effectively used to improve learning opportunities in all subjects. In physical education, for example, a full size trampoline enables pupils in the autistic class to achieve high standards, and pupils with additional special needs to experience the pleasant sensation of rebound bouncing.
- 14 Teaching in the foundation stage is good across all areas of learning. Both teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and of their special educational needs. The use of appropriate resources and teaching approaches for this age group effectively sustain childrens' involvement and effort. Education support assistants play an active and vital role in effectively supporting individual learning needs. Teachers provide lessons that are well planned, stimulating and soundly based on the national guidance for this age group.
- 15 Teaching is very good in music and physical education because teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. It is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and information and communication technology because lesson planning is good and individual needs are well met. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education, art and humanities where short term planning is good but where there is insufficient longer term planning to ensure pupils build on what they know.
- 16 The teaching of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder is consistently good. There is a good understanding of their needs and a range of appropriate strategies used to meet them. Teaching is carefully planned and focused on the development of communication and social awareness. This term pupils are taught more as a group, and less at their individual workstations, which clearly shows the good progress they

have made in their personal development. Very good and supportive relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to try their best and participate as fully as possible. The management of difficult and unpredictable behaviour in this class is immediate, calm and effective and very well supported by education support assistants.

- 17 Children and pupils with additional special needs benefit enormously from the high quality teaching they receive from specialist teachers and from a range of therapists in one-to-one, and small group situations. These specialists include a music therapist, a physiotherapist, speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. Educational support staff, many of whom are highly trained, make a consistent and very good contribution to the high quality of teaching and learning. The teamwork between them and the teachers is of a very high order. They are well briefed and support pupils and teachers in an unobtrusive way so that lessons run smoothly and pupils make good progress. They do this, for example, by supporting pupils in the water at swimming, noting pupils' responses as part of the monitoring procedures in English, or preparing and making easily available resources and tools in design and technology. Education support assistants, working in the class with autistic pupils, minimise disruption by anticipating pupils' responses and preventing disruptive behaviour. In all aspects of school, but particularly in their interactions with pupils when changing, handling and re-positioning them, education support assistants demonstrate a genuine concern for each pupil's dignity. With teachers they provide a cheerful, welcoming and challenging environment and ensure that all pupils have full access to activities.
- 18 During the inspection, in a few lessons where teaching was satisfactory, there were some shortcomings. For example, poor classroom organisation sometimes contributes to pupils' misbehaviour, the end of lessons are sometimes rushed and lessons not brought to a proper conclusion, and there are missed opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning, or use language sufficiently to fully enrich pupils' experiences. Occasionally, time is not always used efficiently and does not always reflect that allocated on the timetable. For example, the alternative activity of unstructured play, while a group waits for its dance lesson, is a misuse of valuable learning time.
- 19 Parents are concerned about homework. There is currently no school policy and no clear view about the amount and type of homework to be set. Home/ school diaries are well used to exchange information about pupils' welfare and some reading books and physiotherapy and speech programmes are sent home to parents who request them. The school is aware that this is an area for development and clarification.

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

- 20 The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school for all pupils, including those with additional special needs and English as a second language, are good. Significant developments in curriculum planning have addressed effectively the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report. All subjects except art and design, religious education and writing now have detailed planning which enables teachers to plan work systematically so that pupils can build on earlier learning. However, there is insufficient scrutiny of teaching through the topic approach to ensure that what is planned for is covered during lessons. For example, although art is taught and pupils have an appropriate range of experiences, the quality and range of these experiences rely on individual teachers. There is no monitoring of the subject

because planning is specific to each teacher and related to the activities they have planned within the topic.

- 21 The provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good. It ensures that all have full access to learning by effectively adapting the curriculum to meet their needs. The school also makes very good provision in ensuring that pupils with communication difficulties have full access both to the curriculum and to the life of the school through the provision of electronic speech output devices and other communication strategies. The effective use and development of Augmentative and Alternative Communication is a strength of the school.
- 22 The provision to promote pupils' literacy skills is good. Teachers have adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet the range of pupil needs very well. Pupils receive a varied series of lessons from structured reading sessions to focused word work. It ensures that all, including pupils whose first language is not English, make equally good progress. There is good planning to ensure that pupils receive effective and appropriate work in numeracy during mathematics lessons, which is effectively reinforced in other lessons throughout the week. This has played a significant part in the improvement of pupils' numeracy skills since the previous inspection.
- 23 Despite the lack of structured activities at lunchtime, the school does provide a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, which include two very appropriate annual residential experiences. The school uses the community very well and learning is effectively reinforced by the use of local amenities, links with neighbouring primary and secondary schools and trips to support the work that has been done in the classroom.
- 24 Provision for personal, social and health education is good overall and is successfully addressed formally through topic work, physical education and other aspects of school life such as lunch and break times. The informal opportunities provided for pupils throughout the school day are very good. The personal, social and health education programme is good and it is implemented effectively. It contains all the necessary formal elements including sex education and health awareness, which are addressed through topic work. Pupils' personal development is effectively supported because opportunities are provided in a way that is relevant to them and the realities of their lives. Staff place a significant emphasis on enabling pupils to make choices, providing them with opportunities to take responsibility and teaching them the skills they need to be independent in learning and aspects of their personal care.
- 25 The expectations teachers have of pupils, and the way adults relate to them also contributes effectively to pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils are given good opportunities to undertake jobs around the school and they act sensibly and take their responsibilities seriously. Adults ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop independence. They do not meet their needs too quickly and this means they have the opportunity to make and learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for their own learning. The individual targets that are established for pupils in their individual education plans promote their personal development very effectively.
- 26 The school's provision for the children and pupils' additional special physical, educational, social and emotional needs is very good. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a member of staff to co-ordinate provision for pupils with visual impairment. A detailed assessment of individual needs informs a well-organised and balanced programme for these pupils. Where appropriate pupils receive regular

intensive individual teaching out of class while others are supported in their classes where the co-ordinator works closely with teachers and educational support staff. A well-equipped sensory room is effectively used for some of the intensive individual work and the whole school is imaginatively used to provide mobility training.

- 27 The co-ordinator for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) assesses the need for and provides advice about the use of communication aids and signing strategies, such as the use of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). The school has built up a good range of relevant communication aids, including a wide range of switches and voice production devices, and serves as the Local Education Authority's resource and loan base for AAC. During the week of the inspection pupils were regularly observed using their communication aids and signing support strategies in a wide range of settings, including lessons, at lunch, during assemblies, at play and when returning registers to the office. The school has planned well for its provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The co-ordinator, following an assessment of individual needs, provides relevant training and advice to teachers, which enables younger pupils to be supported in their age-related classes. Appropriate techniques and strategies are effectively used to support pupils' learning.
- 28 Good links provide social interaction with students from local secondary schools and colleges. They help with swimming activities and complete work experience placements in the school. Although funding for the Borough's inclusion project has now ceased integration opportunities continue with the local primary school. In turn the school shares its hall with the primary school for physical education and this enables two pupils to join the class and work alongside their mainstream peers. In addition, children and pupils from each school exchange visits for assemblies and lunches. These links have a positive effect on the development of pupils' social skills and language.
- 29 Overall the provision made for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was identified as good. Provision for moral and social development is very good and it is good for spiritual and cultural development.
- 30 Pupils have good opportunities to participate in carefully planned assemblies. These are used effectively to focus on teaching and exploring aspects of Religious Education such as Bible stories. During the week of the inspection pupils were learning about Noah. Assemblies also provide suitable opportunities for pupils to appreciate the spiritual aspects of collective worship and to celebrate the main Christian religious festivals. There are, though, limited opportunities for them to develop an appreciation of the richness and diversity of other religions. Religious themes within the topic as well as aspects of music and art, provide further opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils to have time to reflect on the experiences that they have during the school day.
- 31 The provision made by the school to promote pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop an understanding of right and wrong because the school consistently promotes acceptable moral behaviour as it fosters fair play. This is achieved, for example, by stressing the need to share and wait your turn as well as caring for and having respect for others. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils when they are in social situations and any inappropriate behaviour is managed consistently and fairly. Pupils are able to behave well because they understand what is expected of them.

- 32 The school promotes pupils' social development very well. Staff encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to adults and each other and they successfully teach pupils to be polite and helpful. Visits to places such as local shops are used effectively to teach pupils how to behave appropriately and consider others. The school also provides very good opportunities for a small number of pupils to learn alongside pupils from local mainstream schools. These opportunities contribute effectively to the development of pupils' social skills. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of taking registers back to the school office. Office staff contribute to the quality of this learning and social experience through their questions and comments. The pupil using her communication aid to have a "gossip" with the office manager gained a great deal from the encounter because the office manager knew what vocabulary was held in the memory of the communication aid. Evidence of activities undertaken during residential experiences confirms that pupils have very good opportunities to develop social and personal skills in a variety of settings. Elements of the personal, social and health education programme along with the expectations that teachers have of pupils, and the role models they provide are also effective in promoting pupils' social development.
- 33 The school's provision for cultural development is good. There is an appropriate programme of visits, which provides pupils with suitable opportunities to develop an awareness of the richness and variety of their own culture. Visits to historical locations as well as visitors to the school promote an awareness of local culture, art and drama. The school takes an active part in local music festivals, there are good opportunities for pupils to work with visiting musicians and drama groups and a wide range of theatre and puppet groups are invited into the school. There are also good opportunities to reinforce pupils' cultural awareness through the art and music experiences they have. However, there are few opportunities to promote pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural society in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 34 The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of all pupils are good. Essential daily routines are followed and all staff undertake their roles in the welfare of pupils carefully and are very sensitive and supportive to pupils' range of needs. Parents and carers are appreciative of the good levels of care and support in school. They trust the school and are confident staff know their children well. The previous report noted that there was a safe and secure learning environment, with adults showing a caring approach towards all individuals and including effective support from a range of health professionals. This is still very much the case. Shortcomings noted then with Child Protection arrangements have, however, not been rigorously addressed. The policy for Child Protection is out of date. Although the school follows locally agreed procedures and follows through any concerns, staff in the school, including newer staff, are not secure in their knowledge of these procedures. Whole school training in Child Protection is an area that is not systematically and routinely covered. The training received by all staff in manual handling, lifting and restraint procedures is very effectively followed.
- 35 A large number of other support therapists work in school on a daily or weekly basis. A strong feature of the school's provision is the quality of collaboration that exists between support staff, teachers and health service staff who work in the school. They contribute very effectively to the smooth running of the daily life of the school and add significantly to the quality of support, care and attention provided for each child and pupil.

- 36 Nearly half of the school population has a health care plan, which has involved the guidance of the school nurse who also visits families in their home. These plans are very clear and detailed and are accessible and followed closely. They are reviewed regularly. The very experienced and knowledgeable school secretary oversees many of the practices in the school and contributes practically to meeting pupils' and parents' needs. The storage and administering of medicines continues to be very good. Record keeping is excellent. The majority of staff have received First Aid training. Parents consent is sought for a number of things other than outside visits and trips which help ensure pupils' well-being is put first.
- 37 In the absence of a named person for Looked After Children, the headteacher ensures that the needs of a small number of pupils who are in full time care are reviewed at the annual review meeting and at a six monthly interim meeting. Nearly half of the pupils on roll also have respite care during the week. No single person alone currently oversees arrangements for this group of pupils but individual members of staff know who goes where at the end of the school day. The school has taken on board new legislation and requirements for promoting race equality.
- 38 The school has developed a range of good guidelines about the supervision of children and pupils, including guidelines about when they are in school, on curriculum related day visits and when taking part in residential visits. In addition, a well considered policy and procedures document underpins the use of the school's mini-bus. Transport arrangements run smoothly and are overseen by a transport officer who also makes sure that escorts travelling with pupils are secure in their role. Procedures to record attendance are very good with staff knowing who is absent and why. Well-established channels of communication within the school including in the administrative office contribute to this and to the high standards of care.
- 39 Governors fulfil their role in ensuring that the site is maintained to a proper standard and effective procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all on site. Risk assessments are carried out in a systematic manner. The provision of new fencing for the site boundary and to create a variety of outdoor play areas has not only improved site security but also provided play areas that directly reflect the personal and social needs of the pupils.
- 40 Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. Staff are consistent in applying the school behaviour policy and take every opportunity to identify and praise appropriate behaviour. The Friday assembly provides an opportunity for the school to come together to celebrate good work including good behaviour. Challenging behaviour is effectively and sensitively dealt with. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was observed during the week of the inspection. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are taken at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions.
- 41 Assessment procedures overall are good. The assessment of children when they start school is effectively linked to pre-school work. The involvement of external support staff in assessing pupils' speech and language needs, hearing needs, occupational therapy needs and physiotherapy needs ensures provision is appropriate. Annual reviews generate appropriate targets to be achieved by the next review and to be worked towards in lessons. These form the basis of targets in pupils' Individual Education Plans. Ongoing monitoring and recording of pupils' achievements during lessons is good and is used to guide teaching, lesson organisation and the methods used. Assessment as a tool to help with curriculum planning, although good, has not been fully developed in all subject areas. Parents confirm that the quality of information that they receive about how well their children are progressing is

good. Reports and Records of Achievement describe what pupils know, can do and understand and help parents compare current reports with previous reports and make judgements about the progress that their child has made.

- 42 Overall, the school's provision for caring for its pupils demonstrates that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection and significant improvement in procedures for assessment. In addition, the school has responded very well to the new and more complex demands that have been made as a result of the changes in the children and pupils' physical, educational and personal needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 43 The previous inspection found many positive features in partnership arrangements with parents and carers. At the time of the last inspection there was inconsistent use, by some teachers, of home school diaries. This has now improved.
- 44 Parents' and carers' views of the school are very good. Responses in the questionnaire, which was completed by 27 parents and carers, were positive in nearly every area. Parents and carers say their children enjoy school; they themselves have no difficulty in approaching the school with questions or problems; they all believe it to be well managed and also agree that teaching is good. Just over half the parents who responded, however, are not convinced that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. Parents and carers as yet have not formally or informally been asked for their views about homework and how it could contribute to learning.
- 45 The few parents and carers who attended the pre inspection meeting as well as those spoken to by inspectors during the week of the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school, staff, and the care given to their children. The strengths of the school are recognised by parents and carers. Contact by telephone is effective and staff undertake home visits. A good range of information is provided to parents through newsletters and very readable and well presented regular correspondence. The frequency and usefulness of termly written reports from teachers are very good. Reports at the time of the statutory annual review meeting are detailed and very helpful. Review meetings themselves are well organised and structured and keep parents and all adults involved with the child very well informed.
- 46 There are many strengths to information overall. However there are some minor weaknesses also of which the school is aware. The format of the annual report from the governing body and the content of the school prospectus are due to be reviewed very soon so that they contain all necessary requirements and give a fuller picture of the school, properly celebrating its successes and achievements more widely. Teachers now more consistently use home-school link books but there are still some families who choose not to respond in them very often. Overall information to parents is good.
- 47 No parents or carers help within the school itself but one volunteer helper is a regular visitor. Parents and carers do, however, sometimes get involved in helping on school visits or in swimming sessions. Some parents and carers are involved in home/school reading. Fund raising activities are an important part of the work of the Friends of the school and they are generally successful in achieving their goals. The two main annual events held before Christmas and during the summer are well attended. Parent governors are more closely involved in the life of the school. Parents' participation in school life and events, as well as in learning at home, although variable across the school is satisfactory overall.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 48 The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction to the school's work and this is amply demonstrated in the positive changes made since the last inspection and in the good quality of the school's planning for development. This is a school which has clear priorities for improvement and which makes good progress towards them. The effective work on meeting the changing special educational needs of the pupils, particularly those with visual, communication and autistic needs and on the inclusion of pupils in mainstream settings are examples of the effectiveness of the school in planning and implementing change.
- 49 The management of the school is good. There is a commitment to developing a team of people with the skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the increasing range of special educational needs of the pupils. Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are carried out mainly by the headteacher who observes teaching on a regular basis. Formal feedback is given that identifies the strong elements in lessons and those that require further development. This has contributed to the significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have monitored their areas effectively and ensured that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well embedded into the school curriculum. This has had a positive effect on standards within the school. Although there is no deputy headteacher the headteacher delegates some responsibilities satisfactorily to subject co-ordinators. The quality of subject co-ordination is generally good, although as yet, there are no co-ordinators identified for humanities and design and technology. Although all do not yet have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, they are effective in promoting learning and higher standards in their subjects through formal and informal meetings, and through monitoring teachers' planning and pupils' progress.
- 50 There are good procedures in place for monitoring all areas of the school's work. The quality of teaching and of teachers' planning is regularly monitored, for example, and a programme of measures to assess the quality of pupils' learning, such as monitoring IEP targets and outcomes and the sampling of pupils' work through their Records of Achievement, is being effective. The resulting information is used well to inform school development planning and staff development. It is beginning to enable more accurate conclusions to be drawn about pupils' progress. Performance management is well established in school. The governors have identified their performance management committee and set appropriate targets. The headteacher has taken on the role of team leader for all teaching staff. This effectively means that teachers have no choice in who becomes their team leader and with whom they negotiate their performance targets. Whole-school targets have been published for raising standards and the school is beginning to use appropriate data to compare its results with those of similar schools. The management and development of inclusion opportunities are good. Effective links with support agencies and local mainstream schools have enabled pupils' needs to be more appropriately met in a range of settings.
- 51 The school's development plan is a comprehensive document which provides a clear focus on what needs to be done and the action needed for achievement. It contains specific criteria for success, clear lines of responsibility and estimates of the costs involved. As such, it is a very useful working tool, both for staff and governors, and also makes a very valuable contribution to the quality of the school's budget planning.

- 52 The governing body fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively and are very supportive of the school. There are clear procedures to ensure all statutory requirements are met. Governors interviewed had a sound understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas that need to be further developed. They appreciate presentations made to them by staff, which keeps them informed about curriculum developments and new initiatives. They are well informed about developments in the curriculum but less so about the standards attained by pupils.
- 53 There are clear links between the school's development work and its financial planning. The headteacher and governing body appropriately give careful consideration to the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions. The governors receive very good quality information about the budget, and the minutes of their meetings show detailed consideration of budget issues. Governors are also clearly aware in their budget deliberations of the impact of the school's changing pupil population and this and other strategic issues help to shape their longer-term financial planning. The school follows good practice in the purchase of resources and in its appointment of contractors for work on the school premises as well as in its careful consideration of the outcomes of its spending decisions. Specific grants, such as those for the development of Augmentative and Alternative Communication, are used effectively for their designated purpose. Money from the Standards Fund is linked to priorities in the development plan and used to support appropriate training. Additional money is gained from local fund-raisers and effectively enhances provision for pupils, for example through the purchase of a new mini-bus. Best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are appropriately applied. The school actively seeks value for money in staffing and the purchase of training. Quotes, tenders and estimates are obtained for capital purchases. A review process is used to effectively monitor these systems. A recent project was the renewal of the boundary fence to deter intruders. This has proved beneficial and efficient use of money as it has greatly reduced the amount of time and money spent carrying out cleaning and repairs to the school building.
- 54 School administration staff keep all accounts meticulously and provide good quality support and information for the headteacher and governors. They deal promptly and efficiently with all routine business enabling the headteacher and staff to maintain a focus on teaching and learning. Effective use is made of new technology in school administration, financial accounting and planning. The latest auditor's report confirms the high quality of practice and made only minor recommendations for improvements, which have been fully implemented. There is very good management and monitoring of the budget and resources are used efficiently.
- 55 There are sufficient teachers for the age, number and learning needs of the pupils. They are well experienced and effectively deployed to meet the requirements of the curriculum. The ratio of pupils to education support assistants is satisfactory, and teachers and pupils are well supported by the good experience and quality of support staff. Induction procedures for teachers new to the school are informal. Most support staff who join the permanent staff of the school do so by first working on a temporary basis in the school. This is good practice and allows both the school and the prospective support staff to experience the school and decide whether or not it would be an appropriate move. Staff development and training is very good and the headteacher ensures all staff receive appropriate training in new school initiatives. The school's very good staff development programme for teaching and education support staff accurately reflects the wide spread of special educational, social and emotional needs present in the school. This programme has included specialist

training and a very relevant variety of courses about the children and pupil's medical needs, including manual handling and lifting.

- 56 The school makes good use of accommodation to provide an effective learning environment for pupils. Most classrooms are large, well lit with suitable access for pupils with a wide range of physical needs. Classrooms are well organised and enhanced by two and three-dimensional displays. Corridors are wide with support rails for those pupils who need extra support. The main corridor is ramped to enable wheel chair access to classrooms. The assembly hall, which also serves as a dining area and for physical education, drama sessions and school presentations, is of sufficient size. The music room, soft play room, sensory and light room are used effectively and extend the range of provision for all pupils. The secure play area, with safety surface and gazebo, enhances the play and social activities of pupils.
- 57 Learning resources are generally good across the curriculum and have improved since the last inspection. Resources in the nursery and in mathematics and music are very good; they are good in all other subjects except physical education, where they are satisfactory. Very good use is made of community resources such as a local music studio, hydrotherapy pool, and horse riding and swimming activities.
- 58 The school's core income and expenditure per pupil are comparatively low compared to other similar schools nationally. Standards are good overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good. Pupils make good progress. The headteacher, governors, staff and parents work closely together to successfully achieve the school's aims. As a result, the school is effective and provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 59 In order to continue to improve the quality of education and pupils' progress, the headteacher and governors should:
- I. Update the Child Protection policy and ensure all staff know the school's Child Protection procedures and have recent appropriate training. (paragraph 34).
 - II. Complete the planning documents for writing, Religious Education and art and design. (paragraphs 20,68, 72,84, 115).
 - III. Ensure that the time given to teaching of subjects in topic work is appropriate. (paragraphs 20, 83,87,90).
 - IV. Develop a policy and a more consistent approach to providing pupils with homework and ensure parents fully understand this. (paragraphs 19,44).

The following should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Increase opportunities for parents and pupils to contribute to school developments (paragraph 44).
- The headteacher to delegate some of his responsibilities and work load. For example, the arrangements for performance management (paragraph 50).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

72

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

45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	43	13	0	0	0
Percentage	1	20	60	18	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

72

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

25

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

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

5

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

1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	69
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.5
Average class size	8

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	610

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	200 - 2001
	£
Total income	716598
Total expenditure	729695
Expenditure per pupil	11227
Balance brought forward from previous year	31194
Balance carried forward to next year	18097

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	78
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.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	50	11	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	31	16	25	10
The teaching is good.	73	27	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	30	0	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	46	0	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	26	5	7	18

Other issues raised by parents

Although there are no after school clubs some parents felt the school offered a good and wide range of activities during school time.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. Children in the foundation stage are in two classes, the nursery class and the reception class. Appropriate strategies are in place for introducing new children to both classes. These include visits to the nursery prior to admission, home visits by staff and the Portage worker working within the nursery for half a term. Assessments on entry show the majority of children enter the nursery and reception class with very limited personal and social skills, physical skills and speech, language and communication skills. Effective teaching and well-planned lessons support children in making good progress across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Curriculum. Because each child's personal targets in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) are appropriate to their needs and are planned for in lessons, children make good progress towards their targets. All children, including those with additional special educational needs, make good progress, and there are no significant differences between the progress of any groups of children. As it is unlikely, because of the significant learning needs of the children, that they will reach the expected learning goals by the end of the reception class, the school appropriately plans for the Early Years Curriculum to be continued into the primary department through the school curriculum.
61. Teaching is good in the foundation stage across all areas of the curriculum. Both teachers and education support assistants have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide them with an appropriate range of learning experiences. Behaviour in all the lessons seen was good, and the children focused well on the activities provided for them. There is a quiet, purposeful atmosphere in both classrooms, which is conducive to good learning. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children, of individual children's learning needs and of the Early Years Curriculum. The curriculum is effectively planned to promote the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, and short, medium and long term planning are good. Activities are appropriate for learning within the six areas and appropriate to the learning needs of the children. Education support assistants provide effective individual and small group support. In a few lessons observed the pace was slow, but in the majority of lessons time was used well. The regular monitoring of children's responses to activities supports teachers in planning appropriate work. Very good relationships between children and staff help create a secure learning environment.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority in both classes with staff providing positive role models and creating relevant opportunities. As a result, children work and play well alongside each other and together. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly learn the routines of the classroom and respond well to the encouragement of staff in such activities as the morning or afternoon greeting. Because the timetable for the day, in pictures and words, is shared with the children at the start of each morning and afternoon session, they become used to the routines of their day and look forward to particular activities. Teachers provide a stimulating and interesting range of activities, which enable children to be active in their learning, for example through exploring a range of toys that can be activated by switches. One group really enjoyed pressing the lever to make "Humpty Dumpty" fall off the wall, and then reconstructing him.

Teachers use these opportunities well to introduce an appropriate vocabulary and to talk to children about what they are doing. As they gain in confidence children show an increasingly positive approach to new experiences, as during outside play where children sit in push-along vehicles or ride bicycles. Although the majority of play is alongside their peers, children increasingly play co-operatively, sharing their toys and communicating with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Teachers use play, language, pictures, symbols and signing well to support children's listening and communication skills. Good teamwork with the speech therapist and the Augmentative and Alternative Communication co-ordinator helps teachers plan more effectively for individual communication needs. Children learn to listen well through activities such as action songs, where they watch the teacher and try to imitate the actions. Higher attaining children remember the actions and participate independently, others need physical or verbal prompts, for example to point to the teddy bear's nose. As they progress, reception children listen well to stories that, through the use of objects, they participate in. They enjoy feeling the basket and looking under the straw for the egg. Through the use of signs and symbols children begin to associate the written word with meaning. Higher attaining children recognise letter sounds and match them to pictures. Children match picture symbols to objects, others match pictures to objects. Lower attaining children feel tactile soft toys to help them match the picture to the animal sound. Younger children enjoy finding their own photograph from a choice of two, and say or point to the other child whose photograph is being held. Higher attaining children extend their vocabulary and try very hard to repeat familiar phrases, for example in a known story. Through all activities staff encourage children to talk, through gesture, signing and language, and provide good role models for children to copy. Effective multi-sensory activities are used well to capture children's interest and to encourage them to participate. One class had tremendous fun participating in a known story. They "read" the book and their attention was successfully held through the use of a variety of objects. Through taking part and listening to new words as they are participating, they begin to remember the sequence of events. When the teacher brought out a real hen they are fascinated and all enjoy feeling her feathers and watching her head movements. Children are encouraged to hold and use paints, crayons, and pencils through a range of play and planned activities.

Mathematical development

64. Children make good progress in their early mathematical development because activities are planned to use the language of number which is reinforced whenever possible during the day. Children begin to show an interest in numbers and counting through activities such as counting the children in the class, joining in counting stories and rhymes and through play. Through a good range of activities children begin to match colours and shapes, to identify more and less, big and little and to use and respond to an increasing mathematical vocabulary. One boy enjoys pushing his car "up" the slope of the multi-story car park while another enjoys trying to fill her shape with tissue paper.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Through a good range of practical activities and trips out in the minibus, such as visiting a local café and having a drink and a snack, children find out more about the world and the people they meet. Children show curiosity and interest in mobiles that make sounds

and in toys that take apart and can be reconstructed. One child concentrates well at building a wall of large lego pieces and becomes increasingly competent at joining parts together. Teachers plan well to help children learn about cause and effect and off and on. Children begin to show an interest in why things happen and how things work, and all have great fun using toys with a variety of levers and switches that, when activated, make them move or make noises. For example, one girl with visual difficulties successfully finds the switch to start the music tape, another finds that when she pulls the lever the animal moves. High attaining children use coloured press pads to change the screen when following computer programmes and enjoy the way they achieve responses. Through play children are introduced to a range of materials, such as sand. Teachers use activities and objects that are fun and interesting to children as when the children enjoyed using a feely bag, reaching in and taking an object and then trying to communicate what they had chosen. They show a variety of responses after watching the teacher break an egg onto a plate and then feeling it.

Physical development

66. Many pupils have very limited physical co-ordination and control on entry to the nursery. Through a planned range of indoor and outdoor activities, children make good progress in their physical development. Outside, children enjoy using the range of small and large equipment and develop physical control, from sitting on bikes and pushing themselves around to pedalling bikes and steering them. As an example, two boys play well together, one sitting in the push car and the other pushing. They verbalise during their play, the one in the car says “beep beep” and the one pushing says “crash”. Non ambulant children feel the range of mobiles and enjoy the effect of touching the wind chimes. In lessons, they listen carefully, watch their teacher and try hard at body control, such as one non-ambulant child rolling on the floor towards the music area and another crawling towards a favourite toy. Very careful attention is given to staff frequently changing children’s seating and working positions. Children’s physical development is enhanced by the good teamwork and planning between teachers and the physiotherapist. Through playing with a range of construction toys children improve their dexterity and control, joining and fixing pieces together.

Creative development

67. Children make good progress in this area because teachers provide a range of activities that they can respond to by using many senses. They enjoy action songs and joining in with the movements, and have fun selecting and exploring a range of sound producing instruments such as tambourines and shakers. Through teachers being involved in the activities, for example by singing and so reinforcing the name of the instrument as each child chooses, they begin to acquire and widen their understanding and vocabulary. All children, some with adult support, indicate their preference of instrument. Children use a range of materials to scrunch, rip and tear and begin to use glue, spatulas and paint in their artistic efforts. They enjoy scrunching the eggshells before sticking them on to make Humpty Dumpty’s picture.

ENGLISH and COMMUNICATION

68. At all ages, pupils’ achievements in English and communication are good because teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The consistently good teaching and very effective use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems ensures that all pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening (communication), whatever their level of need. The impact of the National

Literacy Strategy has effectively supported pupils' good achievements in reading. However, progress is slower in the range of writing opportunities available to pupils because there is no whole school approach to developing and teaching pre-writing skills. As a result of this, pupils' achievements are only satisfactory. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans.

69. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen well to stories and join in rhymes and songs, some by using signs or communicators. The youngest pupils listen carefully to the teacher and respond well to questions and directions, answering confidently using their own preferred form of communication. During snack times pupils effectively use signs and symbols to communicate choice and to state likes and dislikes. In a very good Year 1 drama lesson, in response to the teacher's stimulating use of the big book "The Train Ride", higher attaining pupils showed great pleasure responding to the story either with actions or signs or words they knew. Lower attaining pupils showed great interest in the various sensory and visual aids that the teacher had prepared to support learning in the lesson. Although most of the pupils have significant hand control difficulties they are beginning to make meaningful marks on paper, with higher attaining pupils able to use a pincer grip to control a pencil when joining two dots together. Pupils at this age develop their reading skills at a good pace. They are beginning to recognise the names and sounds of individual letters. For example, pupils in a good Year 2 library session could recognise the sound "C" and identify objects and photographs of items beginning with the letter. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to show awareness that particular stories are linked to particular books and join in with the retelling of "The Hungry Caterpillar".
70. Teachers and education support assistants know their pupils well and effectively use this knowledge in lesson planning and in assessing and recording the progress pupils make. Individual targets are in place for each pupil in each lesson and this ensures that pupils' new knowledge and skills are built upon that which they already know. Some teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their classrooms to support and reinforce skills, although the use of this technology to support all aspects of English is in the early stages of development. Relationships in lessons are very good and pupils are able to learn in a very happy atmosphere. Education support assistants are well informed, work well with their teachers and make very valuable contributions to individual pupil's learning. All staff help each other in creating a positive learning atmosphere by setting and expecting high standards of behaviour from pupils. Speech and language therapists make a very good contribution to English by helping to assess pupils' individual communication needs and by developing programmes linked to targets in pupils IEPs. Staff who consistently refer to and follow individual behaviour plans very well manage pupils who have difficulties in understanding acceptable behaviour.
71. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are actively encouraged to take part in speaking and listening to others. They contribute appropriately in individual and in small group situations. They communicate information about the stories they have heard and the activities they have taken part in. In a good Year 4 lesson, while reading the big book "Farmer Duck", pupils answer various questions about the story. When asked "What noise does the duck make?" one pupil answers using picture enhanced communication as his preferred method of communication. In another Year 3 lesson pupils, as a result of very good expressive reading and the use of appropriate sensory aids by the class teacher and education support assistants, happily respond to questions about the big book story "Who loves getting wet?" One pupil with complex needs identifies words and colours from the story using a speech output device. Progress in reading is good because teachers' planning reflects the elements of the National Literacy Strategy and because

a suitable reading scheme has been recently introduced across the whole school. Both of these factors provide a clear structure for teaching. Lower attaining pupils recognise that print carries meaning and use pictures to make informed guesses. Higher attaining pupils' recognise words in a familiar context and are happy to discuss the content of their storybooks. All pupils enjoy sharing books and respond very well to the stories they hear. Opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills are less well developed. Although higher attaining pupils produce recognisable letters and words to convey meaning there are missed opportunities throughout the school when pupils' writing skills and making of purposeful marks are not sufficiently supported through the use of information and communication technology programmes. Pupils in the autistic class also make good progress in English. The teacher has successfully adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet the individual needs of pupils who find it very difficult to work co-operatively.

72. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to develop the use and range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems throughout the school. This area is very well co-ordinated and the school provides very useful information for other schools. It complements and supplements the pupils' entitlements and ensures that pupils have access to the curriculum. The school is the base for the Local Education Authority's AAC library and actively encourages parental and carers' involvement in assessing communication needs.
73. The school makes very good use of the Wiltshire Library and Museums service to loan a variety of specialist topic books and related artefacts. The subject is well managed with appropriate targets for development identified in the school improvement plan. Assessment procedures, including the development of "P" level measures, provide useful information about pupils' attainment. Resources are good and most, such as big books, are stored in the library so that they are easily accessible to all staff.

MATHEMATICS

74. At all ages pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. This is because teaching is consistently good and occasionally very good and because teachers have a good subject knowledge and high expectations that promote effective learning. This good progress applies equally to boys and girls and to all groups of pupils with different special educational needs. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. A number of important developments have led to the good improvement. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced along with appropriate training and improved resources. A new co-ordinator enthusiastically leads the subject and monitors teachers planning. The Equals Access planning documents have been adopted and provide an appropriate range to the curriculum. This is supported by improved and finely graded assessment procedures, which enable teachers to set pupils clear and appropriate numeracy targets. The weaknesses of the previous inspection concerning long term planning and a narrow curriculum have been fully addressed. In addition, the work of trained and committed education support assistants makes a consistent and notable contribution to the good standards pupils achieve.
75. Year 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in acquiring, consolidating and using early number skills. Lessons are well planned and prepared so that learning is continuous. Accurate assessment ensures that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. Lessons follow the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy framework with whole class, group and plenary sessions. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' special needs and know how best they learn. Because lessons proceed with pace and activities are interesting and varied, learning is good. Higher attaining pupils count

objects and pictures from one to five and recognise the numerals. They join in with familiar number rhymes, songs, stories and games. Lower attaining pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact or gesture and participate in shared activities, sustaining concentration for short periods. Occasionally, where the challenging behaviour of pupils is not managed effectively, other pupils' learning is disrupted.

76. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good and occasionally very good progress. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils make very good progress because the teacher has a realistic expectation of learning and good behaviour which is effectively shared with pupils. Excellent classroom organisation and very effective use of education support assistants, resources and classroom space contributes significantly to pupils' learning. The lesson is planned and prepared in great detail so that learning is continuous. There is a seamless change from the whole class activity to group work. The timely interventions of an education support assistant effectively supports one pupil as he interacts with the computer on cause and effect. A group of four pupils work purposefully with the teacher who records their mathematical experience on a large board with good use of counters and prompts to help them in understanding the concept of subtraction. Another group work well with an education support assistant using small whiteboards to improve their writing skills. The assistant effectively provides 'hands over' guidance to help the pupils write single digit numbers. Working with an education support assistant, another group of pupils improve their fine motor skills of cutting, sticking and matching numbers. Throughout there is a purposeful atmosphere, with everyone involved and busy. In the autistic class higher attaining pupils accurately count and order numbers to 100 and count on in multiples of two and ten. Lower attaining pupils show an awareness of cause and effect for familiar objects and activities such as using simple switches to activate toys.
77. Pupils' numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding are regularly reinforced across the curriculum and during informal times during the day. At registration the number of pupils present is always counted, at snack time drinks are counted and pupils choose from a number of 'goodies', in food technology pupils measure quantities and learn the mathematical vocabulary with words like 'spoonful' and 'half full'. A particular positive feature of the subject is the high level of involvement of non-verbal pupils and those with complex needs in all the mathematics activities through the appropriate use of signing, symbols, information and communication technology switches and other communication aids. The subject, and the manner, in which it is taught, makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

SCIENCE

78. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well, including those pupils for whom English is not their first language, because the provision for science is good. They make good progress in relation to the learning planned and the targets set for them. The standards achieved by pupils have improved since the last inspection because teaching is better and the school has developed a suitable subject plan. This is based on the Access curriculum materials that have been developed to specifically meet the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning. Teachers plan effective activities that give pupils a wide range of learning opportunities through which they gain knowledge, understanding and skills.
79. Science is taught as part of a cycle of topics, such as transport, water and myself. Key skills and concepts relating to the topic are identified as 'learning outcomes'. Teachers provide, through appropriate activities, opportunities for pupils to achieve the learning that has been identified. Individual pupil targets are identified for each activity and these

are used effectively to adapt the curriculum to match pupils' needs. Often activities have a joint focus, for example, elements of food technology and science will be addressed through the same activity. It was only possible to observe a small number of activities where science was the main focus and teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to good but good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be broadly satisfactory. Teachers provide good introductions to lessons; interesting and relevant activities and they have high expectations of pupils to participate. As a result pupils achieve well and concentrate for the whole activity. Because teachers provide clear explanations and demonstrate what they want pupils to do, pupils participate effectively.

80. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are beginning to understand that objects and materials have a variety of textures and purposes and that their properties can be changed. In a well planned Year 1 lesson pupils looked carefully at a range of different model trains. Careful discussion and questioning by the teacher helped pupils think about how the trains could move. One pupil thought you could pull them to make them move and another suggested pushing them. They then enjoyed watching and playing with battery operated trains to see which train moved fastest. In another lesson pupils saw that changes occur when you mix and cook foods. An activity to cook a pizza provides good planned opportunities for pupils to explore the science concepts relating to 'how materials change', as well as technology and food technology skills such as 'using simple tools and 'designing a pizza'. In making their dough the teacher emphasises the tactile mixing element to encourage pupils to participate and feel the change in the ingredients. Pupils learning is supported well because the teacher puts a good emphasis on scientific language such as 'dry' to describe flour and 'change' to help pupils see what occurs to flour when water is added to make dough. In most lessons teachers use questions well to help pupils recognise and describe what they see. Pupils of all abilities enjoy and learn from the opportunity to smell and taste different foods. They clearly indicate, by facial expression and by pushing things away, their preferences for the smells and taste of some foods such as onion and red pepper.
81. Teachers and education support assistants effectively support pupils to use their senses when developing early investigation skills. Teachers provide a good selection of resources, which pupils are encouraged to explore and to use properly. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are encouraged to think about living things and enjoy watching a film about fish. Through good teaching they are encouraged to look carefully at the colours, patterns and sizes of the fish and choose which they prefer. One pupil, through very careful observation, notices the bubbles in the water. As part of their project about water pupils in Year 5 and 6 make boats out of junk materials and are very enthusiastic when they test them to see which design moves fastest when blown. One pupil with significant visual needs enjoys the opportunity to feel the water in the fountain and to have it run over parts of his body. Activities such as these capture pupils' attention and they make good progress because they are interested in what is happening. The work of older and more able pupils shows that they have developed a simple understanding of growth and teachers enable them to record their learning, providing opportunities for them to put diagrams into the correct order to show 'plant growth from seed to flower'
82. Lessons include a good range of practical activities and pupils have the opportunity to work as part of a group and as individuals. There is a good emphasis on allowing pupils to investigate and this means there is always plenty to do during activities. As a result pupils maintain their interest and participate fully. Education support assistants play a significant role, particularly when they support individual pupils or small groups who need sensitive encouragement to help them participate effectively. Teachers constantly refer to pupils' previous experiences and this helps them to make connections between

things they already know and new learning. Teachers, because of effective assessment systems, have a good understanding of what pupils know and can do and this enables them to prepare activities and work that effectively support pupils' building on earlier learning. They ensure there are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills. Communication is developed effectively and there is a good emphasis on the development of appropriate vocabulary.

83. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans well. This ensures that pupils are given a good range of learning opportunities, which cover all the required elements of the curriculum. However, the teaching of science within topic work is not monitored and there is currently no way to ensure that teachers place enough emphasis on science learning during activities. There are times, in some activities, when pupils' learning is limited because teachers place insufficient emphasis on the science concepts and skills of the activity.

ART AND DESIGN

84. In art and design the achievement and progress of pupils of all ages and abilities is satisfactory, including those pupils for whom English is not their first language. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Subject planning has improved because the school now uses the Access curriculum materials to support teachers when they plan work. However, the school has not established a plan which outlines what pupils will learn during their time at school. There is no way to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to build on skills they have achieved. Few art activities were observed during the inspection and in these teaching ranged from satisfactory to good but it is satisfactory overall.
85. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have opportunities to experiment with a range of different materials and techniques. They use an interesting range of materials, such as fruit and sponges, to make prints on paper. Pupils choose which colour paper to use when making group collages, and choose which paint colours they prefer to make random marks on paper. They enjoy using a range of implements to create patterns in paint, for example combs and wheels. Individual pupil Records of Achievement provide a useful record of what pupils have experienced. Art is used effectively as a vehicle to support pupils' learning in other subjects, particularly those subjects taught through topic work. For example, pupils in Year 3 make collage pictures of trains to reinforce their understanding of transport. Year 5 pupils have a splendid time making very large three-dimensional model fish from wire, paper and plaster. They are very excited when it is time to decorate their fish and work with great care to achieve a good result. Because a wide range of implements, from very thick to fine paint brushes and sponges, are on hand, all pupils fully participate in the activity. The education support assistants are very effective in supporting pupils because they know pupils well and understand what is expected of them. Enthusiastic support for pupils in Year 5 enables them to participate effectively when they make prints from bubbles blown into a mixture of paint and washing up liquid. Teachers reinforce pupils' communication skills well within their teaching and this helps pupils concentrate well.
86. Teachers' plans indicate that pupils have an appropriate range of experiences, which include working in different media and using a suitable range of techniques. Lower attaining pupils, who often have problems manipulating tools, respond well to the sensitive support provided by adults. However, because of the lack of a whole school plan for art and design the quality and range of these experiences rely on individual teachers. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements in art and the school displays pupils'

work well although there is an over emphasis on collage techniques within the range of exhibits.

87. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator is aware that the curriculum needs further development to ensure that pupils make progress throughout their time in the school. There is no monitoring of the subject because planning is specific to each teacher and related to the activities they have planned within the topic. Resources for the subject are good and the school also has a good range of pictures by famous artists including a small number of limited edition prints by contemporary artists. The mosaic mural and fountain in the courtyard and pupils' own artwork helps to create a stimulating learning environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Overall, the achievements of all pupils in design and technology are good. Skilful teaching and well planned and prepared lessons effectively support pupils to make good progress in designing and making simple products, and in using a range of simple tools. This good progress applies equally to boys and girls and to all groups of pupils with different special educational needs. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
89. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 make good progress in using their manipulative skills, as in a lesson making model trains from junk material, because teaching is good. The lesson is clearly introduced so pupils know that to expect. Good and appropriate resources motivate pupils and they squeal with delight as a sackfull of cardboard boxes are tumbled onto the table. Good questioning by the teacher, for example, "What shape is a train?" reminds pupils of previous work on transport. The teacher and education support assistants make every effort to encourage and involve pupils in the making process of joining boxes with glue, Sellotape and wet plaster. Higher attaining pupils work with little support and help clear away. Lower attaining pupils, with effective support, explore the sensory and physical properties of the materials. A good plenary reviews the lesson and celebrates achievements. Pupils are able to identify their own model trains from the collection and are very proud of their work. Pupils make good progress in understanding the process of cooking, preparation and the use of ingredients. They begin to understand that materials have different textures, taste, colour and appearance and that these change after heating. They make crispy biscuits in the shape of circles, reinforcing work they have covered on wheels in the topic on transport. Pupils' independence is encouraged through symbols and words as they are asked to go and find a utensil or an ingredient from the side. Higher attaining pupils do this independently. The number of spoonfuls of each ingredient is counted out and pupils take it in turn to stir the mixture. Pupils identify a rolling pin from a picture and they each roll out a piece of dough and cut out circle shapes with a pastry cutter. Although all lessons are well planned and prepared for, very occasionally the ineffective management of pupils' behaviour and poor organisation to prevent it happening, detracts from the quality of learning.
90. Pupils up to the age of 11 make good progress. No work with resistant material with this age group was seen during the inspection. Evidence is gathered from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and photographs of topics on water and boats and weather. In these activities, pupils design and work with plastic construction kits to make boats and try out different ways of powering them to move. In this way they use simple tools, understand that models can be made from different components and can be made to move by different sources of power. In food technology lessons pupils learn to follow a recipe. In one Year 4 lesson, the lesson is clearly introduced using a big 'First Cook Book', which pupils are able to follow. Organisation and preparation are excellent, so

that the pace of the lesson never drops. A higher attaining pupil helps to open a tin of beans using a tin opener. The teacher allows him to be as independent as possible so he feels he has been successful. Similarly and with close supervision, a pupil cuts up onions. All pupils are then involved in cutting up the sausages and in observing and smelling the ingredients. Good questioning throughout, for example, "Why do you think we cut up the onion?" helps pupils' understanding and focuses their attention. A microwave cooker quickly cooks the meal and all enjoy tasting and eating it. This lesson provided a real shared group experience, during which, speaking and listening skills and number, time and measurement are very effectively reinforced.

91. Design and technology has no co-ordinator to lead and monitor the subject. Planning for the subject is good and design and technology is taught as part of the topic cycle. It is not monitored to ensure that sufficient time or opportunities are devoted to this subject, or to ensure that pupils develop their technological capability as they move through the school. Resources are good and impact positively on learning. The subject, and the caring way in which it is taught, makes a good contribution to pupils, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

92. Due to the timetabling of history and geography as part of topic work, only two lessons were observed during the inspection. However, analysis of a range of pupils' work and teacher plans and records confirms that pupils make satisfactory progress in history and geography in relation to their age and ability.
93. In Years 1 and 2 history and geography are taught through a two year topic cycle. By the end of Year 2 pupils have investigated and explored the school and the school grounds. Higher attaining pupils use the knowledge acquired in finding their way, independently, from their classroom to the school office and to other rooms. Most pupils, with limited support, can find the library, hall and playground. All pupils have enjoyed visits in the local area. This has included visits to the local shops to purchase items linked to a topic on food. In Years 3 to 6 pupils follow a four year topic cycle. Areas studied include the seasons, journeys, festivals and celebrations. Pupils have daily sessions identifying weather conditions and all are included in keeping class records. Augmentative and Alternative Communication aids such as computer switches and symbols are used well to support pupils learning and participation. The sequencing of events and the passing of time are reinforced daily when pupils participate in reviewing their timetable of activities for the day. They begin to understand which activity is first and what that is followed by. Pupils also enjoy celebrating the passage of time when it is their own or other pupil's birthday.
94. In the small number of lessons seen the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory or good. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have appropriate expectations of what pupils will achieve and how they will behave. In a good Year 1 history lesson most pupils could follow the sequence of the school timetable using picture enhanced communication symbols. Two higher attaining pupils anticipate activities they will do in the afternoon. Year 4 pupils, in a lesson with a focus on geography, came up with solutions to the teacher's question "How can we stay dry in the rain?" One pupil with complex learning difficulties made a suggestion using his speech communication device; another pupil answered, "We can use a hat".
95. Planning of the subjects is satisfactory and there is a whole school plan of what is to be taught. However, no member of staff has responsibility for co-ordinating the subjects or

its future development. Termly reports to parents give some useful assessment summaries but do not always say what pupils can do and understand.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. At all ages and levels of ability, pupils' achievements are good because teaching is good. The use, by pupils, of a very good range of switching and control devices, is a good feature of many lessons in most subjects. Some pupils use computers to identify, match and move images on the screen; others use very simple painting programmes while higher attaining pupils word process either using symbols or simple sentences. The overlap between the use of ICT within the curriculum and the school's provision for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) benefits significantly from the good links established between the two co-ordinators for these areas.
97. During Years 1 and 2 pupils develop an awareness of the use of ICT in different subjects. Through using a range of very carefully selected switching devices, pupils respond with pleasure to cause and effect experiences. They are confident to switch on a tape recorder and, as in the case of visually impaired pupils, fibre optics in the sensory room. The linking of sound beams to musical instruments contributes very positively to their learning in, and enjoyment of, a music lesson. As they make progress all pupils confidently use a wider range of press, squeeze, push and pull devices. They remain focused on the relevant target, for example a moving toy, a sound producing device or a visual display unit, for longer periods of time. Pupils develop better mouse control and move a cursor with greater accuracy. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand and use the "clicking" feature of the mouse. Improving control and an increasing understanding of cause and effect enables higher attaining pupils to use a touch screen or mouse to produce simple images on the screen. With a group of higher attaining pupils one teacher effectively used a simple data recording programme to produce a visual record of their findings after they had identified the colours of cars in the car park.
98. Between Years 3 and 6 pupils continue to build well on previous experiences. Teachers make sure that pupils with complex learning difficulties have opportunities to consolidate previous skills while at the same time providing them with activities that extend their skills in the range of devices they can use. Switches, hand, head or body activated, are used with more control and confidence. Improving hand-eye co-ordination enables some, with and without help, to use a touch screen to produce the required "effect". Because of their increasing ability to anticipate what is going to happen and their capacity to attend to the screen for longer periods of time, higher attaining pupils use appropriate programmes to produce simple "written" work in English. They enjoy communicating with another school using e-mail. Higher attaining pupils use a reading programme to support their literacy work and matching activities that support their learning in mathematics. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make good progress in their ability to accept and work at new programmes.
99. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has a clear view about how the subject is to develop. A carefully considered policy reflects National Curriculum guidelines while at the same time responds to the varied and complex needs of the pupils. The co-ordinator monitors how well the subject is covered by monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' progress and supporting teaching in classrooms. All staff have received New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training which has contributed to improved teaching. Staff also receive training from the co-ordinator, for example for making more efficient use of the Internet, e-mailing and in the use of new software and new equipment such as scanners, digital cameras and a digital cam-corder. Resourcing for the subject is very good. The school employs a part time technician, which has further contributed to the

improved provision for ICT. The school's very positive targeting of provision for ICT in its action plan; its effective use of additional funding for staff development and the purchase of carefully considered equipment has resulted in provision for this subject showing significant improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

100. Pupil achievements in music, including pupils with more significant learning needs and those with English as a second language, are consistently very good across the school. Teaching and learning throughout the school are very good due to the determination of the staff, led by the music co-ordinator, to give every pupil access to good quality opportunities to experience and make music. Lessons are presented in a very enthusiastic way. Pupils additionally benefit from a good musical input in other subjects and many aspects of school life, for example every day starts with a whole school assembly in which music plays an important part. Pupils respond well to the atmosphere set by the music, listen carefully and sing, sign and clap enthusiastically to the best of their ability.
101. By Year 2 pupils have listened to an increasing range of different music. They enjoy entering the music room to the accompaniment of, for example, 'The Queen of Sheba'. They respond very well to the music by moving hands, eyes, arms and legs to the rhythm while lower attaining pupils respond by facial expression, such as smiling, to show their enjoyment. Pupils are confident to hold and use instruments such as bells, drums and maracas and they bang and shake them keeping good time with the beat. They listen very carefully and follow instructions well. All enjoy and perform action songs enthusiastically. Information and communication technology is well used to support pupils' access to music. Pupils with most complex difficulties participate fully by using single switches attached to sound beams which allows them to make musical sounds, which they very much enjoy. Pupils are confident to perform, either individually or as part of a small group, in front of others. Higher attaining pupils choose their own instruments and sing as they play them. Pupils listen well and play their chosen instrument in time to musical accompaniment. They play fast, slow, loud and quiet, and stop when instructed. Through listening to and contrasting different types of music, such as Cuban and classical, they begin appreciating the different moods and feelings music can arouse. Pupils enjoy their music and are keen to participate. They behave well and are enthusiastic about using their musical skills because lessons are interesting and fun.
102. By the end of Year 6 pupils listen attentively, choose instruments and distinguish between the sounds different instruments make. Pupils control the sounds they make by singing loudly and quietly and by playing instruments to different beats on instruction. Higher attaining pupils play independently while lower attaining pupils play well with adult support. Pupils are particularly proud of their musical skills. In one Year 5 lesson, pupils explored musical instruments and composed patterns of music to accompany action songs, such as using a large gong to represent thunder, and small chime bars to represent raindrops. After they rehearsed and completed their composition they proudly presented it to the rest of their class, and the following day to the whole school in a 'celebration' assembly.
103. The music co-ordinator uses music as a therapy with pupils who have additional and complex learning difficulties to interact through music with the teacher. The teacher constantly sings to the pupils and introduces musical sounds encouraging the pupils to sing back or repeat the musical phrase. Pupils respond well and participate, making

verbal sounds or repeating drum beats. Pupils progress well and make choices of instruments by using picture cards or symbols.

104. The co-ordinator effectively plans assembly topics to enhance music coverage across all classes and ensures all pupils benefit from participating in musical productions, such as Harvest Festivals and Christmas productions. Pupils take part in the local special schools' music festival and the special school proms, and perform in a local music studio. These activities raise pupils self esteem and they are very proud of their achievements. A range of outside visitors bring live music into school to broaden pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, such as the organisers from the music studio who visit school on a regular basis. Other visitors give performances and run workshops for staff and pupils. Pupils receive and significantly benefit from this rich and varied range of musical experiences. The co-ordinator provides very good advice and support to staff across the school. All staff receive very effective and appropriate musical training, such as 'Sound About', and information communication training including experience using sound beams. Because of this staff are very confident and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of music was good. It has improved to be very good. This is a result of high quality teaching and the improvement of musical resources, such as good quality musical instruments and the introduction of new technology, using sound beams linked to instruments. Music plays an important part in the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Provision for physical education is very good. Pupils achieve high standards and make very good progress. This is because teaching and instructing in a rich variety of activities is mainly by specialists, who bring quality, rigour and enthusiasm to the subject. Their leadership and expertise is supported by the work of committed and highly effective teachers and education support assistants. As a consequence, pupils work hard, show a high level of participation, and listen carefully to signed or spoken instructions. This maintains the high standards noted at the previous inspection. This very good progress across the school applies equally to all groups of pupils of all ages. Indeed it is a prominent feature of the subject, that wherever possible all pupils, including non-ambulant pupils, should have access to as many opportunities as possible and experience the freedom, excitement and challenge associated with physical activity.
106. All pupils regularly go swimming and all make very good progress. This is principally because of the high number of teachers and education support assistants who effectively support pupils in the water and provide individual tuition and encouragement under the guidance of a qualified instructor. The younger pupils and those with most physical need, go swimming in a nearby hydrotherapy pool where they learn to relax and experience the pleasure of buoyancy. Year 10 pupils from a local secondary school provide valuable additional support for this group of pupils. Older pupils build on this prior learning and experience and continue their swimming in a community pool. Many achieve the national target of being able to swim 25 metres by the age of eleven. They make good progress because of clear, unambiguous instructions given by staff in the water, for example, "Hold your head back and look up at the ceiling" helps one pupils float more efficiently on his back. The effective use of good resources, armbands, toggles and boards enables pupils to be independent and enjoy the sensation of moving in the water. They show their enjoyment with squeals of delight and signs of excitement. There is total trust in the staff supporting them. Their achievements and progress, however small, are acknowledged, because staff are skilled in recognising and communicating to pupils their recognition of successful responses. Education

support assistants ensure pupils are changed with great care and dignity. Appropriate emphasis is placed on all health and safety matters. There are for example ample 'spotters' on the poolside as well as staff in the water. An emergency medical bag accompanies all pupils on trips out of school.

107. In gymnastics two pupils, supported by education support assistants, integrate in a physical education lesson with a Year 6 class from the local primary school. They listen carefully to instructions and move, fast and slow, big and small, with increasing co-ordination and control. Their performance is not noticeably different from that of their mainstream peers, as they build and refine their movement sequences. They gain in confidence from this experience showing clear gains in physical and social skills and language development.
108. In dance lessons taken by an instructor with good subject expertise, pupils perform actions in response to musical cues. They join the lesson with a sense of anticipation because "dance lessons are fun"! The instructor asks, "What actions do you want to perform today?" Pupils take it in turn and choose to hop, jump, skip or run around the circle. Everyone applauds and this raises their self-esteem. They learn to pass a large box around the circle clapping in time to the music. When the music stops pupils take an article out of the box and run round the circle displaying the object. Pupils in wheelchairs are equally involved with staff pushing them around the circle. The lesson concludes with pupils rolling under a large silk sheet with staff making sure they experience the feel of the touch of the silk and the change of light as they roll underneath. Throughout there is a sense of a community and sharing. Pupils learn to conform to the 'rules' of the activities and to wait their turn and acknowledge each other's performances.
109. In a weekly horse riding lesson, pupils make very good progress in mounting and dismounting, in holding the reins correctly and in using their legs to control the horses. This is because of skilled instruction, good support from approved voluntary helpers and pupils' own confidence and positive attitude to the experience. All pupils relate well to the horses and the stable personnel. They improve in their balance and posture while riding and learn to communicate with their mount through instructions, "Walk on", and through control of the reins and the use of their legs. One higher attaining pupil demonstrates the 'rising trot' with ease and confidence. Appropriate attention is shown to health and safety throughout, with all pupils wearing helmets and two helpers accompanying the rides.
110. Pupils in the autistic class have a daily physical education lesson first thing every morning, as a way of settling them down and improving their concentration. These are vigorous sessions accompanied by loud music which pupils seem to enjoy. They bounce energetically, showing good balance and co-ordination, on small trampets, or run quickly around the hall in tandem with education support assistants. These sessions are well planned and proceed at a good pace, with support assistants very busy maintaining pupils on their chosen activity. Along with the teacher, they deal effectively with pupils' idiosyncratic behaviours.
111. Autistic pupils make very good progress in refining a sequence of bounces on a full size trampoline. Some are very competent performers. Under the direction of an instructor they perform with confidence, displaying good posture, balance and co-ordination. Good coaching tips from the instructor and teacher, for example, "Keep your head up" means that pupils' performance improves within the lesson. Non ambulant pupils are lifted carefully on to the bed of the trampoline and enjoy rebound bouncing in the prone position supported by the instructor. While four adults spot on each side of the trampoline to ensure pupils safety, the school does not always use the available crash mats as an additional safety precaution.

112. The subject is well managed by the subject co-ordinator. There is a good scheme of work in place supported by effective assessment procedures. The subject is allocated a large amount of time and this is used well. The curriculum provides a very broad range of highly relevant learning opportunities and the school employs a range of specialist instructors to provide expertise in these activities. Opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities are provided on residential trips and in the school playground. In addition, the physiotherapist and occupational therapist provide high quality individual programmes for pupils with additional physical needs. These improve pupils' balance, co-ordination, and control and maintain muscle tone, and ensure appropriate positioning to access the curriculum. Resources and facilities are good and impact positively on standards. The subject reinforces pupils speaking and listening and numeracy skills and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. During the week of inspection, insufficient lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, there is good evidence of detailed planning across the school for both religious education lessons, and also religious education being taught and supported through topic work, particularly literacy work across the school and on a daily basis in assembly. Termly reports contain good evidence of what pupils can do, understand and what they know. This is supplemented by additional reports contained in pupils' annual reviews. Discussions with the headteacher, the religious education co-ordinator, staff, and where possible pupils, indicates satisfactory teaching, learning and progress taking place. Analysis of pupils' work, reports, displays in class-rooms, the school hall and corridors, supports the judgement that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress.
114. All pupils enjoy experiencing and participating in action stories, such as the story of Noah and the flood, linked to their topic of 'water'. They enjoy singing the song "Who built the ark?" and are pleased to select a toy animal when participating in the story. They link the story of Noah to talk about natural sources, such as 'water, rivers and seas', and sing songs about the creation of water. Higher attaining pupils look at the pictures in stories and some follow the text and read. As part of their work on looking at themselves as part of a family and part of a larger community they look at and try to identify pictures of themselves, and their family. They recognise their own picture and some of their friends and family and staff in school. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand what is acceptable behaviour and they talk about good and bad life styles, how they can be good at home and occasionally how they are sometimes naughty at home. Pupils enjoy special festivals and celebrations, they discuss special events and show they have some knowledge and experience of such events in the family, for example a christening. They listen carefully to stories from the Bible and sing songs about how God created the world. The role of prayer in the daily life of the school is an important element in making religious education relevant to pupils.
115. The subject is developing well with the recent appointment of a coordinator. A policy is in place but is currently being updated. Consideration has been given to the locally agreed syllabus, but as yet the full planning for Religious Education across the school is not in place. Festivals of other faiths are celebrated but there is insufficient planned work in Religious Education for pupils living in a diverse society. A good start has been made to extending the resources available for the subject. Religious Education positively supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

