

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RIVERWALK COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL**

Bury St. Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124902

Headteacher: Mr. Barry Ellis

Reporting inspector: Mr. Jed Donnelly  
23637

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 192116

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special for pupils with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2½ to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Close Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP33 3JZ
Telephone number:	01284 764280
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Pearl Rose
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jed Donnelly	Registered inspector	Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		English as an additional language	Key Issues for action
			Leadership and management
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents and carers
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Science	
		Art	
		Special educational needs	
Kathy Hooper	Team inspector	Design and technology	Teaching and learning
		Information technology	
David Hughes	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
Roger Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well does the school care for its pupils
		Religious education	
Christine Richardson	Team inspector	English	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Music	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Riverwalk is a mixed school for pupils with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties. The catchment area is the whole of West Suffolk. It caters for pupils aged 2½ to 19. At the time of the inspection there were 88 pupils on roll. Of these, eighteen pupils had profound and multiple learning difficulties and an additional two had severe visual impairment, twenty five pupils had autistic spectrum disorders and several had challenging behaviour. Pupils in the assessment nursery attend part time. There were three pupils with English as an additional language. The school roll has risen over recent years and forecasts suggest that this will continue.

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

Riverwalk Community Special School has many strengths; it is a good school with many very good features and some excellent practice.

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

- Achievements in English, mathematics and science are at least good and the provision for art and personal, health and social education is very good.
- Teaching is consistently good with some very good features.
- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The curriculum is good overall. Assessment is very good with some excellent features.
- The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is excellent.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The support and monitoring of pupils' learning and welfare is very good.
- The school's links with parents are very good and often excellent.

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

- Standards in information technology which are unsatisfactory. \*
- Overall provision for pupils Post-16.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning. \*

*\* The school has identified these as areas for improvement in the School Development Plan  
The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

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

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing the key issues and weaknesses. The school's capacity to improve is now very good. The issues for improvement identified by this inspection are evident in the school's current plan for improvement and reflect the school's continuing focus on improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	<b>Key</b>  very good      A good              B satisfactory      C unsatisfactory   D poor                E
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	
reading	B	B	B	B	
writing	B	B	B	B	
mathematics	B	B	B	B	
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

Achievements in English, mathematics and science are good. Achievement in other subjects is good except religious education which is satisfactory and information and communication technology which is unsatisfactory overall. Achievements in art and personal, health and social education are very good. In the lessons observed most pupils make good progress and some very good progress. Where progress is only satisfactory, it is often as a result of insufficient teacher expertise in dealing with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils make very good progress against the targets set in their individual educational plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Relationships with staff are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are given good opportunities to make choices and decisions. Unacceptable behaviour is rare and involves only a very few pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good. Staff are trusted and pupils respond very well to staff. Pupils learn to get on well with other pupils and there are very good instances of co-operation and help.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Unauthorised absence is very low.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good	Good

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



Teaching is consistently good and on occasions very good. Teaching in English, mathematics, science, art and personal, health and social education is good. Where teaching is just satisfactory, particularly in the lower school, it is the result of a lack of specialist teaching knowledge of pupils with complex learning and behavioural difficulties.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good overall. The statutory requirements for information technology are not met. There is no separate Post-16 provision. Provision for personal development is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and personal, health and social education is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are safe and secure and their targets indicate high expectations of learning. Pupil's individual educational plans are excellent and are very well monitored.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management is very good. The school recognises many of the weaknesses in the school and is addressing these through the School Development Plan.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The Governing Body is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are effective in monitoring its work and preparing to meet the few remaining statutory obligations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The School Development Plan is evaluated yearly. The key issues have been addressed since the last inspection. The school has set good clear targets for pupils' learning. The school recognises the need to formalise the monitoring of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The day to day administration is very good and the school budget is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Value for money is good. The governing body and staff have vision but formally only look one year ahead.

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal development of pupils</li> <li>• Commitment of all staff.</li> <li>• Leadership of the headteacher and key staff.</li> <li>• Easy to approach the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Speech therapy.</li> </ul>

The team agrees with the views of parents. However, homework is set at the Annual Review and at the teachers' discretion with parents' agreement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do in each key stage. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to more and less able pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.*
2. Achievements in English, including communication, mathematics and science are good, and in personal, social and health education they are very good and sometimes excellent. Progress in the lessons observed was always satisfactory and for the most part good and on many occasions very good. Progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and good at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Progress over time against the targets set in pupils' individual educational plans is good. The monitoring by the deputy headteacher of such procedures in linking achievements to their needs as identified in the pupils' statement of special educational needs is very effective. Progress in personal, social and health education as taught throughout the curriculum is excellent.
3. In the nursery, achievement in language and literacy is good. Children effectively develop their interaction and communication skills and understand routines, events and songs sufficiently to anticipate what comes next. There is a good level of achievement in numeracy. They use their developing understanding of "big" and "little" to match teddy bears to beds and spoons to bowls accurately. Achievement in creative development is good. They join in the singing and signing activities with pleasure and enthusiasm, trying hard to match signs to words. Children with profound learning difficulties respond well to the music, singing and rhythmic story of "The Bear Hunt". Physical development is promoted well and children achieve at a good level because of the structured play activities. Children with profound learning difficulties benefit greatly from the support of the physiotherapists. Children's achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.
4. In English, the progress made by pupils, over time and throughout the school, is good for the majority of pupils and is always at least satisfactory. Pupils frequently make good progress in individual lessons. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good overall and pupils improve them as they move through the school. The teachers have high expectations of the quality of responses and pupils contribute both with signs and speech. Pupils with profound learning difficulties indicate choice by head turning, eye pointing and sometimes by gesture. Pupils achieve well in reading and the majority make good progress. Several pupils recognise letters and know their sounds. Those with higher attainment have an increasing sight vocabulary and read their books confidently, commenting on the pictures and story. There are sensory and tactile books for pupils with profound learning difficulties who enjoy listening to stories. They attempt to lift up flaps to see what is hidden and benefit from the use of objects of reference; for example, fur for pupils to associate with the cat in the story. In writing there is clear evidence of progress throughout the school. Pupils progress to overwriting and others copy writing underneath an example. Some older pupils write with a legible script and some higher attaining pupils successfully produce some interesting writing. The use of writing with symbols is a very positive step in enabling pupils to communicate and understand better.

5. Achievements in mathematics are good in relation to the targets set by pupils' individual education plans. Pupils' achievements in relation to their individual educational plan targets are sustained at similar levels to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. As pupils move through Key Stage 1 they relate numbers to objects, such as currant buns.
6. In Key Stage 4, pupils who progress at a quicker rate match the correct number of cubes when counting in the range 1 to 14. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties in Key Stages 1 to 3 improve their eye contact with objects such as plastic ducks. Records of work over time for these pupils show good progress against the targets set for them.
7. The achievements of pupils of all ages in science are good. For a very few pupils, some of those with learning difficulties related to autism, progress in achievement in science is only satisfactory because the key target set by the school is to create a stable pattern of behaviour as a precursor to full inclusion in lessons. Overall pupils achieve well over the full range of National Curriculum science.
8. Achievement in art is very good for pupils across the full range of learning difficulties in the school. Achievements in design and technology are good. Pupils' achievement in geography over a term or longer, and in lessons is good. In history, the achievement of pupils is good and shows improvement since the last inspection. Achievements in information technology are unsatisfactory. Across the curriculum, information technology is not sufficiently well used. Since the last inspection, progress in the subject has been unsatisfactory. The number of computers has been improved. However, they are insufficiently well used within lessons. As a consequence, all pupils do not have sufficient experience of using computers and their skills are not sufficiently well reinforced in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. Achievement in music is good overall and pupils consolidate and extend skills as they move through the school. Progress overall in physical education is always satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4 where, for the most part, it is taught by a specialist teacher. Progress in swimming is good overall. Religious education is offered to all pupils and pupils' attainment is satisfactory.
9. Post-16 students have significant learning difficulties. Their achievements are good overall, within the context of a predominantly Key Stage 4 curriculum. The outcomes now are as reported in the previous inspection, that is, that pupils make consistently appropriate progress. Individual educational plan reviews and subject reports for Annual Reviews show pupils make substantial progress over time, and there is no significant difference in achievement in different gender, ethnic background or the three pupils with English as a second language.

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

10. Pupils are happy to come to school and arrive promptly in the mornings. They are eager to get to their classrooms and show pleasure at seeing their teacher and classroom assistants. Pupils clearly know and feel comfortable with the morning routine and this results in lessons starting promptly with pupils usually keen to work.
11. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they respond enthusiastically to the broad curriculum the school provides. They show enjoyment when they are singing and are excited when they have horse riding lessons. Many pupils take pride in their work and are eager to share it with the rest of the class. The positive way pupils approach their work contributes to the good progress they make in their learning.

12. Behaviour in all aspects of school life is good. In many cases it is very good. Some pupils have challenging behaviours linked to their special educational needs. These pupils make good progress against the behavioural targets which are identified in their individual educational plans. Parents report very good progress in this area of their children's development. Parents say that the improvement in their children's behaviour allows them to take a fuller part in family life. For example eating in restaurants with their family. This was borne out by the older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties who behaved impeccably when they went shopping at Sainsburys. During the inspection there was no evidence of any bullying and the staff quickly dealt with the very occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The good behaviour of the pupils allows them to take a fuller part in the life of the school community and so develop their social skills for independent living.
13. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and the teaching staff. They listen to each other and wait patiently for their turn to greet each other in the "Hello" song. When there are cases of disruptive behaviour other pupils usually ignore it and get on with their own work. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to make choices and with encouragement most can make sensible decisions. For example which snack they would like at break time or whether they would like a small or large plate. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development during their time at the school and this helps to prepare them for adult life.
14. Pupils' attendance is very good with very low levels of unauthorised absence. Most of the authorised absence is due to the medical problems of the pupils. The high level of attendance contributes to the good progress the pupils make across the curriculum.
15. The school has maintained the very good attitudes to learning and the good behaviour seen in the last inspection. The personal development of pupils has improved from good to very good.

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

16. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in all the lessons observed. Overall teaching and learning is good. In just over ten lessons it was very good or excellent. Teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, music, design and technology and under fives. Teaching is satisfactory in physical education and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in information technology. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good or better at Key Stages 2, 3, and 4 and on occasions excellent.
17. Since the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved. The monitoring of classrooms by the subject co-ordinators is effective and the school's focus on literacy and numeracy has made teaching more effective in all subjects. However, pupils' learning is limited by the under-use of information technology including switches for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This was an issue raised during the previous inspection. The organisation and management of lessons is generally good. In the occasional lesson, the disruption of one pupil affects the learning of others but in the majority of classes pupils are withdrawn promptly by a competent support assistant and returned quickly once they are ready to continue to learn. The school now has a total communication policy. The use of signing encourages pupils without speech to take part in lessons.

18. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They have good insights into the needs of pupils and they understand the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. They are skilful in presenting information in ways which are relevant and accessible to pupils. In the upper school, pupils' learning is supported by teachers' particular subject expertise in art, geography and science lessons where the co-ordinator teaches all lessons. However, there is a lack of subject knowledge about information technology. Teachers use signing and symbols well and this promotes the learning of all pupils including those pupils with difficulties on the autistic spectrum and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. For example, the best teachers maintain an animated dialogue with pupils throughout the lesson and augment this with clear signing for those with little speech. Good teachers allow sufficient time for pupils to sign appropriate responses.
19. Teachers plan their lessons well. They describe learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities and link these to pupils' individual targets in their education plans. The activities effectively meet pupils' individual learning needs. They discuss their plans with support assistants to ensure that pupils are well supervised and that individuals achieve successful outcomes. The content of lessons is carefully explained to pupils, encouraging them to remember, if necessary by referring to resources. The main teaching points are frequently reinforced during lessons and reviewed with pupils' involvement at the end of the lesson. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to ensure that pupils have successful experiences.
20. The teachers challenge and engage pupils so that their concentration is maintained. Exciting activities in art engage pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in very rich experiences which encourage them to become aware of their environment. Pupils are given some responsibility for tasks which effectively involve them in their own learning. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils gave out resources in a lesson and in another, they weighed, measured and mixed ingredients to make biscuits. Skilful teaching stimulate pupils' recollections of previous learning and relates new learning to their own experiences. For example, in geography pupils were reminded of their experience of travel. In other successful lessons, teachers are effective and imaginative in focusing pupils' concentration by their clear focus and their enthusiasm. Teachers help pupils to understand what they have done well and how they did it. Key Stage 2 pupils looked at the desk tidies made by the whole class and considered the order in which they had been made. The best learning occurs where teachers have high expectations that pupils will successfully learn new skills. Pupils' social skills are particularly well developed in well managed lessons. For example, skills, such as making eye contact whilst communicating, are specifically taught and pupils are encouraged to appreciate the efforts of their peers. Good teachers use interesting activities which make the best use of time. As a result, lessons have a good pace and pupils develop good work habits rather than being passive or disruptive.
21. Support staff help pupils to learn by giving them constructive feedback which makes the learning explicit. Where resources are used imaginatively, pupils learn well. For example, a globe was well used in geography to show how the earth is round and pupils used junk material to make attractive desk tidies. In occasional lessons, information technology is effectively used to support learning; for example, a Key Stage 2 pupil used PB Bear to extend her speech and vocabulary.
22. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress and assess their skills and knowledge thoroughly and regularly. Information from assessments is used effectively by teachers to focus their plans more effectively. Teachers reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy well in all lessons and take every opportunity to reinforce these skills effectively. Information technology skills are not similarly reinforced.
23. Individual educational plan targets are clear and specific, and provide a very good basis for effective teaching.

24. In some lessons, where pupils' learning is only satisfactory, it is less successful for a number of reasons. Teachers do not plan activities which engage all pupils. Although priorities for learning are reviewed for older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, pupils are not always involved. In occasional lessons, teachers do not maintain a clear overview of the activities of the whole class because their attention is too much focused on individual children. The slow pace of some lessons provide opportunities for pupils to remain in a passive state or become disruptive. In occasional lessons, pupils with complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour are told that they are naughty.
25. Some teachers do not use sufficient signing for those pupils with little language. All teachers make insufficient use of information technology as a tool for learning. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not given sufficient access to switches and other information technology equipment to support their learning. Homework is set at the teachers' discretion with parents' agreement.

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

26. The school's curriculum is good overall. The school provides a very broad range of interesting and stimulating opportunities for learning. These include a wide range of musical and artistic experiences, drama, swimming and going out into the community. A range of therapies, including speech, music, aromatherapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy are available for a number of pupils. The planned curriculum takes appropriate account of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the Desirable Learning Outcomes for young children. Structured play sessions, which include a wide range of activities and learning opportunities, are built successfully into the planning for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum is taught in a way that is clearly relevant to pupils' needs. The school has very effectively established a modified literacy hour and the Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well throughout the school.
27. Statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education, are met, except in information technology where some elements of the programmes of study are not taught directly. The timetable is effectively balanced overall, except for some aspects of religious education in the early years and design and technology for some classes. The school has continued with its decision not to teach French in the upper school and provides an interesting range of work and opportunities to learn about countries around the world as an alternative area of study.
28. The curriculum for children under the age of five is very appropriately founded on the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The work is planned meticulously to provide an appropriate, broadly balanced curriculum that takes account of the individual needs of each child. Since the groups change daily this is a challenging task but is carried out very well. The very good range and breadth of activities offers pupils the opportunity to develop a broad range of skills and provides a good foundation for their future learning. Personal and social education has a high priority and is central to the whole curriculum. There is a suitable policy and programme for sex education. Drugs awareness and "being safe" are covered well in personal and social education.
29. The preparation for adult life in the curriculum up to the end of Key Stage 4 effectively prepares most pupils to progress to post-16 provision at the local college of further education. Some pupils remain at the school post-16 and continue to work alongside younger pupils for up to three years. There is no discrete post-16 provision. Elements of the Key Stage 4 provision are appropriate tools to prepare pupils for independence, such as use of the ASDAN Transition Challenge. Currently there are three post-16 students with significant learning difficulties whose curriculum is very relevant to their needs. Additional special educational needs are well met.
30. Careers guidance is effectively planned. It provides pupils with a range of valuable opportunities to explore the world of work and supports them in planning for life after school. The school has successful placements for work experience and the specific Makakon

sessions for Key Stage 4 pupils are a good opportunity for them to learn how to introduce themselves and communicate with others more confidently.

31. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. The school is involved in sporting and musical competitions, or festivals, with other special schools and pupils make a variety of interesting educational visits, including museums and shops, during the year. A day's camping is another challenging activity, which gives valuable additional opportunities for social, personal and physical development in other environments. The contact with visiting artists and speakers, and with people outside the school, is a very good way of developing pupils' communication skills. Some pupils take reading books and associated work home regularly and the "Two Way" books in Key Stage 2 facilitate good opportunities for developing pupils' skills in communication.
32. Links and communication with local schools are very good. For example, students come regularly from a local upper school to work with groups of pupils, the local primary school uses the school's soft-play area and there are reciprocal visits for the Riverwalk children. Pupils in Key Stage 3 write to pen friends in another school and each term the groups meet to allow friendships and awareness of other environments to develop very effectively.
33. The school's curriculum is greatly enriched by the school's extensive and excellent links with the community and is excellent. This is a significant strength of the school. The school has gained the Schools Curriculum Award for which the focus was the school at the heart of the community. Staff have placements in local industries and the school makes very good use of local sports facilities and Riding for the Disabled facilities.
34. Opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop spiritual awareness have improved since the last inspection, and this aspect is now good. The school uses assemblies as occasions when pupils may reflect upon the importance of special relationships. For example the support that comes from friendship. A photograph of a pupil drawing with his friend's arm across his shoulders is evidence of this shared value in the school. They value being part of the school, and at Christmas and Harvest Time, when the whole school attends a church service this is endorsed. Occasions arise in lessons when pupils are clearly entranced by what they see, hear or touch. The coldness of clay, its peculiar smell and its capacity for squeezing amazed a pupil with visual impairment. In a music lesson the sound of wind chimes and an 'ocean-drum' thrilled the class. The removal of a tyre from a bicycle wheel in a technology lesson riveted pupils. More importantly adults respected their sense of wonder and enjoyment of this experience.
35. Pupils' moral development is very good and provision for development arises from social opportunities both in and beyond the school. Adults provide very good role models of how people should behave towards each other, and clearly pupils reflect what they see and develop a sense of right and wrong. They conduct themselves very well; for example, in the dining room. They queue for their food without pushing, clear their tables and put the used plates and cutlery in the allotted places. In whole school assemblies older pupils help younger pupils. In lessons they generally follow the practice of listening to others giving an answer. They show acceptance of pupils who have emotional or physical difficulties, and behave in ways that support the teacher's management of challenging behaviour. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to take right actions when any situation arises.

36. Opportunities for social development are very good and is strengthened by increased involvement with outside organisations. Work experience is arranged for older pupils with a number of local companies. They use pupils' artwork in publications such as calendars. Pupils participate in competitions, such as 'Bury in Bloom' when they designed a container from recycled materials. Each month parents are invited to visit the school at a break time when coffee and other drinks are served. A volunteer pianist provides musical entertainment. This is a very pleasant and civilised occasion when pupils chat about the school and their activities. Pupils have opportunities to meet important visitors. During the inspection; for example, the mayor joined a group of pupils for afternoon tea, and their social skills were outstanding. The school provides many off-site visits when pupils' social skills are developed. A group regularly goes horse riding, pupils visit a local supermarket as part of a personal, health and social education lesson, and there are visits to places that support the humanities curriculum.
37. Cultural provision is very good. Pupils' experience aspects of Britain's cultural tradition through their history, music and art. Recently a 'Victorian Week' involved the whole school when staff and pupils dressed in clothes of the time. They took part in a 'music-hall' and visited Ickworth House to experience being 'Victorian servants'. Visits to the local museum and cathedral extend pupils' understanding of their cultural heritage. Provision is also made to develop pupils' experience of other cultures. Displayed in the hall are copies of the work of world famous artists. Pupils' attractive artwork; for example, based on Indian rangoli patterns, is displayed in a corridor. Pupils hear music from different cultures – from Russia, Kenya and a visitor played for them on Australian aborigines' didgeridoo. Assemblies give a chance to participate in the religious celebration of other traditions, such as Divali.

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

38. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Their health, safety, care and protection are a high priority for all adults who work or visit the school. Teachers and special support assistants show considerable care and sensitivity in their work and relationships with pupils. They are alert to safety in the classrooms and in the play areas. They work in partnership with visiting specialists, such as physiotherapists and speech and language therapists, sharing their knowledge and understanding of pupils' difficulties and their progress. Some pupils require tube feeding and injections, and this is provided by special support assistants, as the school does not have a nurse. Named nurses train these assistants and their competence is checked regularly. The arrangement has local authority approval. Teachers take appropriate safety measures for off-site activities; for example, when pupils go swimming and riding. On very rare occasions staff use unsuitable handling techniques for moving pupils but the school has procedures and guidance for this. Currently training in "Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention" is being given to all staff, and this will address this issue further. There is very good oversight of pupils when they arrive and leave the school by taxi, mini-bus or by car. The space for this activity in the congested car park is a concern acknowledged by the school. As the school roll increases so will this problem. There is good communication with parents. Their wishes and concerns are considered appropriately by the school. Class teachers and special support assistants know the pupils in the class very well. The staff know the school's procedures for child protection. This complies with locally agreed procedures, and the headteacher is the person responsible within the school. He keeps all records and communicates with the appropriate agency. He ensures that the staff has annual child protection training.
39. The school's procedures for promoting good attendance have improved since the last inspection, and are now very good. Registers are taken appropriately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, and promptly returned to the office manager. The Education Welfare Officer visits monthly to check them and is available to discuss concerns with teachers and special support assistants at lunchtime. There are good procedures for parents to request holidays for pupils outside the school holidays times. The school is well aware of pupils who are absent. Parents telephone the school to explain or taxi drivers and escorts deliver messages. The school staff check unexplained absence.



40. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school policy is to praise good behaviour and this has a very good impact on pupils. They generally conduct themselves very well being aware of others and the building. The favourable staffing/pupil ratio means that pupils are always well supervised inside and in the play areas. This reduces any form of oppressive behaviour or bullying to negligible levels. The staff manages unacceptable behaviour effectively, sometimes disregarding such behaviour as part of a strategy. Violent behaviour is recorded separately on forms that are used to track any developing patterns.
41. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Individual learning priorities include those for personal development. Class teachers take responsibility for monitoring pupils' personal development, and for delivering a personal, health and social education programme. Through this they plan to meet the individual personal targets set for each pupil in the class. Each term the Curriculum Planning Group meets to monitor how successful the school is in supporting pupils in relation to their targets for personal development. The school's programme for personal, health and social education is very good in supporting the personal development of pupils that underpins their academic progress.
41. The school rightly places a very high priority on developing pupils' personal and social skills and is very successful in meeting this aim. There is very good provision for personal, health and social education. The enthusiastic coordinator has recently drawn up new schemes of work to ensure that all areas of the new curriculum orders will be covered and is monitoring their implementation.
42. Teaching of personal, health and social education is very good in all key stages. Personal, health and social education targets are included in pupils' individual education plans and when teachers plan lessons they take these into account. Targets are regularly reviewed and pupils make very good progress in this area. The personal, health and social education curriculum is embedded throughout the whole school curriculum and extends into break and lunchtime. Teachers effectively plan these break times to meet the needs of pupils and build in opportunities for pupils to make choices and to develop social skills such as using cutlery appropriately and sitting at the table until the whole group has finished their meal. As pupils get older they take more responsibility and queue up for their lunch independently and clear away after themselves. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the provision of the school and feel that their children are making very good progress.
43. The personal, health and social education programme includes education about drugs and that not all drugs are medicines as well as other issues around "keeping safe". Riding lessons increase pupils' confidence and help them develop independence when they ride without the leading rein. During swimming lessons teachers and staff successfully encourage pupils to be independent when they are changing. The very good progress pupils make is evident in the increasing independence of the pupils and their ability to follow instructions as they get older. The Riverwalk Challenge is particularly effective in preparing pupils for independent life by helping pupils to make sensible choices.
44. Post-16 pupils benefit, along with all pupils, from the accurate assessment of individual needs and the very good use of individual education plans. Effective steps are taken to liaise with the Post-19 providers. For example, a pupil very close to leaving the school, as he comes to his 19th birthday, has been tracked in classes by representatives from the centre who will continue his care. The school's very effective individual plans for promoting learning and for care procedures have been studied in detail by the next-stage provider.

45. Assessment of progress against targets in individual educational plans is very good because it is so rigorous and thorough. Targets are reviewed termly. The match of pupils' needs to the provision specified in the individual educational plans is very good. The targets cover both academic performance and personal development. Annual Review arrangements are very good and meet requirements. They include very good reports, from both the school and external agencies. Extra advice is used to support transitional reviews for pupils coming up to their fourteenth birthday, and the views of external agencies, such as educational psychologists, are made available.
46. The school has very effective practices to identify how pupils are making progress in all subjects and personal, social and health education. Accreditation at Key Stage 4 is at an appropriate level and is gained through the Youth Award Scheme.
47. Assessment is very good throughout the school and in every subject area. The assessment practices are thorough, purposeful and practical. All pupils have individual targets for each subject and teachers keep detailed records. Through termly monitoring of portfolios of some pupils' work the very effective assessment co-ordinator has a good overview of pupils' achievements in all subjects. This systematic monitoring of pupils' work and their targets leads to changes and modifications to the curriculum and to individual support for pupils' performance and development.
48. The school has developed its own baseline assessment system. The Riverwalk extended baseline system is an excellent tool for assessment of pupils' progress on the experience – attainment continuum and provides information that is additional to that usually available on baseline tests. The school is monitoring the results very carefully and using them to analyse individual pupils' achievements and to raise attainment in all key stages. The school makes good use of the data produced to identify areas of the curriculum that may need amendment or development.

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

49. Parents are very satisfied with the provision for their children and feel that their children make good progress especially in personal development. Parents speak particularly highly of the commitment of the staff and the readiness of all staff to talk to them about their concerns. They praise the leadership of the headteacher and are more than confident that he will address any issues they may have. Parents would like more homework and speech therapy. The inspection team agrees with parents about the good provision, communication and leadership in the school. Homework is discussed at the annual review and set at the teachers' discretion with the parent's agreement. Pupils' needs for speech therapy outlined as additional provision in statements of special educational need are not fully met. This is in spite of the best endeavours by the school to obtain more support from the health authorities.
50. The quality and range of information that the school provides for parents is excellent. There are many opportunities for parents to meet staff informally. Parents know they can talk to teachers on the telephone or come into school to see them. Each class has a coffee morning every term where parents can chat to each other as well as talking to staff from that class. The school provides facilities for parents to meet in self-help groups and parents value these opportunities. The school fully involves parents in the annual review of special educational needs and gives them very good information on their children's progress over the previous year. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's individual educational plans that are sent to them termly. The school invites parents to training sessions on topics such as Makaton communication. Many parents take up these opportunities making use of the crèche offered by the school.
51. Teachers use home contact books exceptionally well communicate with parents. The excellent communication that the school has with parents enables the school and parents to work in partnership. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their education. This aspect of the school's provision has improved since the last inspection from good to excellent.

52. Parents are properly involved in the planning and review of provision for their child's special educational needs. A high proportion of parents attend review meetings.

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

53. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and ably supported by the deputy headteacher and key staff are very good. All staff are clearly focused on ensuring pupils make good progress overall and very good progress in personal, social and health education. Team work at all levels is effective and the excellent assessment evidence is used very well to set further challenging targets for pupils and to celebrate their achievements. There is good delegation to staff with management responsibility. Whole school targets have been set to raise standards further and the school is well aware of its many strengths and its areas for development. The work of the school is monitored by the headteacher through a variety of effective methods relevant to the needs of the pupils using information technology and data handling software to support this. The school's aims are well met and the quality of relationships between staff and other staff and pupils is very good.
54. Teaching staff benefit from regular review of their performance and, in particular, subject co-ordinators and subject development is regularly monitored. The school has identified that the monitoring of teaching needs to be conducted consistently at this level. The weaknesses and key issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed thoroughly and the school's capacity to improve further is very good. The school improvement plan and draft three year School Development Plan provides an effective framework for the future development of the school and its planned rise in pupil numbers. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities and, together with the leadership of the school, are aware of its strengths and weaknesses as identified in the school improvement plan. They are effective in supporting the school to provide the best possible education for its pupils.
55. The governors have a good sense of strategic direction for the school. They set clear priorities year by year. They make sound predictions about the cost implications of the steps they decide to take. They are kept well informed about school finances, and are well aware of whether or not spending is leading to the improvements they have targeted. For example, the school roll has increased greatly over recent years. Extra money has been used such as for accommodation and staff. The governors and head achieved this expansion whilst maintaining the very good educational standards. They also used the opportunity to enhance the management and planning roles of both senior managers and subject coordinators as decisions are made about spending. This extensive involvement means that the necessary changes are understood at all levels, and so are carried through more efficiently. Other key improvements have been completed through successful fund-raising, in large part from the local community. Specific grants, such as those for the standards fund, are used effectively and appropriately. The national grid for learning grant for next year is to be part of a wider curriculum focus on information and communications technology. The school is well set to tackle this weakness in provision. The use of new technology as a management and financial tool is satisfactory, but its broader use to support educational standards is weak.
56. There is an effective staff appraisal system within the school where teachers are appraised and given targets, which are set against individual subject development plans. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out appraisals. The headteacher is subject to job and performance appraisal by one of his peers and by the local education authority. All teachers have clear job descriptions. There are clear job descriptions for subject co-ordinators detailing their wider responsibilities but these remain generic to all co-ordinators and not subject specific. Subject co-ordinators have produced detailed development plans in each subject. All teachers have non-contact time and this enables them to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching in each curriculum area. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

57. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum and enable it to be effectively delivered. There is a well-developed programme for staff development, which includes all staff. This is linked with specific training programmes to meet individual needs of pupils for example specialist feeding. All staff are well trained and well acquainted with the school's policies and procedures on signing, lifting, child protection and first aid for example.
58. There is an effective programme for the induction of teachers new to the school with free time for them to observe teaching and to refer to a named mentor for support and advice.
59. The school has adequate accommodation to deliver the full curriculum with a wide range of specialist rooms; for example, a sensory area, a specialist art room, food technology room, physiotherapy room, light rooms, and an information technology area as well as specialist areas and rooms for changing and toileting. The multi-purpose hall is equipped only for junior physical education and there are no specialist areas for design and technology. There are few storage areas and much equipment is stored in corridors around the school; the physical education store is inadequate. There was at the time of the inspection no specialist area for post-16 pupils. Some of the temporary classrooms will be phased out in 2001 and, as the school population is rising, there will be grave difficulties over accommodation in the future especially as plans are in hand to make extra provision for older students.
60. The school grounds are compact and do not include any large grassed area so sports days and the like have to be undertaken elsewhere. However, the grounds are well used with areas in which children can be quiet and a sensory garden area together with well-marked playgrounds and extensive well-maintained play equipment. The play area for the nursery is quiet and part lined with Astroturf but has only limited large fixed play equipment. All areas of the school grounds are accessible to all pupils and there are adequate ramps to enable pupils in wheelchairs to take a full part in the life of the school. The area to the front of the school where buses arrive and children are "unloaded" at the start and end of the school day is small and congested; any increase of traffic here will compromise children's safety.
61. The learning resources provided by the school are adequate to enable delivery of the curriculum but some; for example, information technology equipment and computers are under- used. There is a range of specialist equipment such as modified scissors to enable pupils to access the full curriculum. There is a lack of some specialist electronic equipment such as switches and communication aids, so some pupils find accessing the curriculum or making individual choices more difficult.

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

62. Governors, headteacher and senior management team should:
  - (1) Raise standards in information and communication technology.  
(Paragraphs: 117-120)

In addition the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Discrete provision for post-16. (Paragraph: 29)
- Monitoring of teaching and learning. (Paragraph: 55)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	14	61	22	0	0	0

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

### **Information about the school's pupils**

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	88
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	15

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### **Attendance**

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	7.2	School data	0.2

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.3
Average class size	12.6

**Education support staff: YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	822 959
Total expenditure	829 267
Expenditure per pupil	9 014
Balance brought forward from previous year	32 959
Balance carried forward to next year	26 651

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	16	5	0	9
My child is making good progress in school.	45	50	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	48	7	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	34	23	3	14
The teaching is good.	66	30	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	30	7	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	43	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	59	36	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	37	0	0	16
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	36	10	0	19

## **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**

63. The quality of provision for children under five in the early year's classes is very good and has improved from the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Children attend the nursery on a part-time basis from the age of two-and-a half and make good progress and often very good progress in their personal and social development. This prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education.
64. Achievement in language and literacy is good. Children effectively develop their interaction and communication and understand routines, events and songs sufficiently to anticipate what comes next. For example, children recognise the sign for "ducks" and anticipate the "quack, quack, quacks" in the song. They share books and games with adults and this leads effectively to improvement in their sitting, listening and concentration skills. They begin to empathise with the characters in the books. When asked why the bear in the picture is crying, one more able boy responded sadly, "He's upset." Adults' precise use of language reinforces children's activities in the soft-play room when pupils interpret "up, down, under, over, roll over" or "jump in" well. This enables them to carry out instructions accurately. Children with profound learning difficulties respond when a silken sheet is waved above them during "The Bear Hunt" in the sensory room. They smile, raise their hands, focus their eyes on the light on the sheet and communicate pleasure in the activity. When asked, "Do you want a drink or biscuit?" one nodded his head enthusiastically.
65. Staff welcome children with speech and signing and the children learn to use simple signs purposefully to communicate their wishes or contribute to the activities and develop further their social skills. They learn signs, symbols and words when stories are told and retold. Some more able children are able to match pictures to symbols confidently. There are some children who are able to answer questions about the pictures and story of the book they are reading with an adult. Children understand that a response is required when a question is asked and sign accurately; for example, the word "house", to indicate that they are going to play in the house.
66. There is a good level of achievement in numeracy. Children scan inset puzzles to see which piece fits into which space. They use their developing understanding of "big" and "little" to match teddy bears to beds and spoons to bowls accurately. One child was able to count how many were in the class by touching everyone on the head, showing good one-to-one correspondence. They understand what a circle is when asked to paint one in art. Some children understand that they are able to count different objects, bricks, bobbins, and cards into groupings of one, two and three. They count the numbers back in the songs they sing until there are none left. Children sequence the events of the day, what comes next, before and after play.
67. Children's achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world is good. They recognise photographs of events during the day and of recent outings. Through well-organised visits, they develop their knowledge and understanding of other places in the area; for example, the nursery at the local school. Children enjoy using the computer and use switches to enter their responses. They are aware that the mouse controls events on the screen, but need support to use it. Children know the routines that operate within their class. Children settle well into their groups and develop a good attitude towards work. They are interested and responsive. Children try hard to copy and repeat signs and enjoy group activities such as circle time and shared reading.



68. Physical development is promoted well and children achieve at a good level because of the structured play activities. Children climb, roll, jump, slide, roll up small, and extend themselves fully, controlling their bodies well in the small soft-play room. In the outdoor play area they run and climb slopes, slide confidently down the play apparatus and pedal the tractor or cars competently. Children with profound learning difficulties benefit greatly from the support of the physiotherapists. Staff and the physiotherapists work very well together in the sensory room and this has a clear impact on pupils' learning and levels of awareness. Children anticipate what is to happen with pleasure and the security of the support from adults encourages movement and co-operation when changing position. Children's fine motor skills develop well. They pour out juice confidently at break times, hold pencils, crayons and paintbrushes correctly, and manipulate tools when modelling with care and further develop their independence.
69. Achievement in creative development is good. Children enjoy music and singing is an important part of the day's routines and activities. They join in the singing and signing activities with pleasure and enthusiasm, trying hard to match signs to words. Children with profound learning difficulties respond well to the music, singing and rhythmic story of "The Bear Hunt" and the dramatic movements of light and colour. Children enjoy painting and paint with deliberate brush strokes to make tree trunks, adding a circle for the treetop. One girl was able to make a hand print, look from her to the outcome and then gleefully re-print her hand. Children enjoy cutting out figures from playdough and use cutting tools competently. When colouring in a bear, the learning support assistant intervened before the boy started and asked relevant questions about body parts and features to encourage him to add these correctly to his picture. The children have many opportunities to explore materials and develop their sensory and tactile skills.
70. The quality of teaching for children under five is good overall and is frequently very good. Teachers and classroom assistants work together well as effective teaching teams. They plan carefully to provide suitable opportunities for children to learn and develop independence skills. Any difficult behaviour is managed well and children respond well to the suggestions, choices and praise given by staff. Individual tasks are planned and organised well with good quality resources and an accurate match of activity to the needs of each child. Teachers know the children well and keep a focus on learning at all times. Full attention is given to each child's targets and individual learning plan. There is a good balance of activities within each lesson. Speech therapists work closely and very effectively with the school staff and parents.
71. The curriculum is broad, balanced and has full regard for the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The needs of each child are very carefully assessed. Individual programmes are planned and delivered in such a way that they promote children's learning and build on developing skills. Effective arrangements are made for liaison with other schools and play group children attend. Partnership between parents and the school ensure that parents are fully involved in any assessment and target setting. This has a beneficial effect on the progress made by children.
72. There are sufficient good quality resources and the very effective co-ordinator is aware of areas for further development. There is good access to resources such as the sensory and tactile rooms, soft-play area and the small outside play area much appreciated by the children.

## ENGLISH

73. The progress made by pupils, over time and throughout the school, is good for the majority of pupils and is always at least satisfactory. Pupils frequently make good progress in individual lessons. There are no English as an additional language issues in the school.
74. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good overall and pupils improve them as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their listening and concentration skills. There is evidence of good listening skills in many pupils and this enables them to benefit from all aspects of school life. Staff use Makaton signing effectively to aid communication with pupils. Questions such as, "Whose coat is this?" are correctly answered by pupils using initial sounds or pointing. Teachers focus on particular words and use objects of reference and Makaton to help pupils understand more complex questions; for example, "There is a big bear and where is the little bear?" In Key Stage 2 good use of signing by adults enables all pupils to participate in the lesson and check the day's activities on the timetable. Good questioning by the teacher helps pupils to extend their answers and thinking when they are discussing what they did at the weekend. The teachers have high expectations of the quality of responses and pupils contribute both with signs and speech. Pupils with profound learning difficulties indicate choice by head turning, eye pointing and sometimes by gesture. One pupil effectively used a special keyboard to select a rhyme to sing and this enabled him to communicate with the teacher and the class.
75. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils practise signing and speaking the letters of the alphabet. They say the names of objects as they appear on the television screen. They recall and anticipate rhymes, other objects that begin with the same letter, and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge about books. They can explain how you use a dictionary. Pupils respond appropriately to questions and describe activities they have done before the lesson; for example, having tea with the mayor. Each group knows they have to report back and the teacher's good use of signing causes pupils to take interest and understand what is happening. Pupils enjoy drama and respond well to the teacher's expressive voice, becoming quiet as the snow falls and miming their skating on the ice well. Pupils develop and practise their communication skills effectively as they move through the school by using verbal and non-verbal communication. They want to communicate.
76. Pupils achieve well in reading and the majority make good progress. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn that several words begin with the same initial sound. They follow the symbols for the timetable and read what comes next. Pupils begin to recognise the names of other pupils underneath the photographs, often by focusing on the initial letter. They have a real sense of achievement when they get it right. Pupils listen to stories with enjoyment and there are squeals of excitement and pleasure at the repetition of phrases. They enjoy acting out an excerpt from a story. Pupils can match objects to pictures, and read their personalised symbol books confidently. They are aware that text carries meaning and show interest in, and enjoyment of, books. Several pupils recognise letters and know their sounds. Those with higher attainment have an increasing sight vocabulary and read their books confidently, commenting on the pictures and story. Older pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 continue to enjoy inserting words when the teacher pauses in her reading, inviting them to complete a rhyming word. Pupils know that a dictionary is an information book and that you use the index at the back of the book to find words and flick through it, not reading every page in order. They find the letter "b" on one worksheet and can match words beginning with "b" on another. There are sensory and tactile books for pupils with profound learning difficulties who enjoy listening to stories. They attempt to lift up flaps to see what is hidden and benefit from the use of objects of reference; for example, fur for pupils to associate with the cat in the story.

77. In writing there is clear evidence of progress throughout the school. Pupils progress to overwriting and others copy write. Older pupils often write with a legible script and some higher attaining pupils successfully produce some interesting writing. Other pupils write to pen friends at another school and read out, sometimes with support, the replies to their letters, many of which are written with symbols. They order the days of the week and start to make a diary where they will record something they do each day. Valuable opportunities to work with play dough or other malleable materials, to colour and paint, are provided throughout the school. These help pupils develop greater dexterity. The use of writing with symbols is a very positive step in enabling pupils to communicate and understand better. Links between reading and writing are clearer and assist pupils to develop an interest in written words. This approach also gives pupils a sense of pride and confidence when they match symbols or order these correctly to produce a sentence.
78. Pupils' responses to lessons are good. Most pupils behave well and are enthusiastic. A good working atmosphere is created in the classroom. Pupils concentrate well and clearly know the routines of the lessons. They are keen to communicate with staff and are very comfortable with visitors, attempting conversation or saying, "Excuse me," or "Please" and "Thank you." Relationships between pupils and the adults are good and pupils respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement.
79. Teaching in English is good overall, being good or very good in two-thirds of lessons seen. It is never less than satisfactory. Planning is very good and the work for individual pupils is carefully matched to their abilities and interest. All staff are skilled in their use of questions to ensure that pupils continue to understand and every opportunity is taken to reinforce language and communication in other subjects. Conversation is an important feature of all subjects and activities through the day. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team and with other specialist staff. Teachers manage pupils well and make good use of resources, including the sensory room. A key issue at the last inspection was that the use of signing should be improved and there has been a good improvement since then. On most occasions, staff use signing confidently and well to communicate with pupils so that they learn to use signing effectively themselves. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils learn how to sign simple phrases to each other and respond appropriately. Leadership and management of the subject is good.
80. The English curriculum is broad and balanced with a clear and relevant focus on communication. Each child has individual targets and teachers take full account of these in their planning. The Literacy Hour has been effectively adapted and the school makes very good use of its assessment procedures to ensure that there is a good match between pupils' targets and the work they are offered.
81. The co-ordinator has been pro-active in the planning, evaluation and modification of the Literacy Strategy and has made good use of the support and guidance from the local education authority. She has been very effective in the successful implementation of, and training for, the Literacy Strategy and been supported very well in this by staff. Some additional, very attractive and useful books have been purchased recently and the school is aware of the need to continue to extend the range of books for older pupils and to make greater use of the library. The books in the library have been colour coded and given symbols but pupils have few opportunities to look at a book with adults, or by themselves. Very good use is made of symbols and signing to aid communication. However, few pupils with profound learning difficulties have additional communication aids or switches to enhance their ability to communicate. The well-directed and purposeful play activities, which include good opportunities for imaginative play and use of language, are of additional benefit. Pupils have the opportunity to play with pupils from other groups, and spend time with other adults; for example, the caretaker, and this enhances their use of social and expressive language.

## MATHEMATICS

82. Achievements in mathematics are good in relation to the targets set by pupils' individual education plans. By the time pupils enter the lower school they recognise 1 is followed by 2 but do not readily sequence 3 and 4. About half the pupils know Tuesday follows Monday, they know Wednesday and Thursday but they are not secure with the order. As pupils move through Key Stage 1 they relate numbers to objects, such as currant buns. They recognise size in terms of 'big' and 'little', and match 'big bears' to 'big beds' and 'little bears' to 'little beds'. Higher achieving pupils do this consistently, and these pupils also recognise that '0' is the same as zero, and they are familiar with numerals 1 to 5. They count to 3 and begin to take away objects from a group and count the remaining number.
83. In Key Stage 2 pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding of numbers up to 5, and some match models of pigs to figures up to 8. They understand the plus sign means 'and'. At the start of each day pupils practise sequencing the morning's timetable by fixing activity cards in order on a wall. Pupils count the number of adults and pupils in the room and record this with the correct card on the wall. They recognise a number of two-dimensional shapes by correctly colour-coding them on a sheet, and they use mathematical terms, such as *rectangle*, accurately. Pupils develop their skill with mathematical operations like subtraction. They use plastic cubes to count and subtract, and they record their answers on worksheets. During this key stage the formation of their written numbers improves with help and reassurance.
84. In Key Stage 3 pupils further develop their numeracy skills. They use number grids to help with addition and subtraction questions, and they use and understand the notation for add, subtract and equals. Higher achieving pupils in this key stage count to 20 without help. Pupils handle data; for example, taken from the school registers about numbers of classes, boys, girls, and staff. With this information they construct block graphs to provide visual representation of their findings. Using a roamer they estimate distances and directions.
85. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties in Key Stages 1 to 3 improve their eye contact with objects such as plastic ducks. They touch water and signal with their eyes that it produces a distinct sensation for them, and they show recognition of ducks by pushing a number of them into a bowl of water. By eye contact and slight facial movement, they register recognition of two or more textures through hand contact with soft material like peat, and rough surfaces such as sawn timber or fir cones. They experience 'big' and 'little' by holding different sized bears and bowls.
86. In Key Stage 4 pupils who work more slowly continue to reinforce their number skills by counting up to five objects, like plastic elephants, and with the use of a computer program they match numerals to a number of objects. Pupils who progress at a quicker rate match the correct number of cubes when counting in the range 1 to 14, and they begin to understand the idea of place value. Some count backwards successfully. They recognise size difference and by this stage they use numerical terms such as 'bigger' and 'biggest' confidently. Pupils understand that weight can be measured, and that objects of the same weight balance. They observe that the more weight placed in a scale pan the lower it sinks. Pupils begin to predict outcomes; for example, that three balls of the same size and weight will weigh more than two balls.
87. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties in this stage and post-16 meet their learning targets in mathematics. They show their understanding through good eye-contact, and some indicate when a response is needed through eye or facial movements their understanding of a story related to the number five. They gain the idea of repeating shapes by helping to produce a pattern book through their responses to tactile materials and shapes in the school's sensory garden – flower pots and containers; for example, pupils sort vegetables into categories by touch, and they know which switches to press to achieve a recognised sequence.

88. Pupils' achievements in relation to their individual educational plan targets are sustained at similar levels to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
89. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work co-operatively in planning each term's work, and in small teams they plan lessons weekly for classes at a similar stage. They are successfully adapting the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy to their teaching, taking account of pupils' individual educational plan targets in their planning. Lessons start with a class activity that may include songs and actions that effectively involve all pupils. A variety of resources, such as flash cards of numbers, and model animals, stimulate the interest and concentration of pupils so they learn to use number. Special support assistants complement the teachers' roles by focusing individual pupils on the tasks, and reinforcing understanding by signing, and the use of resources such as large plastic numerals, counting bricks, and two-dimensional geometric shapes. In most lessons effective use is made of the symbols of the Makaton scheme for communication, but insufficient use is made of information technology as a tool for teaching and communication in mathematics. Time is thoughtfully used in keeping with National Numeracy Strategy suggestions. This gives variety and pace to class and individual activities and keeps most pupils busy and well behaved. Behaviour stemming from emotional instability is managed by good use of special support assistants who are knowledgeable about the background of each pupil. Teachers' control of such incidents is good so that the flow of lesson is not unduly interrupted and other pupils continue to learn. Teachers write out learning targets for individual pupils for each lesson and, with the assistance of special support assistants, they note progress in pupils' logbooks. This information gives the basis for the next lesson's targets, and is reviewed as a record each half term when teachers jointly plan for the next half term. Where homework is requested for individual pupils it is very beneficial in reinforcing the numeracy skills learned at school, and the pupil takes pride in the achievement, and this work is kept in a ring binder. Such pupils have a clear understanding of their own progress.
90. Teachers reinforce numeracy in other activities. In a past food technology lesson; for example, a class of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties focused on the recognition of circles when tomatoes and cucumbers were sliced. In geography pupils experienced a view of the Earth represented by a globe although the opportunity to use the word 'sphere' was missed. Each day the sequence of time is emphasised by the teacher's reference to the clock during Circle Time, "at eleven o'clock what do we do?" Volunteers who assist with riding reinforce pupils' termly targets in number; for example, counting, and identifying 'bigger' and 'smaller'. However, opportunities to use numeracy are occasionally missed; for example, in a lesson on conductivity in Key Stage 4 science.
91. Leadership and management of the subject is good. Teachers are confident in their adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy to their lesson planning and teaching. The co-ordinator took the initiative to seek training on the use of the National Numeracy Strategy in special schools and she has passed this on in training at the school. Information technology's use as a practical tool in helping pupils to learn mathematics is underdeveloped by teachers.

## SCIENCE

92. The achievements of pupils of all ages in science are good. This applies across the range of learning difficulties amongst pupils. Pupils in the early years and up to the end of Key Stage 1 explore a good range of features of the natural world and achieve good progress overall. For a very few younger pupils, some of those with learning difficulties related to autism, progress in achievement in science is only satisfactory. This is because the key target set by the school is to create a stable pattern of behaviour as a precursor to full inclusion in lessons. During Key Stage 2 the initial achievement in pupils' responses to the world around them is fostered well. Tasks are achieved in a scientific way, such growing cress with and without water, or the study of plants including naming roots, leaves and so on. By the end of Key Stage 3 most steps in achievement require adult support. With support pupils achieve well; for example, they observe materials and are able to follow the lead given by staff to grasp ideas such as hard and soft, or hot and cold. At Key Stage 4 and post-16, many can use coloured sheets to change the colour of light so as to achieve a specific effect, though most will need at least some adult help. Records of work over time for these pupils show good progress against the targets set for them. For example, a pupil was able to use one magnet to pull another, and was interested in watching balls sink in water compared to other objects which floated. A year later he was independently sorting objects by their reflectivity, and almost independently connecting simple electrical circuits. Overall pupils achieve well over the full range of National Curriculum science, broadly physical processes, materials and life processes. Achievement in scientific investigation is successfully blended into this work. More could be done with a very few pupils to develop a capacity to predict what will happen next in a situation. This is because some more-able pupils understand and think with growing confidence, and are ready for further steps towards using science investigatively.
93. Progress made by pupils in the last inspection was judged to be good and evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils are continuing to make good progress.
94. The teaching of science is good and there is no ineffective teaching. The key strengths in teaching are the use of resources, the use of assessments, and the expert knowledge of needs, used well to set achievable yet ambitious targets for each pupil. For example, in each lesson there are plenty of items for pupils to use such as simple electrical circuits. This leads to good learning because pupils are interested, they concentrate better, and they understand well because they can touch and use the scientific apparatus. Support staff are used effectively because the teachers have made sure they know the main objectives for each pupil and the stages of lessons. The effective use of assessment is the basis for the strong progress made by pupils term by term. The summative assessments by the teachers are very good because they link so well to the attainments required by the National Curriculum. This link is then carried over effectively into individual learning objectives. As a result both lower and higher attaining pupils make significant steps to consolidate and extend learning, from their different starting points. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and the methods used effectively include all except a very few pupils. Teachers have suitable subject knowledge and are able to include appropriate steps to teach basic skills, especially speaking and listening skills. Behaviour is managed well, without fuss or wasted time. Overall, pupils learn well because the clear structure makes sure there is plenty of work, and that all will be helped sufficiently to benefit from the lesson.
95. Leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has produced a good scheme of work and the school ensures that National Curriculum science is fully in place. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' achievements. These strengths ensure that each pupil covers new work each term and that good progress is maintained over the full time pupils spend at the school. At present the monitoring of the impact of this good work lacks rigour. The splitting of the Key Stage 2 cohort into two ability groups, which are taught different levels of work, is a very good feature promoting enhanced learning for both low- and high-attaining pupils. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in science.

## ART

96. Achievement in art is very good for pupils across the full range of learning difficulties in the school. Early years pupils and those up to the end of Key Stage 1 are helped sufficiently for them to gain confidence and interest as they start to explore creative ways of working. The very good feature of this exploration is the variety of media and techniques used. This is a strength that underpins the very good progress made by pupils of all ages. For example, by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use clay as they model during a topic on farms, print and then organise patterns during a topic about wheels, and use three dimensional, drawing and textures in a topic about homes. This is only part of the very rich experiences covered by this age group. By the end of Key Stage 3 more pupils accomplish art work with useful independence. A further very good step is that many learn how to look at and judge both their own work and the work of others. Records show that art becomes a rich and satisfying experience for many as they move through Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4 and post-16 schooling the strengths which start in Key Stage 3 are strengthened, and skill and control are improved. This very good progress applies both to making art, and the knowledge and understanding pupils develop about what makes art succeed. The displays around the school show a treasure house of impressive, exciting work. Pupils have won national competitions because the best of their work exceeds that from mainstream schools. The school could do better in its use of information and communications technology in art.
97. The current strengths in art are maintained from the equally strong picture presented in the report of previous inspection. There have been some important refinements since that time, mostly the monitoring of teaching.
98. Teaching of art is very good overall, with a range from excellent to good. It is never ineffective. There are many strengths, each securing important outcomes for learning. Overall learning is also very good. Teaching is securely based on high expertise about art styles and techniques. This sustains very good planning about what can be expected in the lesson and about what resources to use. The expectations are always high. For example, all pupils are required to make creative use of a set technique or approach, but even so pupils are challenged and inspired. Lower attaining pupils may need much help, even to be able to see the art or to use the resources. This is given and they are fully included and use the same techniques as all others. Higher attaining pupils are shown how to adapt the techniques of the lesson more skilfully, and encouraged to make more varied and interesting art. A large part of the very remarkable impact from the teaching is because of the skill with which support staff are led to become co-teachers with individuals or small groups. Each lesson includes moments when that day's work is shown to the class so that pupils learn to value their own efforts and to enjoy the work of others. At times art lessons lead to moments of creative energy. For example a class of pupils, all with extreme learning difficulties, sat around a large table being helped to roll paint-covered balls over a cloth to make a huge pattern. The wholehearted enjoyment of staff made an impression so that even the least-aware pupils were excited. The end of the lesson was used to re-establish calm and to reinforce what had been achieved. Another very good strength is assessment. The rigour of the judgements made about attainment, and the use of this data to inform the next stages of learning, are both exemplary. Allied to this is a very good use of encouragement and feedback to make sure all pupils are interested, concentrate fully and work really hard. Teaching provides a good level of support for the basic skill of speaking and listening.
99. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The scheme of work specifies the excellent range and variety of techniques to be used, and sets ambitious targets about what levels are to be achieved. The assessment systems give precise measures of what has been attained for each pupil, termly. The school uses many opportunities to extend pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Galleries are visited, artists-in-residence work with pupils, competitions are entered, local arts festivals are used, and much more. The coordinator has monitored teaching and curriculum and made important refinements since the previous inspection securing benefits for the youngest pupils, and for pupils with the most extreme learning difficulties.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Achievements in design and technology are good. Pupils under five and at Key Stage 1 have a sound knowledge and understanding of the world; for example, how to make books containing 'mud', 'snow' and water after hearing We're going on a Bear Hunt. Key Stages 2 and 3 pupils experience a range of materials such as food, junk, fabric and wood. They learn to combine ingredients in food technology and embellish fabric in textiles. They consider the steps required to make artefacts; for example, a desk tidy. They make objects such as shoe box rooms from pictures and their own plans. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have experienced shopping and of tasting and feeling different kinds of foods. They have experience of a range of textures; for example, of different kinds of gloves, as well as sand, wood shavings and dough.
101. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils name and mix ingredients, print cloth and saw wood into lengths. They consider appropriate shapes and materials when they design and make hats and kites. Higher attaining pupils write accounts of what they have done and evaluate what they can do, using symbols. Post-16 students embellish fabrics when making butterflies and they design and make such things as mobiles. They test their products when making kites to find the best materials. They learn to use a drill and sewing machine with support and they use templates. Their manipulative skills develop well using a range of small equipment to prepare food such as biscuits and pizzas. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have appropriate sensory experiences including learning how to make a draw-string bag by un-picking it. Older pupils who have experience of drilling and cutting dowelling when making kites. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are very well motivated by work in design and technology lessons, particularly when working with food and, those who are able, gain considerable enjoyment from doing things for themselves.
102. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, teachers are imaginative in the way in which they help pupils to understand the subject and, as a result, pupils' outcomes are successful. Pupils are proud of their efforts. Teachers plan and prepare their work well to address several levels of ability. The best planning makes explicit links with the individual targets for pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to learn about materials through all their senses, touch, smell and taste. Pupils are well engaged in lessons where there is brisk pace. Support assistants often contribute well to pupils' learning through their encouraging manner and their questioning. Good teachers are enthusiastic and maintain verbal and signing communication throughout the lesson. The best teachers help pupils to make good use of symbols to record what they have learned. They reinforce literacy through their emphasis on new words and they reinforce numeracy; for example, by counting. Teachers reinforce learning points frequently throughout the lesson to ensure that pupils understand. Good teachers encourage the more able and more socially aware pupils to help the less able ones. They give pupils responsibilities, such as preparing foods and encourage them to do as much as possible for themselves.
103. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements. Work with resistant materials and textiles have been developed. Although there is still no specialist room, resources have been extended and a separate space is available for teaching the subject.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum is appropriate and meets statutory requirements although it is narrow and there is an emphasis on food technology. Good links with local firms enrich the curriculum. Links with local mainstream schools are valuable. The lack of specialist accommodation for older pupils restricts the range of experiences. There is insufficient use of information technology, both to help pupils understand how to use it and as a tool for learning. Good systems for assessment are in place. The best teachers use the assessments to inform their planning in the future.



## GEOGRAPHY

105. Achievement in geography over time, and in lessons is good. Key Stage 1 pupils explore where they play. They go on 'Bear Hunts' and experience 'going up' and 'coming down', and 'going through'. They learn to locate places in different rooms. Following the route taken by 'the bears' they explore the texture of various natural materials, such as grass, mud and water. Through these experiences they begin to develop an early sense of place, direction and essential elements of the world.
106. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have gained an understanding of what characteristics make a place different. They investigate 'Houses and Homes' to discover the features that distinguish particular rooms, such as bathrooms and kitchens. Another topic on 'Shops' gives them the idea of specialisation. They sort items into groups according to the type of shop that sells the products; for example, toyshop, baker, and hat shop. Following a route in the school to the art room, and noting reference points on the way – the sensory garden and pond, for example, reinforces this idea. Within the art room pupils experience what makes it 'special'. They use clay and paint, and cut out pictures with scissors and they learn that these materials and activities create a particular place. Pupils' earlier work shows that they understand that weather plays an important part in their lives. In one classroom pupils recorded the number of days when there was rain, sunshine, strong wind or cloud as block graphs. In most classrooms there is a statement on the day's weather. Pupils understand that weather is a combination of many elements. They know it influences the clothes they wear, and why leaves on trees change colour in autumn.
107. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 extend their knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the local area. With verbal prompting they locate the position of India and England on maps. They learn about the prime meridian and some of the places located on it; for example, Burkina Faso. By carefully observing photographs of this place in North Africa pupils conclude that it is hot, dry and lacks vegetation. From their work on British weather they know that it is very different from Burkina Faso. They sample cous-cous, a type of cereal eaten in North Africa. Many pupils like the food but are shocked to learn the people of Burkina Faso eat little else. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have better recall of place names than pupils in Key Stage 3, and they use a wider range of geographical words, such as 'foggy' when identifying types of weather. They make a link between the growth of vegetation and the amount of rain a place receives. These examples indicate the progress of pupils' achievement over time. In all key stages pupils participate in fieldwork. They experience geography first-hand by walking along a riverbank and walking up hills. In earlier work they helped clean sugar beet, tasted it, and handled the packaging. They recorded their work in a booklet called ' Sugar beet to sugar'.
108. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties sense seasonal change by handling dead flowers of plants they planted earlier in the year. A tactile map of the school garden provides a secondary source of a place they know at first hand. Photographic evidence shows they experience a range of weather – sun, wind, rain and snow in the school grounds as the seasons progress.
109. Geography was not being taught at the time of the last inspection. Other evidence indicated that pupils' made at least appropriate progress. The fuller evidence from this inspection shows that pupils make good progress.

110. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully to take account of pupils' individual learning needs. They display a confident understanding of the subject in presenting pupils with key ideas and language. A lesson on the location of places and their characteristic features was introduced by a short video of the school. This focused pupils' attention on the purpose of the lesson, and communicated effectively the route to the art room. On the way the teacher referred to 'reference points' such as the sensory garden. The art room gave pupils many things to recognise and remember why it is a different place. Handling clay excited the pupils, and for a visually impaired pupil the smell and coldness of the clay provided a memorable identification of the room. Teachers work as a team with special support assistants. Their knowledge of pupils' needs guides them in asking appropriate questions, and judging how much time to allow before prompting. Teachers and special support assistants make effective use of signing to include all pupils in the class or when communicating with individual pupils. This is particularly effective with pupils who require skilled management to maintain their learning, and prevent other pupils being disturbed. Teachers include a variety of resources; for example, food tasting and African clothing, that arouses pupils' interest and keeps them alert. Teachers take opportunities to question pupils to develop their learning. When a pupil placed a hat with a wide brim on his head the teacher asked why it would be useful in Burkina Faso. Occasionally opportunities are missed. For instance, when pupils gave examples of English breakfast foods the teacher handed pupils drawings to fix on the wall, rather than challenging them to choose and develop their independence. Teachers assess the progress pupils make in geography relative to their learning targets. They retain samples of pupils' work as evidence of the progress made. Teachers discuss this work when they review teaching and pupils' learning each term.
111. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is good co-ordination of geography by the humanities co-ordinator. A programme of fieldwork, that includes farm v visits, river work and visits to Shotley Marina, supports teaching in school. The subject benefited from being a focus of development about 18 months ago. This provided the co-ordinator with time to monitor teaching and the basis of professional discussion with colleagues. The school is taking part in the 'On the Line' project as part of the millennium. It has postal and Internet links with schools in Spain and Togo Land. A display board shows a world map and countries that lie on the Greenwich meridian. Resources are sufficient, but the use of information technology to support learning is underdeveloped.

## HISTORY

112. History alternates with geography on a termly basis and during the inspection no history teaching took place. It is not possible therefore to make a judgement on teaching quality. Evidence on pupils' achievement was gained from an analysis of past work in pupil profiles and on displays on notice boards and photograph albums.
113. The achievement of pupils is good and shows improvement since the last inspection. Pupils gain a sense of time from the daily routine of the timetable. Pupils select symbolic drawings of various subjects and activities to fix on the class wall timetable. All classrooms have a timeline running the length of a wall. In one classroom pupils had brought in family photographs of babies to pin on the timeline with their dates. This helps to give them a sense of the past in relation to their own families. Other dates on the timeline relate to events or people that pupils learn about in their history lessons: man's landing on the moon; pupils' drawings of 'The Rocket' and Guy Fawkes; and photographs of Kentwell Hall, a Norman church and a Saxon village. A sense of time is also developed in pupils by asking them to order their daily routines. In a piece of work entitled 'All About Me' pupils in Key Stage 2 described getting up, washing, dressing and eating breakfast. Teachers encouraged them to anticipate what they might expect to happen next in a known sequence of actions. Pupils identified themselves and others from photographs of babies. Their teacher prompted them with questions to say how babies are cared for in comparison with their needs now. This provided them with knowledge of growth and change that can be used to understand history.

114. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 learn about life in ancient Egypt. They listened to stories, studied photographs of paintings, and handled artefacts. Pupils became aware of ancient Egyptian writing, food, jewellery and musical instruments. Last term a Victorian week had a significant impact on pupils and staff. A visit to Ickworth House gave all pupils the opportunity to gain an understanding of the life of a servant in a large Victorian household. Pupils dressed in period clothes and handled washing equipment used at the time. Teachers encouraged them to think about the differences compared with modern washing machines to develop further their understanding of change in the way people lived then and now. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex learning difficulty are encouraged to hold and touch artefacts, to compare a warming pan with its later counterpart the hot water bottle. They feel the weight of an iron kettle and that of a modern electric kettle. At Ickworth House pupils took the roles of servants, and teachers and other staff helped them with cleaning and polishing cutlery. Through these experiences the expectation was that an impression of life in the past would remain with them.
115. Leadership and management of the subject are good. History receives good attention by the humanities co-ordinator. She is building a useful collection of artefacts and other resources. These are accessible from a central location in the school. In addition artefacts are loaned from the local museum and the local education authority's resources service for schools. These materials have a positive impact on pupils in raising their interest and awareness of history. There was no evidence seen of the use of information technology in history.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

116. Achievements in information technology are unsatisfactory. Pupils under five, use appropriate interactive programs; for example, about bears. At Key Stage 2 pupils use switches and higher attaining pupils use a mouse. Other pupils have used a paint program to make pictures. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have used a tape recorder, concept keyboard and a photocopier with support. Other pupils have experience of using remote control equipment such as toys and Roamers and have access to CD-ROMs to find information with support. Post-16 students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties have experience of using a switch with a great deal of support. Where information technology is used, pupils are well motivated by their experiences. Across the curriculum, information technology is not sufficiently well used.
117. Since the last inspection, progress in the subject has been unsatisfactory. The number of computers has been improved. However, they are insufficiently used within lessons. As a consequence, all pupils do not have sufficient experience of using computers and their skills are not sufficiently reinforced in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.
118. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. All teachers do not plan to teach the subject because they lack confidence as a result of their inadequate skills and knowledge. Where information technology is taught, the learning is not sufficiently well integrated into other learning. It is usually set as a separate activity and opportunities are missed to reinforce and extend pupils' skills and knowledge. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not provided with a sufficient range of switches and other equipment which would give them better access to the curriculum. This limits pupils' progress.
119. The leadership and management of information technology is unsatisfactory. Plans do not address all the strands identified in the National Curriculum; for example, data handling and control. At the time of the inspection, there was no co-ordinator and the subject is not monitored or evaluated. Pupils' achievements in information technology are not assessed. The school cannot, therefore, ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement as described in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Statutory requirements are, therefore, not met. The school has sufficient computers but the range of software is inadequate for pupils' needs. Although the development of information technology is highlighted on the school development plan, there is no long term development plan for the subject.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

120. The school has a policy statement on modern foreign language which states "Taking a short course in a modern foreign language becomes an entitlement for all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4" and language teaching is offered where appropriate as a cross-cultural experience for pupils in upper school". However, all pupils are disapplied from this aspect of the National Curriculum at the review of their statements in the year in which they are twelve.

## MUSIC

121. Achievement in music is good overall and pupils consolidate and extend skills as they move through the school. At Key Stage 1 pupils join in songs and number rhymes with enthusiasm, some singing their response in the "Hello" songs clearly. Pupils play their instruments to make suitable sounds as the musical story of "The Bear Hunt" develops. They play in time with the music and eyes shine with pleasure as they listen to the guitar and singing. They change from stamping, or shaking maracas, to swaying gently with them, very effectively. They make choices of instruments to play when they sing other songs and show the group that they can play a tambour or triangle in time with the singing.
122. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing high and low notes, sign or make actions at the correct time and clap, or tap, rhythms accurately. They follow the lead of the teacher well. Pupils show that they know the names of some instruments and are learning when to stop and start playing and shake, or hit, their instruments appropriately to make interesting sounds. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties smile in response to songs, turn and twist the ocean drum with some adult support, improve their eye focus and attempt to move their hands and arms to hold an instrument. They listen well and respond rhythmically, showing greater awareness of the changes within the music as the lesson progresses.
123. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils who have profound learning difficulties flutter fingers through a wind chime and respond joyfully to the musical sounds they make. They explore the instruments. One, who at first needs adult support to tap and scrape the wooden guiro, successfully attempts to do this unaided. Pupils use mirrors to identify nose, eyes or mouth, and touch these during a song. In assembly pupils sing enthusiastically and music makes a good contribution to assemblies.
124. Pupils enjoy creating and listening to music. They volunteer to play and enjoy singing. Pupils try hard to follow and copy any signing which accompanies a song. Sometimes they anticipate the next word and sign in advance; for example, during the song about Goldilocks and "the bears". Pupils glow with pleasure then their playing is praised at the end of the lesson. Pupils with profound learning difficulties smile and try hard to move their hands in time with the music. They enjoy listening to music and any singing that accompanies it.
125. The quality of teaching is good overall. Tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities, but there is always an opportunity to achieve at a higher level. There is a good atmosphere in lessons and teachers use resources very effectively. Staff work well together and encourage pupils to listen carefully. They support pupils with profound learning difficulties very well by helping them to move their head, feet and arms and moving them around the room. They manage pupils with complex learning difficulties well so that they are to participate fully in the lesson. The music chosen for each age group is age-appropriate and there are good links with other subjects. Teachers use music and singing very effectively in many of the pupils' daily routines.

126. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There has been an improvement in the provision for music since the last inspection. The very effective co-ordinator is now a full-time member of staff who is able to offer good support to other staff. Resources are of good quality and sufficient to meet the present curriculum. The introduction of an even wider range of instruments is planned to develop the curriculum further. A music therapist visits the school every two weeks and this is of additional benefit for a few pupils for whom music therapy has been recommended. There are many exciting opportunities for all pupils to be involved in workshops, festivals and productions and a wide range of groups and visitors bring good quality music to the school. All of these have a significant impact on pupils' learning and social and personal development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127. Progress overall is always satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4 where, for the most part, it is taught by a specialist teacher. Learning and progress in swimming is good overall.
128. At Key Stage 1, pupils generalise their knowledge and understanding of basic movements, they follow commands and develop their understanding of prepositional phrases. Some pupils climb up and inclined bench and crawl through tunnel equipment. Pupils particularly enjoy the warm up where pupils are physically very active.
129. At Key Stage 2, older pupils jump over a bench and climb onto and off a box. Other pupils roll over a mat and crawl along a bench.
130. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils perform different elements of a dance routine and combine them together with music and demonstrate different elements of weather; for example, using scarves and information communication technology to re-inforce learning. Pupils generalise their learning on literacy and numeracy in active fun learning. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are well supported by a good number of support staff. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their routines as a result of good and very good teaching.
131. For those pupils across the school who use the local swimming pool learning is good and for some pupils very good. Groups are very well organised according to ability and the swimming instructors ensure that the sessions are physically very active and fun. A good number of staff are supporting pupils' learning in the water and this ensures they are safe and make good progress overall. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress whilst experiencing horse riding and developing a notion of balance and travelling.
132. Pupils enjoy their lesson and this is a result of teacher enthusiasm and for the most part good teacher documentation. Pupils are keen to share their performances with others and take a very active part in their learning.
133. Teaching is always satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. It is consistently good or better when taught by the subject specialist teacher. Effective teaching is characterised by a good start to the lesson with an active warm up, good use of signing systems, enthusiasm and very effective team work. Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and are good role models. On a few occasions pupils spend too long waiting their turn on the apparatus and the "cool down" period at the end of the lesson is too short.
134. The leadership and management of the subject is good and the good standards set at the last inspection have been maintained. The co-ordinator recognises the need to monitor the teaching of the subjects throughout the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. During the course of the Inspection the timetable allowed only one lesson of religious education to be observed. However, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers, and observation of assemblies where, "religious education is offered to all pupils through whole-school and upper and lower school assemblies" suggests that pupils achieve appropriate standards. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.
136. There is a clear policy and scheme of work that is taught through "subject" lessons in the upper school. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 and early years is incorporated into other learning as part of a "desirable outcomes" curriculum. There is insufficient tracking or monitoring of what areas of the curriculum children have visited in these early years. Children learn about themselves and about their emotions and understand about the feeling and sanctity of others. Assembly themes are well linked to the programmes of study but such themes are not always well co-ordinated; for example, during the inspection the theme "people who help us" was only apparent in two of the three assemblies visited.
137. As they become older, pupils are exposed to major Christian celebrations and to the celebrations of other faiths such as Divali and Hanukkah and have been exposed to other religious practices or rituals such as Jewish food and the Islamic call to prayer. Visits have been made to places of worship for example Rougham Church, and from various religious groups including a Jewish lady, the Salvation Army and local clergy.
138. There are adequate artefacts available to meet the requirements of the curriculum but they are scattered about the school and inadequately organised. No displays of work in this subject area were seen during the week of the inspection. The newly appointed co-ordinator has produced a subject development plan that should address current shortcomings of both curricular delivery and subject monitoring. The religious education curriculum is based on the locally agreed syllabus.