

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MOSSBROOK SCHOOL**

Norton, Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107182

Headteacher: Maggie Brough

Reporting inspector: John Currie  
15289

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 January 2000

Inspection number: 192119

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bochum Parkway Norton Sheffield
Postcode:	S8 8JR
Telephone number:	0114 2372768
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Merelina Edeson
Date of previous inspection:	25 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Currie	Registered inspector	Under fives	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Geography	How well are pupils taught?
		History	
Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Aileen Webber	Team inspector	English	
		Art	
		Music	
Sue Etheridge	Team inspector	English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Science	Residential provision
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
Jacque Cook	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
		Information technology	
		Religious education	

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Mossbrook is a day special school with a residential unit. The residential unit is used by 29 pupils who spend up to two nights a week, and also by pupils who attend other schools. The school caters for pupils with statements of special educational need for moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. There are 72 pupils on the roll of the school. The majority of pupils are white; there are some pupils from Arabic, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. The attainment of the pupils on entry to school is well below national expectations. There are 10 pupils for whom English is an additional language and half of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. Just under half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is high in comparison with similar schools.

Since the previous inspection the percentage of pupils with autism and associated communication and challenging behaviours has increased from 16 to 42. The number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties has decreased. The level of staffing has not increased in line with the guidance in Circular 11/90 and the school is now significantly understaffed for the numbers and type of special educational needs being catered for.

At the time of the inspection there were no children under five. There were four pupils of reception age.

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

The pupils achieve good standards of work in English, mathematics and personal and social development. Children in their reception year make rapid progress and have a good start to their education. The pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their personal development is very good. Teaching is good overall with some significant strengths in English and personal and social development. The school is effectively led by the headteacher and there has been good improvement in important areas since the previous inspection. The residential provision is good. The school works very constructively with parents. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- A high proportion of good or better teaching.
- Good achievement by most pupils in English and mathematics.
- Very constructive partnership with parents.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their personal development is very good.
- Very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Very good accommodation and levels of resources for learning.
- Good provision for pupils with communication needs and autistic spectrum disorders.
- A very positive ethos.

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

- The work of the governing body in ensuring high standards and quality.
- The roles and responsibilities of senior staff are not shared equitably and the role of the deputy headteacher is insufficiently broad.
- The number of teaching staff.
- The assessment of pupils' achievement in science and some other subjects.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then the school has made a number of significant improvements and as a consequence standards have risen and the quality of teaching has improved. The school now has very strong and purposeful links with parents. Individual Education Plans for all pupils and care plans for those pupils in residence are now in place and the links

between the residential provision and the school are much improved. The provision for pupils with autism has improved and all staff have received appropriate training and some staff are now well qualified in this field. The teaching of the younger pupils has improved considerably. There has been good improvement in the use of information communications technology and the curriculum of the whole school has improved. The school has maintained the high quality of its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the high standards reported in art and music at the last inspection have not been maintained. The role of the deputy headteacher in strategic planning has not been improved as was recommended in the previous inspection. Overall the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

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

The school has set its own targets for improvement in literacy, numeracy, information and communications technology and swimming and is making satisfactory progress towards achieving them. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics across all aspects of both subjects. Pupils in their reception year make good progress in a short space of time. Pupils with more severe communication and challenging behaviour needs make very good progress during lessons specifically designed for them. The majority of pupils make good progress towards their personal and social targets and towards targets for literacy and numeracy where these are set. Pupils' achievements in other subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and respond well to the positive support and encouragement that they receive from the staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, pupils' behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions. Most pupils are aware of the need to follow the school rules and do so very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils make very good progress in working and playing with one another and learn to respect and value the feelings of others. The school raises the pupils' self-esteem and helps them to become more independent.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Most pupils arrive at school on time.

Many of the pupils have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Despite this, the behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils are very keen to come to school and enjoy it. They

regularly show how courteous and polite they can be and show genuine concern for others particularly if they have done something wrong.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 5-11</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. The skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy, are well taught across the school and are reinforced through a wide range of subjects. Overall the school is successful in meeting the needs of the vast majority of pupils. In a few instances, however, because of the large number of pupils in a class or group, the needs of those with more challenging behaviours are not always adequately met. The school is particularly good in teaching those pupils with significant communication and behaviour needs through the communication sessions. The school has also been successful in ensuring that the teaching of literacy and, more recently, numeracy is at least good, and on occasions, very good. In a few lessons, the skills of the teacher to manage pupils who present difficult and challenging behaviour are insufficient and in these lessons the progress of some pupils is adversely affected.

Teaching is very good or better in 26.2 per cent of lessons. It is satisfactory or better in 93.4 per cent. It is less than satisfactory in 6.6 per cent of lessons.

Pupils' learning is generally good across the school. They show a keen interest in much of their work and generally work very hard during lessons. Most pupils develop their skills of communication well and increase their knowledge in most subjects. Many concentrate well in lessons and pupils of all abilities are able to work on their own for increasing periods of time. Some pupils find working with others difficult and when this happens they lose interest and, on occasions, stop others from working.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the school provides a good range of subjects and opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress. The provision for pupils with more challenging behaviour and communication needs is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; pupils make good progress in learning supported by appropriate advice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and is a strength of the school. The school ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to celebrate the work of others, learn about right and wrong, learn about people from different cultural backgrounds and learn how to live with one another.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school ensures that the pupils are safe and well cared for. They help the pupils to behave well. The assessment of pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and personal and social development is good but is weak in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has very positive and constructive links with parents, which help the children learn.

The curriculum is particularly strong in English, mathematics, personal and social development and in the provision for pupils with communication needs and challenging behaviours. All subjects are planned effectively and the school has recently introduced a curriculum for pupils with more severe learning difficulties to operate alongside the National Curriculum.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Headteacher provides strong and effective leadership which has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection. Roles and responsibilities of the senior staff are not shared equally.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school and take a keen interest in what is going on. They are, however, insufficiently informed about and involved in the monitoring of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school knows its own strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan sets out what action is to be taken.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of teachers, classroom assistants, resources for learning and the accommodation.

The school has very good accommodation and has a very good range of learning resources. There are, however, insufficient teachers to meet the needs of the pupils. The school is managed satisfactorily and ensures that it gets value for money for the services it receives.

## 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>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The way the school handles complaints, problems or suggestions.</li> <li>• The children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The school expects the children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school values all children and their achievements, however small, are recognised.</li> <li>• The school helps the children grow and develop.</li> <li>• The school is very supportive and helps the parents to understand and support their children.</li> </ul>	<p>There were no specific points raised through the questionnaire or at the meeting with the Registered inspector.</p> <p>A very small number of parents indicated that they felt that they were not kept well enough informed about their children's learning and that they did not receive enough work at home.</p>

The inspection fully supports all the positive comments made by the parents. The inspection finds that the school provides information for parents in a range of ways and that there are many

opportunities for parents to find out about what is happening. The school has a clear homework policy and the inspection judges that enough homework is set.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom this school in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in pupils' statements and annual reviews.
2. Pupils achieve well in their reception year and make good progress in all areas of learning and towards the targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). By 7 and 11 they achieve well in English, mathematics, personal and social development, geography and make good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and make satisfactory progress in all other subjects.
3. Many of the pupils find it very difficult to communicate when they start school and some have challenging behaviours. They make quick progress in developing and improving their communication skills through, for example, signing, and most improve their behaviour because of the clear structures in place which help them understand what is expected of them. As they become more settled and used to the routines, they make good progress in other areas of personal and social development, for example, self-help skills, taking turns, playing with other pupils and working with adults. They make good progress in reading, learning how to turn pages and use the pictures as clues to what the book is about. They improve their capacity to listen as part of a group and many are able to follow simple spoken instructions. Most learn to count small numbers of objects and some can name a good range of two-dimensional shapes within a few months of being at school. They all show a healthy curiosity in the world around them, enjoy music and art activities and make good progress in improving their balance and basic co-ordination. All pupils make good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs. These relate to language, numeracy and personal and social development and are based on the pupils' needs as identified in the statement of special educational need. Following a baseline assessment, the targets are modified and subsequently changed as the pupils achieve them. Overall they make a good start to their education in reception year.
4. By 7, most pupils achieve well in all areas of English. Most talk about things, which interest them, usually supported by signing. In reading, the higher attaining pupils use the pictures in a story to help them and recognise the individual sounds of letter in simple words. Lower attaining pupils are very interested in reading and know how to use a book. In writing, higher attaining pupils copy over written words and some have good control over the size and shape of letters. Higher attaining pupils, for example, also spell regular simple words correctly. By 11, the higher attaining pupils have improved their speaking skills considerably and many speak clearly. Lower attaining pupils communicate their ideas and feelings effectively usually supported by signing and an adult. In reading, the higher attaining pupils are confident, predict what might come next enjoy reading. Lower attaining pupils read simple text accurately and the pupils with more severe difficulties use symbols as an aid to reading. In writing, higher attaining pupils, for example, write correctly, punctuate accurately and are used to writing in a number of different ways, for example, letters, poetry and stories. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make equally good progress in learning and achieve well.
5. In mathematics, pupils by 7 achieve well and make good progress towards the numeracy targets in their IEPs. By 7 most pupils count accurately to three. Many can sort and match simple shapes. Higher attaining pupils know about the basic properties of two-dimensional shapes. By 11, the majority of pupils calculate simple sums in their head. Higher attaining pupils can, for example, double a number or add on ten. They use dice to generate random numbers and add them together and a few have learnt their tables to twelve. Lower attaining pupils match objects by colour or type, count objects and can match the number of carrots eaten by a rabbit to the correct numeral. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, science, where they can read and identify numbers on the scale of a thermometer.

6. In science, pupils' achievements by 7 and 11 are satisfactory. By 7 the higher attaining pupils are recording what they have observed and the lower attaining pupils explore their surroundings and use their senses effectively to what objects feel or sound like. By 11, the higher attainers know that certain materials change and describe the change, for example, frozen and melted water and record their findings in tables. Lower attainers identify and name different parts of the body.
7. In geography, pupils achieve well and make good progress by 7 and 11. By 7, the higher attainers recognise and name different fruits and understand that they are grown in different countries with different climates. Lower attainers appreciate that some countries are far away. By 11, most understand that there are different climates around the world and that these effect how people live. Higher attainers use atlases to find places in the world. Standards have risen since the previous inspection.
8. In all other subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In information technology, there has been an improvement since the previous inspection when achievement was unsatisfactory. In art and music, pupils' achievements are not as high as they could be and have not improved since the previous inspection. In other subjects, the achievements of the pupils have been maintained since the previous inspection.
9. Overall, most pupils make good progress and achieve well in their personal, social and health education. Much of this progress is because there are targets supporting this work in the pupils' IEPs. Many pupils improve, for example, their behaviour and how they relate to other children and adults. This is noticeable at lunchtimes when all the pupils show how they can eat and behave at a table. Parents, for example, are very proud of the progress made by their children in these important areas and they quote numerous examples of how well behaved the children are in church at the end of term services and also when they take them out themselves as part of the family.
10. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The school received advice and support from a local education authority service, which provides advice on individual pupils and also supports teachers to develop and implement strategies in the classroom.
11. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls.
12. Since the last inspection, the achievement of the pupils has improved in English, mathematics and in their personal and social development. Notable improvement has been seen in the achievements of the reception pupils and also of the pupils with more severe and challenging behaviours often associated with their autism. These improvements are clearly linked to improvements in teaching in all of these subjects and areas.

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

13. Pupils respond very well to the school, with very good attitudes to learning. Overall their behaviour is good, their personal development and relationships are also very good and their attendance at school is good.
14. Pupils enjoy coming to school and many parents say that their children cannot wait to get into their transport in the morning to start the school day. Pupils arrive smiling, greeting staff and visitors with enthusiasm and in a hurry to take off their coats and prepare for learning. Where pupils are unhappy, good contacts with parents and carers can usually trace the incident to perhaps a personal set back or being unwell. Pupils face frequent personal and physical frustrations in their approach to work, but are generally very persistent in attempting to overcome their difficulties and achieve success. The joy of the whole school in recognising the achievements of their friends in Good Work Assemblies is a moving testament to the very positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.

15. Overall the behaviour of pupils is good and there have been no exclusions. Pupils are very aware of the impact of their behaviour and many show true remorse on occasions where they have failed to meet the high standards that they themselves have set out in the school rules. Pupils are generally well behaved and polite and throughout the inspection could be observed holding doors open for each other, offering to share, waiting turns to speak in a lesson and paying attention to their teacher. In a few lessons, some pupils with very challenging behaviour can suddenly and quickly, disrupt the learning of others in their group. Not all teachers have the necessary strategies or sufficient support to manage this behaviour, but generally pupils do respond well to the good relationships they have with staff and resume learning within the course of the lesson, although occasionally a pupil will be removed from the lesson completely.
16. Pupils' personal development and relationships with others are generally very good. The atmosphere in the school dining room at lunchtime resembles a high quality restaurant, with pupils enjoying eating their lunch together and observing good table manners and a lively level of social communication. Pupils know where to hang up their coats, to use tissues where appropriate to blow their noses, especially noticeable in a week when colds affected many of the pupils, and to wash their hands before lunch. In the school playgrounds, pupils play well together and share equipment. Pupils enjoy making a choice from several snacks for their morning break and this facility is run by a number of the older pupils. Through constant reinforcement of social routines, pupils respond very well to sitting through an assembly or lesson, and looking at and listening to a performance, such as for example the classical guitarist who visited the school during the inspection week. Pupils respond very well to caring about the small number of domestic pets that the school keeps, and many pupils have been able to tolerate pets in their own homes after learning to care for them at school.
17. Overall pupils' attendance at the school is still as good as at the previous inspection. The school has addressed the issue raised in the last inspection of the late arrival of transport and this is an improvement. There are now no unauthorised absences at the school and this also is an improvement since the last inspection. Most absences are linked to pupils being away through sickness, although a small number of pupils from ethnic minority families do take extended holidays abroad for cultural reasons, and the school authorises these absences.

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

18. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is very good or better in 26 per cent of lessons and is good or better in 62 per cent. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons. There are weaknesses in just under 7 per cent of lessons. Teaching is good in the reception class and this is an improvement over the previous inspection. For pupils aged 5 to 7 teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, geography and physical education and is satisfactory in all other subjects except history, which was not taught during the inspection. For pupils aged 7-11, teaching is very good in English, good in mathematics, science, geography and physical education and is satisfactory in all other subjects. It was not possible to observe history being taught during the inspection and therefore it is not appropriate to make a judgement. The teaching of the group of pupils who require additional support for communication is consistently very good. Overall, teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The proportion of good and better teaching has increased significantly and many of the weaknesses identified have all but disappeared.
19. Teaching in the reception class has improved since the previous inspection. The sessions are well structured to ensure that the pupils know what is expected of them and this helps them to settle quickly and get on with their work. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subjects taught and a sound understanding of the pupils' individual needs. This enables her to plan whole class sessions that hold the attention of the pupils very well and improves their capacity to attend and learn. Individual tasks are planned effectively and ensure that the pupils make good progress towards their targets identified in their IEP. The management of the behaviour of individual pupils is good and both the teacher and classroom assistant are adept at directing pupils back to their work and minimising the time lost during lessons when pupils lose concentration or interest.

20. The school teaches literacy very well. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and apply the content and the principles very well to the pupils, many of whom experience considerable difficulty in communication. The work is well planned using interesting books that are well suited to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The lessons are usually exciting with an essentially practical and active approach to teaching and learning. English lessons are well planned. The very good range and quality of resources ensure that the pupils enjoy, for example, 'big books'. Some teachers bring a touch of drama and excitement to their teaching and this certainly has a positive effect on the pupils.
21. Numeracy is taught well across the school. The co-ordinator for numeracy has provided good support for teachers who are secure in what they are teaching. Teachers have a good strength in how to teach pupils with special educational needs and this is reflected in the choice of activities for practical work and the way in which most teachers use the whole class sessions to review what the pupils know and remember and also to recap on what they have done during the lesson. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers ensure that the range of activities and tasks are well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. For example, essentially practical and sensory activities are planned for pupils with more severe learning difficulties; classroom assistants are deployed to work with individual pupils who require considerable support and the higher attaining pupils work on tasks, which interests and challenge them.
22. Science is well taught across the school. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject and many of the activities are interesting and make good use of the pupils' own experiences. For example, when looking at how water changes when frozen, the teacher relates this to the pupils' own knowledge of ice and frozen foods. Although the teaching of science is good the achievements of the pupils are only satisfactory because there is insufficient assessment and recording of what pupils know, understand and can do during the year. This means that progress over time is not as good as it could be.
23. The teaching of pupils with severe communication difficulties/stroke autistic spectrum disorder is a very good and is a strength of the school. The previous inspection identified this as a weakness and the school has responded very effectively to this issue. The teacher structures the sessions very closely and ensures that they meet the very precise individual needs of the pupils. Each pupil knows what their targets are and these are reflected back to them at the start of each session so as to reinforce the work to be carried out. The teacher and support assistant expect the pupils to work very hard and they achieve this by building very positive and supportive relations with the pupils and by entering into the activities themselves with enthusiasm.
24. There are no subjects where teaching is unsatisfactory. However, there are a number of weaknesses in some lessons, which have a direct effect on the pupils' achievements. In a few lessons teachers are not skilled enough to manage the more challenging behaviours of some pupils. This results in the lesson being disrupted and the learning of all pupils being adversely affected. In some of these lessons, the number of pupils who present challenging behaviour is more than can be managed effectively and some groups are too large for the kinds of activities planned. In some lessons the contributions of the pupils are not recorded and this affects their capacity to remember what they have learnt during the lesson.
25. Overall, teachers plan their lessons effectively and ensure that the activities and tasks are matched to the immediate needs of the pupils. They have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach although not all teachers are secure in their understanding of religious education. Teachers and classrooms assistants work very well together and expect the pupils to work hard. Where it is appropriate, all teachers ensure that pupils take some work home with them, for example, reading books, topic work or simple games to play. This has a positive impact on their learning and also helps parents to be more fully involved in their children's learning. Pupils who are residential during the week have the opportunity to do homework and this helps them to establish good habits in terms of learning. All teachers take the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language into consideration when planning and organising groups.

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

26. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities. These are particularly successful at encouraging pupils' personal development. Links with the community, including visits and visitors, add variety and richness to the curriculum.
27. The curriculum provided for children at the foundation stage is good. It covers all the areas of learning, and is firmly based on the Early Learning Goals. It also prepares children well for the next stage. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught as required. A well thought out programme of personal, social and health education is also provided. This includes aspects of citizenship, sex and drugs education, as well as emphasising personal safety at a level suited to the ages and abilities of pupils. In most classes, timetables place a particular emphasis on physical education, and this is relevant to pupils' special educational needs. However, the school does not make its rationale for this explicit in its curriculum statement. Although there is good breadth in the curriculum as a whole, there are some weaknesses in individual subjects. For example, in religious education, the well planned curriculum is broad, but all teachers do not faithfully implement this. In design and technology and art, teaching occurs discretely and through topics, and as there has been no audit of coverage for some years, the co-ordinator cannot be sure that all the intended content is actually taught. The curriculum is satisfactory in art, design and technology, information technology, music and religious education.
28. It is difficult for the school to provide activities at the end of the school day for all its pupils, because of the reliance on transport. However, some lunchtime activities are provided, such as games, and some pupils benefit from an extended day, spent in the residential setting. This provides additional opportunities for socialising with their peers, and participating in a wide range of activities. Pupils throughout the school have a wide range of visits, linked to the subjects and topics studied. There are also many visitors to school, such as theatre groups and musicians. All of these opportunities enrich the curriculum.
29. Staff have worked hard to successfully implement the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, both of which are effective in promoting high standards. Since the last inspection planning has improved considerably in English and information technology, and there has been satisfactory improvement in planning for art. However, a weakness of planning in science and the foundation subjects is the failure to identify assessment opportunities in schemes of work. This makes it more difficult for teachers to continue to build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
30. A particular strength of the curriculum is the wide range of opportunities for promoting pupils' personal development, including their spiritual awareness, moral, social and cultural development. Considerable thought has gone into a useful document to guide staff in these aspects of the school's provision. This gives practical guidance on ways in which personal development can be promoted, as well as clear intended outcomes. Guidance is implemented well, and is reflected in all aspects of school life. There are good opportunities for reflection provided, during circle time and in assemblies, and pupils experience the wonder of creation of new life when they hatch chicks. They also learn that there are responsibilities associated with rearing young animals. Pupils' self-esteem is promoted very effectively through the weekly celebration assembly, when pupils receive certificates for achievements, and leaves to be added to the *tree of kindness*, for helping one another. As citizens of the school, pupils have drawn up a set of school rules themselves, and they develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. At lunchtimes, there is family seating and a strong emphasis on good table manners. Through religious education, geography, art and many other subjects, pupils develop a good awareness and understanding of other cultures, religions and ways of life.
31. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. For example, some take messages, deliver registers and help clear away resources; older pupils read with younger ones. Pupils' social development is promoted very well through opportunities for working

alongside their mainstream peers. On occasions, whole classes come to Mossbrook, and pupils engage in well planned activities associated with a subject or topic. The school also has links with a number of mainstream primary schools, and this enables pupils to spend part of their week in their neighbourhood school. Such links are well planned and prepared for, and contribute particularly well to pupils' social development.

32. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvement in its provision for pupils with autism, and those with more pronounced learning difficulties. There has been considerable investment in staff expertise, and the development of small group communication sessions effectively supports pupils with autism. The school is in the early stages of implementing a curriculum suitable for pupils who are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. As a result of these developments, all pupils in the school have similar curricular opportunities, and this is an improvement since the school was last inspected. There is a clearly stated philosophy on inclusion, and class groupings reflect this. Pupils are taught in their class groups for most of the time, and the extent of group and individual work is limited by staffing levels. Although some consideration has been given to grouping pupils with similar needs or levels of ability, such as in literacy sessions, this has not been implemented.

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

33. Overall pupils' academic performance and their welfare are monitored and supported well.
34. All staff in the school are committed to the wellbeing of the pupils and respect their individual needs and particular requirements for care. The school places great emphasis on maintaining the pupils' dignity at all times, and strives to ensure that their time in school benefits their academic and personal development and respects their cultural background. During assemblies for example in the course of the inspection, pupils were shown the importance and relevance of Eid celebrations in the lives of Muslim pupils.
35. The school's arrangements for child protection are good and led by the headteacher who is the designated person, and supported by the school nurse who receives mandatory training in child protection issues. All staff are aware of the procedures of the local area child protection committee, and have received appropriate training in these procedures, and in referring any concerns they may have. The school monitors all reasons for pupils' absences and registration procedures comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and an intrinsic part of daily achievements, certificates and awards, class points and celebratory stickers. Appropriate records of incidents and accidents are maintained and should there be a need to restrain a pupil, the school is aware of the procedures to follow, record, report and appraise the incident. Pupils are continually reminded of the school rules they themselves have devised and that place kindness to others and an abhorrence of bullying, at the centre of their values. The school encourages pupils to respect themselves and be responsible for their own safety when appropriate, and to have no hesitation in discouraging unwelcome attention or behaviour from others. This was vividly exemplified in a school assembly by an award to a pupil for her ability to say "No" when she did not want to be approached, and echoed by the whole school in their support of her, and their, feelings. The school supports healthy eating programmes and meals at the school offer pupils not only a good choice of well prepared, attractively presented, fresh food, but also the opportunity to enjoy and learn from the experience of eating in a civilised fashion at a table with friends and staff. Day-to-day procedures for monitoring and promoting the health and safety of pupils are good. Dispensation procedures for any medical needs are well ordered by the school nurse and there are good arrangements for accident and first aid procedures. The school has completed risk assessments not only for the school building and site but also for the moving and handling of all pupils. Fire drills are held regularly, indeed during the inspection, and the school is vigilant in ensuring the security of pupils. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes and arrival and departure arrangements for pupils are well organised and safe.
36. Overall the arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are unsatisfactory, although they are good in tracking the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and, assisted by IEPs, in personal, social and health education. The school's decision to cease recording the

assessment of non-core subjects and the lack of annotation of evidence of progress prevent the use of assessment information being available to guide curricular planning in non-core subjects. Where detailed IEPs are followed to measure pupils' progress, as for example in the reception class, their progress can be accurately evaluated. The school is aware of the need to refine its systems further. Regular meetings are held with parents, support services and staff to review and amend pupils' IEPs, and the arrangements for annual reviews are good. Detailed records of pupils in communication groups and their links to setting new targets for pupils with autism are monitored effectively to provide appropriate levels of challenge for those pupils. Each pupil has a photographic record of their annual achievements and copies of certificates to build up each year and these constitute a useful record for pupils to observe their own progress.

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

37. The school has very effective links with parents. Parents and carers are very satisfied with their partnership with the school. They are confident that the school cares for their children and that the staff are as committed to their child's welfare and progress as they are. Parents appreciate that the school is always willing to listen to their concerns, to consider them and to support them in ensuring that their children reach their full potential. They support the importance that the school places on their children being safe in society and the values that the school teaches them. Many parents are amazed at the potential that the school has unlocked in their children and thankful for the opportunities that the school is facilitating their children to achieve. The school is very effective in raising parents' confidence in their ability to promote their child's learning at home.
38. Parents and carers now take an active role in deciding the targets on their children's IEPs and, by having copies of these IEPs at home, parents and carers support the objectives of the home/school agreement to continue effective learning at home. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are regular newsletters home and parents can choose whether to receive information on their child on a daily basis, or as most parents choose, on a weekly basis through the home/school diaries. The school anticipates through the home/school agreement that parents and carers will support homework provision and most pupils take a reading book home each night, and even when pupils are staying in the residential provision, arrangements are still in place for completion of homework. Parents are satisfied with the information they receive in their child's annual reports and in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, and these now meet with statutory requirements which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
39. Parents have access to a designated room in the school and both of the carers and friends association groups in the school value the good access they have to staff and to the administrative support in the school. The school is aware that communication with all parents and carers frequently needs assistance where English is not the first language in a home, and makes appropriate provision to ensure that some information is translated into the parents' first language. Parents are welcomed into school for weekly class assemblies and can participate in for example Makaton workshops, or come into school and directly observe particular teaching or therapy techniques for their children.

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

40. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. Since her appointment, two years ago, important developments have raised the standard of achievement of pupils. For example, staff training has increased the quality of education for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced raising pupils' standards in reading and writing. The number of support staff in classrooms has been increased by the judicious deployment of staff in school from the residential provision, Moss House, during the day. Levels of expertise of lunchtime care and supervision have been

improved and pupils' social skills enhanced. The quality of provision within Moss House has also improved, helping pupils' social and emotional development significantly. These developments have been made possible through the work of a committed team of staff, the specific co-ordinating roles of key staff, notably teachers responsible for English, mathematics, the under fives and communication, and the clear strategic thinking and planning of the headteacher.

41. The current emphasis on the subjects of English and mathematics has led to the decision to reduce the recording of pupils' progress significantly in some of the other subjects. The subsequent lack of information lowers standards and creates difficulties when reporting to parents. The capacity of the school to succeed and develop further is sound but places too much of the work required is currently being carried out by the headteacher. This is because, as identified at the last inspection, the role of the deputy headteacher has not been developed to include appropriate delegated responsibilities. Job descriptions are in urgent need of review for all but the most recently appointed staff.
42. The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and the headteacher but are not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school. The governors are not involved adequately in school development planning. The governing body meet as at least once a term and sub-committees meet as necessary. The literacy and numeracy governors have visited the school and are well informed about developments. Although other governors make visits to the school when it is in session, and occasionally go into classrooms, these visits are not focussed and do not enable them to gather first-hand evidence on which to base decisions and be clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body does substantially fulfil their statutory duties although the special educational needs policy has not been reviewed or its success reported on in the governors' annual report to parents.
43. The day-to-day running of the school is good. The administrative staff are very well organised. They have clear roles and provide an effective and welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors. There is a clear structure of meetings ensuring staff are informed and necessary information is exchanged between different areas of the school. This contributes positively to the quality of teaching and care of the pupils. For example, representatives from classroom, residence, clerical, domestic, nursing and caretaking attend the weekly planning 'pink sheet' meetings. These meetings are minuted and sent to all staff. There are also other meetings including weekly staff meetings where the school development plan is discussed, agreed and evaluated. These work well and ensure that the plan is kept under review. Priorities for development are well chosen, reflecting the previous inspection, national initiatives and current needs of the school. They are focussed on improving pupils' standards. Good financial planning ensures funding is allocated on a priority basis. In addition to the targets on the development plan the school has drafted specific targets for particular areas. These include literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, swimming and improving their partnership with parents. There are clear strategies in place to ensure targets are met. As at the last inspection, the plan is still an "extensive document" but it is no longer "static" and action sheets note progress towards completion for each target. However, in a number of cases the success criteria are not connected with raising pupils' standards of achievement.
44. The monitoring, evaluating and developing of the quality of teaching in the school is sound overall. Effective steps have been taken to improve staff expertise. For example, childcare and support workers receive regular in-service training. Also improvements in the quality of teaching literacy have been carefully monitored and evaluated over the last four terms. The headteacher and the English co-ordinator have undertaken regular classroom observations of the literacy hour. Specific feedback to individual teachers and general feedback to all teachers has proved very successful in enhancing teaching and significantly improving the learning of the pupils. It is planned to begin monitoring and evaluating teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy next term. However, school staff do not formally monitor teaching in other areas. Standards in some subjects, including science, art, design and technology and religious education, are not as high as they could be. The school has responded appropriately to advice received from the local education authority following a monitoring visit and it also takes advice from external consultants, for example, on autism.

45. Since the last inspection the number of pupils experiencing Autistic Spectrum Disorders has increased almost threefold from 15 per cent to 42 per cent of the school. The level of staffing has not kept pace and there are now insufficient teachers when compared to the staffing levels recommended in Circular 11/90 and when compared to similar schools. There is a good match between the expertise of teaching and non-teaching staff to the demands of the curriculum. Many teachers have advanced qualifications and good experience. Recently appointed support staff have Nursery Nurse Examining Board (NNEB) qualifications, others have expertise gained from in-service training. The provision of staff in Moss House is adequate for the twelve pupils using the residential facility at any one time. Staff participate in training with school staff and also undertake specific training where necessary.
46. The aims and values of the school are very well reflected through out its work. Good examples include the increasing number of pupils attending other schools as part of an inclusion programme. Also the calm, but purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms where background music often plays, means that pupils feel safe to make mistakes and success is celebrated. The principle of providing equal opportunities is clear in all subject policies and the needs of ethnic minorities are recognised, met and celebrated. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is well managed through good practice in meeting the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. In order to maintain a common approach, the process of induction for new or temporary staff is planned well. Procedures are good. Staff have relevant documentation to tell them about the day-to-day running of the school. Time is put aside on their first day to learn more about the school and the pupils. New teachers commented they were able to talk with the headteacher at any time and the staff were, and continue to be, very supportive, particularly subject co-ordinators when lessons are being planned.
47. The school does not follow the LEA appraisal scheme but a school-based system including a good pre-interview analysis carried out by each teacher is helpful and provides a sound basis for planning professional development. Satisfactory use is made of new technology. An audit of staff skills using information and communication technology has led to the co-ordinator offering in-service sessions to all staff. Many teachers are producing lesson planning and policies using word processors and the recent introduction of the National Grid for Learning at the school is being developed to explore electronic mail and the Internet for the pupils and the staff. The school's software for managing the finances is being updated and appropriate training is to take place soon.
48. The adequacy and range of resources is very good in all subjects and they are used well. For instance, the religious education resources are of very high quality and are labelled to ensure staff can easily and quickly find what they need. Specific grants, for example, for the National Literacy Strategy are spent well and books, for example, are colourful and exciting. The quality of the resources has a positive impact on the quality of education provided. Similarly the accommodation is very good. There are sufficient classrooms. Although two have to be accessed through other classrooms on the whole this does not distract the pupils. Very good specialist areas improve the quality of education including a new music room and library, a sensory room and communication therapy area. A new addition of a conservatory enables pupils to have more space and an area for 'messy play' enhancing provision in the reception class. A parents' room provides somewhere for parents to meet. The school is very clean and tidy with good storage facilities. Relevant artefacts and interesting displays illustrate and celebrate pupils' work making the school a stimulating learning environment. The school grounds are very good, including a lake. There is an exciting, staged development planned for the grounds due to start this term. The residential provision is good and all staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The sleeping areas have facilities to allow pupils to personalise them if they wish and the communal areas are homely and well decorated. There is a good range of resources, including a computer. On the whole the accommodation is used well, for example, recently a children's nursery has taken over some vacant rooms. The hydrotherapy pool, however, is only used for half the week but needs constant maintenance. The school has sound procedures to apply the principles of best value. In order to make comparisons they are seeking a similar school. There is a policy for tendering and a range of consultants is asked for their views on various areas.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:
- Improve the way in which the governors are involved in the life of the school in order to:
    - enable them to have a clear, first-hand picture of what goes on in the school;
    - enable them to evaluate the work of the school effectively;
    - ensure that they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school;
    - ensure that they are actively involved in the school development planning process;
    - ensure that they can support the work of the headteacher and senior management in raising standards and quality.(Paragraph 42)
  - Ensure that all teaching staff have up-to-date job descriptions and that the roles and responsibilities of senior managers are reviewed in order to:
    - ensure that the deputy headteacher has a clear role to play in whole school matters;
    - ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team are clarified.(Paragraph 41)
  - Seek to increase the number of teachers in recognition of the changing needs of the pupils since the previous inspection and in line with the guidance in Circular 11/90. (Paragraph 45)
  - Improve the assessment of pupils' achievements in science, religious education and the other non-core subjects of the National Curriculum by:
    - ensuring that the achievements and progress of pupils are systematically recorded and;
    - using this information to help teachers incorporate opportunities for assessing the pupils' achievements when work is planned;
    - assist teachers in planning the next steps in pupils' learning.(Paragraphs 8, 22, 29, 36, 41, 44, 78, 81, 87, 90, 95, 105, 107, 114)
50. The school has recognised the need to review its assessment arrangements and this forms part of its school development plan.

51. The governors, in drawing up its action plan, may wish to consider the following minor weaknesses identified in the report:
- the management of challenging behaviour is a few classes; (Paragraphs 15, 24)
  - the consistent implementation of the school's religious education curriculum; (Paragraph 27)
  - the leadership of art, design and technology and physical education; Paragraphs 87, 90, 110)
  - planning for swimming and the recording of pupils' achievements. (Paragraph 108)

## **THE RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

52. The residential setting strongly reflects the school's aims in many ways. The need for residential provision is specified, where appropriate, in the pupils' statement of special educational need. It makes a very positive contribution to developing socially acceptable behaviour, and pupils' personal development, particularly their independence skills. For example, it is successful in encouraging pupils to play co-operatively, and in the development of new sleeping and eating patterns. All pupils who attend the school have the opportunity to benefit from the residential provision, as do pupils from other schools in Sheffield. On occasions, pupils can remain after school to join in activities with their friends, and sometimes stay overnight. The last inspection identified the need for the school to clarify with the LEA the purpose of the residential provision. This review has not been completed.
53. Learning opportunities are good. Care plans have improved since the last inspection. Parents genuinely appreciate the facility as it offers their children a chance to develop socially and personally and enhances their overall development. The last inspection, and now pupils have targets set for them to work towards when they are in the residential setting. Where targets are specific and measurable, progress against the targets can be clearly seen. Care plans could be further improved by ensuring that targets are always specific and measurable. If staff were to record, and date, how well pupils achieve each time they work on a target, staff would be able to demonstrate how much the provision promotes pupils' progress. Staff also take account of targets set in pupils IEPs, and provide opportunities for pupils to work towards these. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities is provided, both within the residential setting, and through links with the community. For example, pupils are taken to use the facilities, such as a large ball pool and climbing apparatus, at a nearby YMCA. There are high expectations of pupils developing greater independence, and pupils respond well to this. Routines, such as cleaning teeth after breakfast, are well established, and mealtimes are a very civilised affair, with pupils showing very good table manners, and an ability to engage in conversation with a visitor at the same time as eat their meal.
54. The quality of care provided is very good. Comprehensive written guidance is followed very closely, and procedures such as the administration and storage of medicine are carried out precisely as required. There is scrupulous recording of accidents, safety checks and nighttime observations of pupils. The latter are monitored by the acting principal RCCO, who checks parts of the closed circuit television recordings, to ensure the accuracy of recorded entries. There are good levels of staffing, supervision and care, and relationships between pupils and staff are good. Pupils clearly feel happy, secure, and at home, and are proud to welcome visitors.
55. The interior is well decorated and stimulating. There is a homely atmosphere, and plenty for pupils to do, as well as to stimulate them. For example, early evenings are spent reading, doing work with numbers, and using the computer. Since the last inspection continuity between the day provision and the residential setting has improved. This is achieved mainly by staff working part of their day in the school, supporting pupils in their lessons or supervising at break and lunchtimes. Communication with parents is good, and parents clearly appreciate the facility. The residential facility is well led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.6	24.6	36.1	31.1	6.6	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

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	72
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.76	School data	0

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

It is inappropriate to report on attainment as measured against national standards at the end of Key Stage 1 because of the small number of pupils involved and the nature of their special educational needs.

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

It is inappropriate to report on attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 as measured against national standards because of the small number of pupils involved and the nature of their special educational needs.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	62
Any other minority ethnic group	3

### 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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.33
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.7
Average class size	10.3

#### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	380

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	816,214
Total expenditure	784,152
Expenditure per pupil	10,596
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,572
Balance carried forward to next year	55,634

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	72
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	91	9	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	29	3	3	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	44	6	3	18
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	35	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	41	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	9	0	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	35	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	27	3	0	24

### Other issues raised by parents

13 parents attended the meeting with the Registered inspector, which was held before the inspection. The parents expressed considerable support for the work of the school. There was particular praise and appreciation for the residential provision. Many parents recognised the value of the time their children spent away from home, affording the children the opportunity to play with other children and to develop self-confidence and a degree of independence. The parents praised the ethos of the school and the attention paid to, for example, behaviour and social development.

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

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

56. At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five in school. There were five children in the reception class in their reception year four of who reached the age of five shortly after starting school in September. It is not appropriate, therefore, to report on the standards achieved by five years. The report will focus on the achievements of the pupils and the progress they have made since starting school using the statements of special educational need as a starting point. Because of the small number of pupils it is inappropriate to distinguish between pupils with different needs.
57. The pupils have achieved a great deal since starting school. All have made significant progress in all areas of learning although the focus for much of the work is in their personal and social development, communication and mathematics. Most progress has been achieved in their personal and social development. The class teacher plans very effectively for all the pupils and their individual education plans identify challenging targets for the pupils to aim for. Because of this, the pupils improve their ability to concentrate and pay attention to whole class activities for increasing periods of time. All of the pupils are more aware of the need to listen and they try very hard to reduce the kinds of behaviours, which prevent them from learning. The teacher and the classroom assistants manage the behaviour of individual pupils very well. They ensure that the systems and structures of the day are secure, talk with the pupils in a constructive way and provide clear instructions and expectations for behaviour.
58. The teaching of language and literacy is well organised with a balance of whole class sessions, small group work and individual tasks and activities. The individual tasks are based on the assessment of pupils' individual needs. These tasks enable the pupils to make good progress in communication. For example, they improve their use of simple signs and pictures, which helps them to carry out tasks independently. They also improve their listening skills and most have made very good progress in following simple instructions. The teaching of reading is good and this helps the pupils to improve their ability to follow stories, recognize characters, talk about what is happening in pictures and a few are able to read words which interest them, for example, 'splish, splosh'. Progress is also made in developing writing skills. Some pupils have developed good control over pencils and can make meaningful marks on paper.
59. Pupils achieve well in mathematics making good progress in early counting skills, matching and in identifying two-dimensional shapes. The teaching of mathematics is good. The range of learning experiences planned by the teacher ensures that the pupils benefit from whole group discussions, practical activities that reinforce the ideas being taught and the use of television programs. These can be quite challenging for the pupils but they try hard and some of them are able to recognize and name squares, triangles, circles and rectangles.
60. Generally, pupils make achieve well and make good progress in physical and creative development. They make slow but significant improvement in developing basic skills of balance and co-ordination. In music, they enjoy listening to sounds and playing instruments to create sounds. The activities planned by the teacher are appropriate and ensure that the pupils are engaged in practical and experiential learning as much as possible. Pupils' achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Some have developed some good skills in using a computer and they can select from a simple menu which game they want to play. Most are improving their curiosity of the world around them are beginning to explore, for example, the features and characteristics of the natural world.
61. Since the previous inspection, the teaching of the reception pupils has improved greatly. The quality of the curriculum has improved and the pupils are achieving well. The teacher is now more experienced in teaching pupils with autism and associated communication and challenging behaviours. Lessons are well organized and the quality of Individual Education Plans has improved. Targets for individual pupils are clear, relevant and monitored daily. The curriculum now includes an appropriate range of activities drawn from the Equals Access

curriculum for pupils whose attainment is below that of the National Curriculum. As the pupils make progress and achieve more, the curriculum makes good use of the National Curriculum and the timetable of the class reflects this. Overall, the pupils benefit from these improvements and they all make a good start to their education. The majority of the pupils in the class experience difficulties in learning associated with autism and there is a need to ensure that future developments take this into consideration. For example, when whole class activities are organised so as to minimise unnecessary distractions and the creation of more discrete work places for individual pupils who need this approach.

## ENGLISH

62. Achievements in English, in speaking and listening, pre-reading and reading, pre-writing and writing are good for pupils of all abilities at both key stages.
63. When pupils start at the school they can sign and say a few words of particular relevance to them, such as items on their daily timetable. By 7 they have made good progress and can talk about things they have seen and done, supported by signing. For example, in one lesson lower attaining pupils talk about what they can see through the window when writing a class poem, one pupil says, "I can see a tree". By 11, higher attaining pupils continue to make good progress. Their speech is clear and easy to understand and they have good understanding. They could improve their ability to understand new concepts if signing were used when new ideas are being introduced. Lower attaining pupils can generally make themselves understood and work on including prepositions in their speech, such as "under", "beside", "above". They could improve their understanding and speech if signing was used more consistently. Pupils with autism also make good progress, supported by their work in a Communications Group. They show a trust of staff and take turns when they are interacting with them. They use switches and show an understanding of cause and effect as they track the bubbles going up the tube with great concentration.
64. By 7, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in reading. Higher attaining pupils have a variety of word attack skills, for example they use pictures, the story line and phonic cues to decode new words. They are easily able to read regular consonant-vowel-consonant words, such as b-a-t and s-u-n. They can read words with some consonant digraphs, such as "th" and "sh". Lower attaining pupils show a very positive attitude to books and turn the pages carefully, and can read most words of a simple reading scheme with some prompting from staff. By 11, higher attaining pupils are confident, fluent readers and can assist other children in "paired reading". They use improved skills, including predicting, to decode new words. This demonstrates that they have made good progress. They need to improve their understanding of split vowel digraphs, such as m-a-d-e, t-u-b-e. Lower attaining pupils read simple passages, usually accurately, with understanding. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties work on the Equals Access curriculum and match pictures and Rebus symbols with objects. They could practise these skills in whole class work if "Big Books" included a few Rebus symbols on each page.
65. By 7, pupils' achievements in writing are good. Higher attaining pupils, copy written words, or copy over or underneath writing, and begin to have control over the size, shape and orientation of letters. For example, in one lesson, pupils choose pictures of food for an imaginary, breakfast that begin with "b" (e.g. bacon, banana, Bran Flakes) and stick them onto a cardboard plate. Lower attaining pupils track objects in pre-writing work. By 11, pupils show good progress. For example higher attaining pupils spell phonically regular words and High Frequency words (common, irregular words such as "their", "they") correctly. Their letters are usually correctly formed and they use lower and upper cases consistently. They take part in shared writing with the class and write class texts and poems. They also write for different audiences, including word-processing, such as a newspaper and other classes. They could improve their ability to write independently by using "word-books" and dictionaries more frequently. Their work in the literacy hour also helps them to be clear about grammar and punctuation. For example, in one Key Stage 2 lesson a pupil says, "Capital letters are never in the middle of a sentence".

66. Attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships in English are good and in the literacy hour they are very good. Pupils concentrate well and are productive and their pace of work is good. They are clear what they are expected to do and they carry it out well. They have good relationships with each other and the teacher, showing interest and pleasure in each other's work. They behave very well. They listen well and answer questions eagerly. They are supportive of each other's special needs. Pupils with autism concentrate very well in their Communications Group. For example they show fascination and sustained interest in the three-dimensional effect produced within a mirror by a series of light bulbs disappearing into the distance.
67. There has been a good improvement in English since the last inspection with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). The achievement of the youngest pupils is now no longer unsatisfactory. Pupils with autism and challenging behaviour, including working within the Communications Group, now make good progress.
68. Teaching and learning in English is good overall and at Key Stage 2 it is very good. In the best lessons, teachers have good knowledge of teaching the literacy hour and incorporate signing well into their lessons, which assists the comprehension and language extension of the pupils. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, which are shared with the class. The combination of good subject knowledge and clear objectives helps the pupils to learn because they know what is expected of them and the teachers are able to support their learning with effective and appropriate support. Resources are very good, for example each class has a large magnetic whiteboard with magnetic letters and this helps to hold the pupils' attention. Work is well matched to the pupils' different abilities. This ensures that they are challenged during lessons but also carry out tasks which enable them to be successful. Pupils' behaviour is well managed and this creates a calm environment for learning. The work is presented in an interesting way, which is motivating. For example books are carefully chosen and teachers and pupils dress up and act out parts of the story to bring the work alive. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, the management of pupils with challenging behaviour is not secure and this affects the learning of all pupils.
69. There has been good leadership from the co-ordinator in the implementation of the NLS. This has included monitoring of teaching, which can be shown to have improved teaching and learning. The way that the work is planned around interesting books, with an exciting and dramatic approach has given the pupils a love of books and reading. This is further encouraged by the very good library, which is well organised and includes fiction and non-fiction books, Big Books and taped stories. Classes have written their own books, with photographs of children in the school, which are very well presented. These are very popular with pupils when they come into the library. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their communication skills, for example taking part in productions and performances. There is good assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in reading, writing and communication and this enables teachers to plan future work and to demonstrate clearly the progress the pupils have made. The speech and language therapists contribute to the assessment of pupils' abilities and provide suggested programmes of work.
70. Makaton signing is used well in many classes. However there is a need to ensure it is used consistency in all classes and to develop its use to the introduction of new vocabulary and concepts. The school needs to extend the use of Rebus symbols, particularly as a lead into reading. For example with shared reading of "Big Book" texts, in the class work of the literacy hour, some pupils need one or two Rebus signs on each page to help them to contribute to the "reading" of the class text. The management of pupils with autism and challenging behaviour in a few classes needs to be improved in order to ensure that the positive learning environment is not disrupted.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. Pupils achieve good standards in all areas of mathematics at both key stages. They make good progress overall and specifically in meeting numeracy targets on individual education plans.

72. A significant number of pupils are unable to recognise or count numbers when they join the school. By the time they are seven, however, most recognise numbers, at least to three. Many count accurately and understand how to work out a figure less than or more than a number. They learn to sort and match shapes. Higher attaining pupils develop a sound knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils make good progress because they have a good basis established for their mathematical learning in the reception class, and the high quality of teaching throughout the key stage ensures the rate of progress is maintained. Teachers plan lessons well to include several activities. This interests the pupils and ensures they work consistently well throughout the lesson. For example, they enjoy playing board games or working on the computer, both activities developing skills in matching colours and shapes.
73. By the time they are eleven, pupils have improved their capacity to calculate answers in their heads. Most can double numbers, add on ten and continue straightforward number patterns, and sequences. Lower attaining pupils with the assistance of one-to-one or very small group sessions increase the numbers they can recognise and count. They match blue cars with blue garages and count how many carrots the rabbit eats. Whilst a few continue to experience difficulties in the addition of numbers under ten accurately, most recognise and name shapes and understand how to show information on a simple pictogram or bar chart. For example, they collect data concerning the favourite drinks of members of the class and draw a chart to show which drink is the most popular. Higher attaining pupils use dice or dominoes to randomly generate numbers to add together. A significant minority of pupils know the two, five and ten times tables. A few have learnt all their tables to twelve. They have a clear understanding of place value, multiply and divide and work accurately in decimals. Pupils establish the properties of shapes discovering which ones will roll. They use their skills in addition and, where possible, subtraction working out how much money is in a purse or how much has been spent. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has had a very positive effect on the progress made by pupils. Where the strategy is used very well, for example, in Year 5, all pupils join in activities as a class as well as working in smaller groups. In both instances the work is skilfully pitched at an appropriate level for each pupil. This ensures pupils make significant gains. Higher attaining pupils are doing particularly well in this class. For example, when asked for a really big odd number responding accurately with figures including trillions and billions.
74. Pupils' numeracy is practised, reinforced and improved effectively through activities in all areas of the curriculum. For example, they sing number songs and rhymes, count the number of fruits in a story and count and weigh ingredients. They identify shapes in design and technology and match colour when painting pictures of exotic fruits. During registration times pupils are encouraged to look at the daily timetable in mathematical terms, for example, the vocabulary used, first, and second lesson, and before and after play, and the sequence of activities.
75. Since the last inspection standards in mathematics overall have been maintained and the achievement of the youngest pupils has improved. This is largely because pupils continue to be taught well despite concentration on initiatives including the NLS and now, the NNS. Further improvement has been hampered by the increase in the number of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and a lack of an appropriate increase in staff. This has a direct impact on the achievements of pupils when support staff has to leave the room to work with one pupil. In consequence, without the member of staff, the planned group work in the classroom can no longer take place. All pupils in the class do not learn as well as they should when this happens.
76. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. Teaching and pupils' learning is at least good and mostly very good at Key Stage 1. Teachers have a very good knowledge of mathematics and numeracy. They are very clear about how to successfully teach the wide range of attainment and special educational need of the pupils. This ensures pupils' learning is effective and that they improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Teachers plan lessons very well, carefully choosing methods and content to sustain successfully pupils' interest and concentration throughout a lesson. For example, pupils enjoy trying to identify a shape from feeling it rather than seeing it. They do not have time to

become bored as the pace of the lesson is maintained through appropriate changes in activity. Non-teaching assistants are used exceptionally well and work with groups of pupils. They are well briefed and use appropriate resources effectively. Many pupils begin to work independently as staff praise and encourage them to work to the best of their ability. During Key Stage 2, although teaching and pupils' learning is good overall, the quality is not consistent. In a significant number of lessons the teaching and pupils' learning is at least good and often, very good. However, there is also satisfactory, and on occasion unsatisfactory, teaching and learning. Staff are skilled in teaching basic numeracy skills which pupils acquire effectively. They also have a good knowledge of the National NNS. However, as would be expected at this early stage, some are more proficient than others in its implementation. In the best lessons pupils are given work at a suitably difficult level and they rise to the challenge. For example, to double numbers in their head rather than to count, or to say whether a number consisting of two odd digits and an even digit will be odd or even. There are instances, however, of lessons where pupils lose interest and concentration when they find work too easy or explanations prolonged. In one lesson, a few higher attaining pupils clearly knew how to collect data for a bar chart but had to participate in a class data collecting activity. This slowed their learning. During the inspection some opportunities were missed to use information technology. Whilst pupils in Years 2 and 3 consolidated their learning about shapes successfully using a computer program, in another class, some older pupils did not know how to work their programs, although they could do the mathematics involved. At both key stages staff insist on good behaviour and successfully use praise and encouragement when pupils conform. This promotes good standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons because they find the activities fun and they are successful. They learn to share equipment, to take turns and they value the contribution of others by instigating or joining in with clapping or awarding 'dings'. Attractive displays of work and equipment in classrooms, for example, on shapes, as a constant reference helps pupils to learn.

77. The mathematics co-ordinator, who has carried out work on behalf of the LEA in the subject, is very effective giving a clear educational direction to staff. The National NNS has been introduced very well. Appropriate priorities are set for developing the subject and a range of on-going in-service training provided. The Equals mathematics curriculum for lower attaining pupils is effective and used well alongside the NNS. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is soundly based on good questioning and marking of work where appropriate, in lessons. Achievements are recorded on 'I can' sheets developed by the co-ordinator. These records are most effective where staff complete them frequently and use them when planning lessons. Monitoring of mathematics is sound. Targets have been set for every pupil in the school to improve their standards. Teachers' planning is monitored to ensure appropriate content and methods are used in lessons. Monitoring of teaching is planned to begin in the summer term when observations of literacy lessons cease. Accommodation is used very well. Discrete rooms within classrooms help pupils to concentrate without distraction. In most classrooms there is sufficient space for pupils to work in several groups. There is a very good range of well-organised resources, which helps pupils to learn. Each classroom has its own trolley of equipment and a central store is organised very helpfully.

## SCIENCE

78. Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory. Pupils make steady gains in scientific skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of science. They have a broad range of experiences across all the programmes of study, and by the time they are 7, higher attaining pupils describe some features of objects, record by making simple drawings, and writing single words. Lower attaining pupils explore their immediate surroundings, and show a facial or physical reaction to things brought to them to touch, see or hear. By the time pupils are 11, higher attainers use scientific terms when they make observations. For example, when observing water change state, they describe it as *harder* when frozen, and *melting* when heated. Some are able to give simple explanations. For example, in a lesson on light, one noted that rainbows are found when there is sun and rain. Their methods of recording are more sophisticated. They record data in a prepared table, for example. Some can write a short factual account of what they have done. However, there is no evidence that pupils have begun

to understand the principle of fair testing. Lower attaining pupils record by colouring, or joining pictures to words. They are able to identify different materials and some parts of the body.

79. Teaching in science is good. It is good in 60 per cent of lessons, and satisfactory in 40 per cent. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and they use scientific vocabulary well in most lessons. Because of this, pupils become familiar with, and learn, this vocabulary. This helps them to understand the importance of the vocabulary and enhances their skills as young scientists. All staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour therefore most pupils respond well to the lessons, enjoy them and behave well. Lessons are well prepared and organised. A good range of activities is provided, so pupils' interest is maintained, and lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace, with pupils engaged throughout. Teachers provide experiences that contribute well to pupils' personal development. For example, some science work has been carried out with groups from mainstream primary schools, and classroom experiences are enriched by visits to museums and places of scientific interest. However, a weakness of planning in some lessons is the match of tasks to the different levels of pupils' ability. Occasionally, language is used that is too difficult for pupils to understand, and at other times, pupils all tackle the same task, which is too difficult for some. For example in one lesson where pupils were making coloured spinners to show that white light is made up of different colours, all tackled the task in the same way. Several made spinners wrongly, and these did not give the desired effect.
80. A significant strength of teaching is the imaginative use of a wide range of resources. Science resources are good, and they are well stored and organised. In one lesson on sound, the teacher provided a very wide range of different musical instruments, from a number of countries. Pupils showed great interest in these, and were enthralled as the teacher demonstrated how instruments were banged, shaken, and blown. Pupils handled them carefully when it was their turn to sort them into groups according to how they were played. In one lesson, pupils were fascinated when they saw the objects they withdrew from a bag. Younger pupils tried different ways of putting batteries into a torch, and were delighted when they got this, and other battery operated toys to work.
81. In general, teachers question pupils effectively, to promote recall and to check understanding. Pupils are keen to answer questions, and occasionally older pupils ask questions, such as, '*How long does it take water to freeze?*' However, assessment is weak in science. There is not enough thought given to what teachers expect pupils of different abilities to learn in each lesson, and teachers' medium term planning does not identify assessment opportunities. Although teachers have sheets on which they may record against 'I can' statements, few do this well, and the statements do not allow for the very small gains that some pupils make. Recording is rarely dated, so it is very difficult to monitor progress over time. A few teachers annotate pupils' work, and this is useful, but work is not always dated. These weaknesses make it difficult for teachers to build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, and limit the progress that pupils make.
82. Standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is aware of the weaknesses in the subject and has identified related targets for development in the subject development plan. These include monitoring of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory.

## **ART**

83. Achievements in art are satisfactory. Other subjects and class topic work are supported by art. For example younger pupils are helped to do paper folding and to paint within the outline of different shapes as part of their mathematics work. By 6 or 7 they have made satisfactory progress in learning new techniques and, for example they learn how to do collage and making a large collage pot of flowers. By 11 they show an ability to observe closely and provide observational detail in painting, for instance they make copies of famous artists' work, such as Monet's "Water Lilies", Van Gogh's "Irises" and Lowry's "Yachts". Pupils show interest and enjoyment in art and work carefully and with good concentration. Older pupils show a careful attention to detail that requires the ability to work on a piece of work over a sustained period of time. However there is a limited amount of time spent on art and this means that pupils are only able to make satisfactory progress. There is no assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do and this means that teachers have no clear idea of which techniques the pupils still need to develop.
84. There has been no improvement in the teaching and learning of art since the last inspection. The need to develop the subject was identified before and remains in the current development plans for the subject.
85. The teaching of art is organised to fit in with class topic plans and it was therefore not possible to observe any separate art teaching during the inspection. However from observation of art within other subjects, displays in classrooms, photographs and in discussions with pupils and staff, it can be shown that the learning and achievements made by pupils in art are satisfactory.
86. Teachers identify art within their topic plans and cross-reference this to programmes of study of the National Curriculum. For example the art of other countries is included in topics such as "Africa" and "The Wider World". However the co-ordinator does not carry out an audit to ensure that the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are sufficiently covered at each key stage. Different techniques, such as design, graphics, fabric and paper printing, model making, batik, collage, watercolour painting, observational drawings, fabric weaving and pottery are taught to link with topic work. There are visiting artists to the school and they provide workshops, such as in the recent "Winter Wonderland" Project when an artist was in residence and worked with the pupils to produce the school "Hello" sign with plaster casts of hands.
87. The leadership and management of art are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of clear vision and leadership for the subject and no monitoring of teaching. There is no assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in art and no mapping of what has been covered in each class, or the time spent on art, to ensure that pupils are taught all aspects of the National Curriculum. This means that, despite their enthusiasm and skills, the pupils can only make satisfactory progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. Standards of achievement in design technology are satisfactory. Photographic records show that a broad range of tasks are undertaken by pupils as they move through the school, but weaknesses in record keeping mean that evidence of progress over time is limited. The youngest pupils develop a sound range of skills as they take part in assembling ingredients and a variety of other resistant materials. During the inspection, younger pupils made biscuits, and models of town and country buildings, for example. By the time they are 7, lower attaining pupils are able to mix ingredients themselves. They are developing skills in cutting and sticking, which they achieve with some support. Higher attainers use a wider range of simple tools, such as scissors, brushes, a hole-punch and a stapler. Some sketch, label or draw to communicate their ideas. They are beginning to understand how everyday objects work, such as a food whisk and a pencil sharpener, and they acquire vocabulary to describe materials and shapes. During the inspection, older pupils were making a simple musical instrument, such as a drum, from a range of materials. By the time they are 11, lower attaining pupils are able to

work with a wider range of tools. They are beginning to use a vice safely, for example. They cut through wood using a junior hacksaw, thread a needle and make random stitches. Following simple visual instructions, pupils make a construction model. Higher attaining pupils use a greater variety of tools such as a drilling jig, vice, hammer and multi-purpose scissors. They carry out investigations, to find out strengths of adhesives, for example. Across the school, there is less evidence of pupils making progress in their ability to design.

89. Teaching of design technology is satisfactory overall. In two out of four lessons seen, teaching was good; it was satisfactory in one, and unsatisfactory in one. In most lessons, planning is good. For example, written guidance in one lesson plan emphasised the importance of all adults allowing pupils to choose, cut and stick by themselves. Guidance was followed well, and this enabled pupils to create their own individual products. Numeracy skills are promoted well. On one occasion, pupils weighing ingredients were encouraged to judge whether the two scale pans were *the same* or not, they sang *Five currant buns* at the end of the lesson, then they drew numbers from a bag to determine their position in the line for leaving the class. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge, they know their pupils well, and use this knowledge to set suitable tasks, and manage behaviour effectively. For example, in one lesson tasks were presented at two levels of difficulty, and this enabled all pupils to succeed in making a simple instrument. In most lessons, time is used well, but occasionally too much time is spent on demonstration of a task, and this means pupils have less time to become involved in learning by doing. Teachers make good use of a wide variety of resources, and these appeal to pupils. The co-ordinator has also made some useful resources to assist 'small hands'. Consistent signing, the use of symbols, and the practice of sharing the lesson targets with them, all support pupils' understanding. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen, too many pupils were taught in a small area, there was insufficient space for them to become involved in the planned activity, and their behaviour deteriorated. In other lessons, pupils showed interest, and behaved well.
90. There is some good use of photography to record what pupils have done, but assessment is weak. Although there are record sheets, which have been developed since the last inspection, these show skills developed but are not dated, so they do not give a picture of progress over time. They do not show the contexts in which skills have been acquired. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. At present, there is no monitoring of the curriculum or of teaching. Leadership in the subject is unsatisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

91. Pupils achieve good standards in geography across the school and most make good progress in extending their understanding and awareness of the world. By age eleven, pupils most pupils have a clear idea about different places in the world and how, for example, the climate effects what people wear and how they live. Some are able to identify places on a world map or a globe. Pupils by the age of seven, for example, appreciate that some places in the world are far away and it is necessary to travel by boat or plane to reach them. Teaching is good and lessons are well prepared and the activities are well suited to the range of needs of the pupils. For example, in one lesson the teacher uses a good range of real fruits, pictures, maps and a globe to teach that different fruits are grown in different parts of the world. Pupils are able to recognize the fruits from the pictures or the real thing, name them and, with support from the teacher, place the fruit on the correct country on a large map of the world. However, the pupils' responses were not recorded in any way and this means that it is difficult for them to remember what they have achieved during a lesson and the teacher has no written record of what the pupils have learnt. In another lesson, good use is made of books used in the literacy lessons to support pupils' knowledge of how people live in a different country.
92. The subject has improved the achievements of the pupils since the previous inspection. The teaching has improved and the quality and range of the curriculum has developed in response to the changing needs of the pupils. Many of the planned activities are practical and allow the pupils to gain first-hand experience of the real world through visits to places of interest and importance. The curriculum makes full use of the National Curriculum. The curriculum also

recognizes that many of the pupils will find learning about countries far away quite challenging and there is a good range of resources to support their learning. There is a need, however, to address the fact that no regular assessment of pupils' achievements or progress in geography has been carried out over the last few years. There are no assessment opportunities identified in teachers' planning. There has also been no systematic monitoring of teaching in the subject by the co-ordinator. However, the curriculum is monitored and the school is about to review how the subject is taught across the school as part of the school development plan.

## **HISTORY**

93. There were no opportunities to observe history being taught during the inspection. Both history and geography are taught through a whole school topic and during the term of the inspection, the focus was geography. Much of the evidence of pupils' work is through displays around the school, photographs of visits and activities and the annual report to parents. There are no assessments of pupils' achievement in history.
94. Pupils generally achieve satisfactory standards in history. From the annual report to parents pupils experience a wide range of activities by the age of eleven. For example, during the autumn term, the whole school topic was based on the Millennium. Pupils across the school looked at different events, which had taken place over the last thousand years and presented their findings in a display around the hall and through a presentation to the school using drama, music and art. By eleven, most pupils appreciate that some events took place a long time ago and that life has changed even in recent times. This learning is reinforced through well planned visits to places of interest and also through visitors coming to the school and presenting practical activities for the pupils to enjoy.
95. The curriculum is well planned and ensures a broad range of experiences, which fully reflect the coverage of the National Curriculum as well as meeting the individual needs of the pupils. However, there have been no regular assessments of pupils' achievements in history over the last few years and, like geography, this is a weakness which needs to be addressed.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

96. During the inspection it was possible to observe only a few instances of pupils working with information and communications technology. A scrutiny of samples of work and teachers records indicates that most pupils are achieving satisfactory standards. Pupils' progress is difficult to track because assessment and recording are unsatisfactory. Achievements are ticked off against an undated checklist although there are useful 'balloon' recording sheets that detail a pupil's achievements in a task. On balance, the indications are that most pupils are making satisfactory progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the introduction of the National Grid for Learning at the school. Through this initiative, the number of computers in the school has increased. Three-quarters are networked and many are also linked to the Internet. This gives a greatly improved ratio of 2.8 children to each computer enabling them to use the computers more often to improve their standards.
97. By the time pupils are seven, they are able to select which program they wish to use. They use a cause and effect program, often without support from staff. Pupils use switches effectively to communicate. For example, to add the chorus to 'Old MacDonald's Farm'. Most pupils learn to write words and some write sentences and print what they have written. They know that equipment responds to commands, for example, the video and the tape recorder. Higher attaining pupils load disks and enter information using concept, and conventional keyboards. They have used the Internet to find information for their topic work, played an adventure game and made a floor robot go where they want it to. By the time pupils are eleven, most can use a variety of equipment and have refined their control. For example, they use directional keys increasingly accurately. Younger pupils direct Noddy's car around a track and match the front and back of animals. Information communications technology is used well to support pupil's learning in the literacy hour. They enjoy listening to talking books on the

computer, word process their work and practise spellings. Pupils begin to use the 'My World' and other CD ROMs effectively to research for information, for example, on the Caribbean for topic work. In mathematics, pupils gain a good level of success using programs from a published scheme. Pupils recall this work with obvious enjoyment. They sequence colours, match numbers and practise number skills. Higher attaining pupils know they can enter data and produce a graph and they are keen to use the Internet.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall, but is inconsistent throughout the school. An audit indicates a low level of skill and confidence for many teachers. This has been partly addressed by in-service training and further sessions are planned for Internet and other communications applications. In some instances teachers' expectations of what the pupils will learn are not sufficiently high. Higher attaining pupils are asked to use programs that are too easy for them and this slows their learning. This is balanced by the high demands made of pupils in literacy and some numeracy lessons. Most pupils persist with activities demonstrating very high levels of concentration and interest. One pupil spent time dragging and placing pictures of stirrers and little parasols in cocktail glasses on the screen. When he was satisfied they were perfectly lined up he printed the picture. Teachers organise good opportunities for co-operative work. Pairs or small groups of pupils behave well and take turns using a keyboard or touch screen. Some of the best teaching is on a one-to-one basis when teachers or support staff work with pupils. For example, prompting a pupil to remember the commands to write text. In one instance a pupil immediately became faster and more accurate in his number work to his evident pleasure.
99. There is a good curriculum developed by the co-ordinator showing how pupils will gain skills and knowledge. Appropriate software is linked to topics but it is not clear how often each pupil has access to information and communications technology. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching unless it is seen as part of the literacy hour. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and has a good level of knowledge about the subject. He is aware that to make best use of the opportunities provided through the National Grid for Learning assessment procedures and staff training need to be addressed as a priority.

## **MUSIC**

100. Pupils' achievements in music are satisfactory. When they start at the school pupils can join in with actions, sounds and signs, and some pupils can sing some parts, of familiar songs, such as "Old MacDonald had a Farm". By 6 or 7 they make satisfactory progress and are able to clap the rhythm of different fruits, for example "man-go", "ba-na-na". By 11 higher attaining pupils can clap the rhythm to a series of pictures such as "co-co-nut", "sun", "co-co-nut", and "sun". However older pupils could improve their composition skills if they were asked to select which pictures to use according to the rhythm the words make instead of picking them at random.
101. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are satisfactory. When singing is accompanied by guitar or taped music they are particularly well motivated and show enjoyment. However at times the behaviour of some pupils with challenging behaviour is not well managed and the learning of all pupils is affected. Pupils show respect for the good resources and enjoy using them. In some lessons, however, the amount of time spent talking about the work restricts the time spent playing instruments or singing. Pupils make comments that they want to sing and play instruments with the taped music. Pupils integrated into local primary school lesson have very good attitudes towards the experience.
102. There has been no improvement in pupils' achievements in music since the last inspection, when the standards were good. However the number of pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties has increased and teachers do not have the necessary range of skills to teach music to these pupils.
103. Teaching of music is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with good resources and pupils are clear about the objectives of the lesson. For example, the teacher makes good use of

pictures to encourage the linking of visual stimulus with playing in time. This helps those pupils with communication difficulties to appreciate and understand rhythm and how this can be represented in symbols. This effective use of pictures and the secure knowledge of the teacher means that the older pupils have made sufficient progress to use musical notation. The positive effect of the teaching of music is seen, for example, in assemblies where the vast majority of the pupils join in the songs enthusiastically. Many can sign the songs and the overall effect is quite powerful. Music is also used in the communication group lessons where the use of rhythm supports the pupils in remembering when to participate in activities and also to help them remember information. However some opportunities are lost for pupils to deepen their knowledge of music. For example, too much time is spent on extending non-musical vocabulary within pupils' class topic work, such as talking about different fruits, and this restricts the time available for music. On occasions, too much time sticking pictures on a sheet randomly, without being asked to think about the rhythms they are making. This restricts their progress in composition. In some lessons the management of challenging behaviour is unsuccessful and this affects the learning of the whole class.

104. There are good resources, including percussion instruments, which are of a good quality and a specialist music room. There is an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator and music makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example there is a weekly whole school assembly when singing, spiritual reflection and signing contribute towards the pupils' achievements in music. Good use is made of musicians, such as the recent visiting flute and percussion workshop, working with the pupils.
105. The school is aware that the qualifications and experience to teach music to pupils with autism and challenging behaviour needs to be improved and there are plans for the co-ordinator to attend a relevant course. Assessment is carried out for the class, showing which attainment targets have been covered. However there is no clear assessing and recording of what individual pupils know, understand and can do in music. The curriculum is based around class topics and this means that there is not always sufficient emphasis on extending pupils' musical knowledge, understanding and skills, based on clear assessment. There is insufficient monitoring of the teaching of music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

106. Standards of achievement in physical education are satisfactory. Pupils make the best progress in swimming, which they start as soon as they come in to school. They quickly make gains in skills and confidence in the school's small pool. By the time they are 7, higher attaining pupils float, without flotation aids; some use a float whilst they propel themselves backwards using their feet. Lower attainers are confident enough to jump into the pool but they still need armbands to float. By the time pupils are 11, higher attainers swim a length of an Olympic pool using crawl, but they have not yet mastered breathing techniques. Lower attainers are confident enough to use the full length of the pool, they can swim a recognisable stroke, but they still use armbands.
107. The school provides a broad range of learning experiences; these include horse riding for some older pupils, which is highly relevant to their needs. However, not all classes have the same amount of time for physical education, so not all pupils have the same opportunity to learn and make progress. As there are no records kept in the subject, there is little evidence of the progress pupils make over time. In the lessons seen, pupils made satisfactory gains in ball skills.
108. Teaching is good overall. It is good or very good in half the lessons seen, and satisfactory in the others. All staff follow the guidance on ensuring pupils' safety during lessons. A qualified instructor teaches swimming, and older pupils use a full sized pool at a nearby school. There are no plans for lessons, or records kept for swimming, and this is unsatisfactory. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and are well structured, providing a range of suitable activities, as well as opportunities for free movement, play or competition. When support staff are in the water with pupils, learning is more effective because support is better. The instructor and support

staff give useful feedback and demonstration, which help pupils to correct their techniques. Pupils particularly enjoy races in the large pool, and try their best to win. They work hard throughout lessons and are well motivated.

109. People passing through often disturb lessons that take place in the hall, and the space available is not sufficient for some groups, particularly when two classes combine. This restricts the movement, and the physical exertion that is possible. During physical education lessons personal development is promoted very effectively. When pupils change into their kit they follow a set routine, led and supported by staff, and this encourages their independence in changing. Good behaviour is quickly rewarded with praise, and staff encourage the development of teamwork. Pupils respond well by trying their best to work as a team, and win races. They are rewarded for their achievements in swimming when they receive certificates in assembly.
110. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, guidance to staff on safe practice has been developed, and there has been investment in resources, which are very good. However, record keeping has been abandoned to create time for development work needed in literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator has been assigned an additional management task, and co-ordination of the subject has deteriorated. There is no monitoring of the curriculum, teaching, or pupils' progress. Leadership is now unsatisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

111. It was only possible to observe a few lessons of religious education during the inspection, but these lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicate that pupils achieve satisfactory standards of achievement and progress at both key stages.
112. By the time they are seven, pupils know about celebrating festivals. Most make the link between the birth of Jesus and Christmas and understand that special foods, traditions and customs are associated with festivals. Pupils learn to appreciate the wonders of nature, for example, exploring the colour and beauty of trees in autumn. Higher attaining pupils are able to write short prayers and know about the symbolism of a candle. By the time they are eleven, many pupils are developing their own beliefs and values. They look at old Bibles and learn about worship from visiting the local Church and looking at videos of Jewish synagogues and Muslims fasting and praying. They learn a great deal from looking at artefacts, trying on prayer shawls and hats. Many remember watching in an assembly a pupil act out the daytime fasting and praying of a Muslim boy. They recall symbols, identify a prayer mat and know he has to eat at night. Pupils widen their knowledge of festivals to include Diwali, Hanukkah, Easter, and participate in harvest festivals.
113. At the last inspection the co-ordinator taught all the classes. Now, in most instances, the class teacher teaches religious education. Some teachers are less confident than others and this has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, which is sound overall. However, both the co-ordinator's teaching and the learning of the pupils she teaches are of a very high quality. The co-ordinator is aware of these discrepancies but teaching is not sufficiently monitored and evaluated at present to improve the quality of pupils' learning. The co-ordinator plans religious education lessons for the class teachers very well. Selections are made from the excellent range of resources and appropriate teaching strategies detailed. Pupils acquire an appropriate level of understanding and knowledge in this way. Pupils' interest is focussed and their concentration is good when teachers skilfully build an atmosphere. For example, using a lighted candle and religious music, or setting up a family Bible on a suitably draped table and talking in low voices. Pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement of the staff. They behave well and are keen to answer questions. In the best teaching, pupils are continually involved and build on their previous knowledge of, for example, special books. They gain insight into beliefs and values. A wedding photograph album, which is handled carefully, effectively links special books with a special and significant event. Throughout both key stages teachers take opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. For example, signing words as a matter of course, using sounds to cue pupils in 'ch' for church and 't' for Torah, and counting the branches on the candlestick.

114. The curriculum for religious education is sound and is firmly based on the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus, meeting statutory requirements. Although the scheme of work is good all teachers do not teach it to the same depth. The curriculum makes a very significant contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strong elements on sharing and caring for the community. For example, exploring the environment around the school and collecting litter. Another class when investigating the reasons for rules developed 'good' and 'silly' rules to illustrate their understanding. Assemblies, as at the last inspection, continue to make a positive contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education. The co-ordinator provides very good direction for the subject. The aims and values of the school are very evident in the scheme of work and in the lessons planned. Resources are comprehensive and managed very well indeed. The development of religious education is not a current priority for the school, which hampers improvement. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. It is difficult to track many pupils' progress other than through what they have experienced. This is reflected in a number of end of year reports. In some instances staff are not clear what they are assessing in terms of what pupils know, understand and can do at an appropriate level.