

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSHLANDS SCHOOL

Wildwood, Stafford

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124518

Headteacher: Mr J Kirkby

Reporting inspector: Adrian Simm
21138

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 March 2000

Inspection number: 192439

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special (SLD)
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	3-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lansdowne Way Wildwood Stafford
Postcode:	ST17 4RD
Telephone number:	01785 356385
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Phil Richards
Date of previous inspection:	2 – 5 December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Adrian Simm	Registered inspector	Art	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	
		History	
Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Special educational needs	How does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Will Gale	Team inspector	English	How well the school is led and managed?
		Information technology	
		English as an additional language	
Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Science	How well are pupils taught?
		Design and technology	
		Music	
		Physical education	
David Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Religious education	
		Under fives	
		Integration	
		Post-16	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marshlands School is a maintained special school for pupils aged between 3 and 19 years who have either severe (SLD) or profound and multiple (PMLD) learning difficulties. The school is funded for 49 pupils. Currently 31 boys and 18 girls are on roll between the ages of 5 and 19 years; only a small number with PMLD. The admission of pupils with additional and more challenging needs is increasingly including pupils who are autistic or have behavioural difficulties. Pupils attend the school from a wide rural area surrounding Stafford and increasingly, from some urban areas of Stafford with high social deprivation. Twenty one pupils are eligible for free school meals which has remained steady since the last inspection. A very small number of pupils come from homes where the first language is not English. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The school has been affected during the last two years by much staff absence. The current governing body has been in place fully since September 1999.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in developing pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Teaching and learning were good during the week of the inspection. However, despite the lack of satisfactory and consistent development since the last inspection, recent improvements in the curriculum and teaching, and satisfactory pupils' achievement ensure the school has recently become effective and as such, is currently offering satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning is good; teachers are well supported by learning support staff;
- It promotes very good attitudes from pupils towards school and learning. Pupils are very enthusiastic, interested and involved in their work, particularly at Key Stage 1;
- Relationships within the school between pupils, and between pupils and staff are good. Pupils' personal development is good. They respect their school and the feelings of others very well, and behaviour is good;
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good; for moral development it is very good;
- It achieves its aims and values well and ensures equality and access of opportunities for all pupils.

What could be improved

- Prioritising and costing areas for development for the school which can be evaluated for their success;
- Appraisal of the performance of the school's leadership and management;
- Greater rigour in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in order to ensure consistency;
- Consistency of assessment and the collection and analysis of information to inform planning and to raise standards in all subjects;
- More precise setting of pupils' targets in Individual Education Plans against which pupils' progress can be measured;
- Letting parents know annually how the school is developing;
- Better planning to meet the needs of all pupils whom the Local Education Authority expects the school to admit.

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 December 1996. For much of the time since the last inspection, the headteacher and other senior staff have been ineffective in improving the school. The headteacher has been distracted by differences with members of the former governing body. Whilst introduced in response to the last inspection, school development planning has faltered which impedes the

strategic development of the school. The new governing body has not yet been in place long enough to fully come to terms with the needs of the school and put in place procedures to monitor and evaluate developments to ensure greater success. However, the new governing body now fulfils its major statutory responsibilities and has systems for monitoring the school's finances. Recently, the headteacher asked for support from the Local Education Authority in getting the development of schemes of work back on track. This has resulted in improved planning for the curriculum and the school has introduced a more consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress. However, these improvements have not been in place long enough yet to provide useful information to inform planning further and improve pupils' achievement. Parents now receive an Annual Report about the work their children have been involved in but these do not yet consistently report pupils' progress in personal development or the curriculum. Some developments have been made by the school since the last inspection but most of these have been introduced recently and as such, overall school improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. In the last two terms, everyone has worked very hard to improve the school. It has the capacity for further improvement providing that it continues now to be led purposefully, and monitored and evaluated more closely by the new governing body.

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	by age 16	by age 19	Key	
Speaking and listening	C	C	C	Very good	A
Reading	C	C	C	Good	B
Writing	C	C	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	C	C	C	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	C	C	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	C		

The school sets statutory targets. It is in the second year of setting appropriate non-statutory targets in Makaton, but only in the first year for speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. As such, there is no evidence against which to make judgements on pupils' progress against these targets. In pupils' and students' work, achievement is good in English and history by the age of 7, and in information and communications technology(ICT) by the age of 11 and 14 years. Elsewhere, achievement is satisfactory in all subjects except in design and technology and geography where there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Throughout the school, pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning. They are interested in the experiences offered and are eager to contribute.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour throughout the school is good during lessons, in the dining hall, on the playground and during educational visits out of school.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, and good relationships between pupils. The good foundation gained by pupils in their early years which enables them to take responsibility for their own

	actions and to be as independent as possible is not fully developed as they move through the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Most pupils display very positive attitudes in their learning. They are eager to learn and show interest in everything they do. This results in good concentration with all pupils regardless of ability. The higher attainers frequently help the others in their groups. Pupils show very clear respect for staff and other pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 5-11	Aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall the quality of teaching and learning was good for all pupils during the week of the inspection. They have improved since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. It are satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons, good or better in 75 per cent of lessons and very good in 25 per cent. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all subjects and at all key stages except in ICT at Key Stage 4 and for post-16 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, where they are satisfactory. During the inspection, one lesson in mathematics at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory because implementation of the school's 'positive behaviour management' approach did not work sufficiently in maintaining control of three pupils who severely distracted others from their work. The best teaching is consistently evident at Key Stage 1 where it is good or better in 88 per cent of lessons and very good in 41 per cent. Overall, lessons are clearly planned and interesting in order to encourage pupils to concentrate and to learn new skills and knowledge. An example of this was pupils' wholehearted participation in a range of ball control exercises in physical education. The teaching of literacy and numeracy follows the style of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and is structured to enable all pupils to be successful. Teaching encourages consistently all pupils to answer questions willingly and enter into discussion.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum reflects the school's aims and meets statutory requirements. It gives pupils a broad and relevant experience of all curricular provision including that set out in Statements of Special Educational Needs, except for a modern foreign language from which pupils are disapplied through the Annual Review process.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good. Pupils respect their school and the feelings of others very well. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	High priority is placed on the welfare of the pupils and pupils feel safe and secure. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils' academic performance, but their effectiveness is limited because of the poor quality of target setting in the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are not sufficiently specific against which to measure progress. The lack of preciseness of the IEPs also limits the extent to which the personal development of pupils can be monitored.

The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory and parents are pleased with the school's provision and achievements. Schemes of work are in place for this academic year, but their development has been slow and unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The science programme of study at Key Stage 4 and resistant materials in design and technology are not yet developed sufficiently. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have a sensory curriculum appropriate to their needs and in line with their Statements. Extra-curricular activities are curtailed by the transport requirements of the pupils, but the school has a satisfactory number of lunchtime activities and residential opportunities. The school's aim that pupils should have equality of access and opportunity is paramount and all staff strive successfully to meet this aim. The school has a detailed and clear health and safety policy that is well implemented in the main. However, the implementation is not sufficiently robust to trigger all necessary checks or ensure that practice always follows policy.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is unsatisfactory. Only in the last year has firm action been taken to ensure progress. The headteacher has established closer relations with the new governing body and sought advice from the Local Education Authority which has given priority to the school's needs. The school has benefited from this advice and is now more aware of areas for improvement. The school does not yet plan strategically for the breadth of special needs for which it is expected to cater.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its basic statutory responsibilities in areas such as health and safety and financial control. It does not yet have a Special Educational Needs policy and as such, cannot report on its success to parents. Governors do not monitor the performance of the headteacher and have not evaluated the school's pace of improvement with sufficient rigour.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school currently has insufficient data, and targets and success criteria are insufficiently precise against which to measure progress or against which to decide how greater progress could be made. Formal monitoring of teaching does not take place and the pace of pupils' progress is only sufficiently monitored in English.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher and key governors have an informal understanding of some priorities for future development. However, this does not provide a sufficiently rigorous method for making the best strategic use of resources. Current budget planning procedures lead to uncertainty and inaccuracy in predicting the extent of annual budget surpluses, particularly when budgeting for extensive staff absences. In 1998/99 this amounted to 16% of the budget, which is unsatisfactory.

The school deliberately has a high level of support staff compared to similar schools. This helps to meet the variety of pupils' needs and ensures the school achieves its declared aim of providing equality of opportunity and access for all pupils, and that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The school has satisfactory accommodation and the building is clean and well presented. The increase in learning resources this year has helped to raise the range and quality of resources to a satisfactory level in all subjects. The school has responded to the relatively minor issues raised in the last audit report and now some of the principles of best value are applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a small minority of parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like the school; • Parents feel the school will help them with any concerns; • The school helps pupils to mature; • Pupils' behaviour is good; • The school expects pupils will achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the school works with parents; • The leadership of the school; • Improved information about their child's progress; • A more interesting range of activities outside of the classroom; • Having the right amount of work for their child to do at home.

In general, the inspectors' judgements support parents' views about the school. However, inspectors consider that higher attainers at Key Stages 3 and 4, and post-16 could be more independent. The broad range of extra-curricular activities carried out by the school and the amount of work pupils do at home are satisfactory for this type of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school is only in the first year of setting targets for speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. As such, whilst these are appropriate, there is no evidence yet against which to make judgements on pupils' progress against these targets. Pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Annual Reports to parents or Annual Reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs lack detail and provide insufficient evidence of progress. In addition, the school decided not to keep most of the pupils' work prior to the current year. Therefore, little evidence was available against which to judge pupils' progress and to interpret trends in results over time. For much of the period since the last inspection, the headteacher and senior staff have been ineffective in seeking to improve the school. Recently, the headteacher asked for support from the Local Education Authority in getting the development of schemes of work back on track. This has resulted in improved planning for the curriculum and the school has introduced a more consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress. Whilst this has resulted in teaching now being a strength of the school, until recently, the school has lacked a clear educational direction and has relied on the day-to-day efforts of individual members of staff to maintain standards. However, these improvements have not been in place long enough yet to provide useful information to further inform planning or to measure pupils' achievement. The pupils' attainment levels and the size of year groups makes it inappropriate to draw comparisons with other schools.
2. Given the very limited evidence available, satisfactory improvement in pupils' achievement has been made since the last inspection in all subjects where comparisons can be drawn. Owing to insufficient evidence at the time of the last inspection, judgements were not made on pupils' achievement in art, history, ICT and religious education. On this inspection, judgements could not be made in design and technology, and geography.
3. Overall, achievement in English is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements are good by the age of 7. They make particularly good progress in speaking and listening, and reading. Pupils' achievements at 11, 14 and 16 are satisfactory. Post-16 students make satisfactory progress.
4. At 7, pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are good. Pupils coming into school often lack confidence in expressing themselves but after a short time, they respond to simple instructions and understand key words in speech, such as remembering characters from stories like the 'Three Little Pigs'. Most pupils understand some basic Makaton signs and answer questions with a relevant reply. Most pupils speak in short phrases; higher attainers use whole sentences with a content which shows some sense of the listener's requirements. Lower attainers realise that gesture or signing can help them to convey meaning. Pupils achieve well in reading. Within two years of starting at school, the majority recognise some individual letters, but not whole words. Pupils handle books correctly, holding them the right way up, turning the pages and looking with interest at the pictures. Higher attainers know that title pages give an idea of the content of a book and express choices about which book they are likely to find interesting. Pupils writing is satisfactory. The majority copy-write a few letters, although not in an even size. Higher attainers use a correct pencil grip and remember how to write a few letters without adult prompting. Lower attaining pupils show an increasing ability to shade within picture outlines.
5. By 11, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The majority follow instructions to the whole class and recall a few of the main aspects of a story read to them. For example in history, they link the 'g' sound well to words such as Greece and gold in the story of King Midas. Higher attainers speak in whole sentences, but usually prefer to use short phrases. There is a tendency to shorten words in speech and not include clear endings. All pupils can indicate yes and no clearly by speech, gesture or signing. Pupils handle books correctly and now gain more meaning from the pictures. Higher attainers recognise the letters of their own name and most of the letters on a computer keyboard. Most pupils have

developed an adequate pencil grip, although a few need adult support to sustain their drawing. Higher attaining pupils remember how to write some letters, especially if they are related to their own name.

6. By 14, pupils' achievements in speaking, listening, reading and writing remain satisfactory. There is a wide range of achievement in speaking; higher attainers can frame whole sentence responses such as describing pattern sequences from the work of William Morris in their art lesson. Lower attainers, and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties indicate their meaning by vocalisation and gesture. The majority cannot read text, but recall the main elements of a story. They know several single letter sounds, but cannot sound out combinations of letters. Higher attainers read familiar words especially if set in an easy-to-understand context. Most pupils copy-write letters and begin to understand the need to leave spaces between words. Higher attainers produce short sentences on a computer keyboard. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties reach out and hold an object and show some capacity to explore it with their fingers, especially when encouraged by an adult.
7. By 16, and during post-16 studies, pupils and students achievement remains satisfactory in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils are better able to adjust their speech to the needs of the listener, especially when they are explaining what they are doing. Most pupils describe a few events in sequence and include sufficient detail to explain their meaning. Higher attainers, especially those who are post-16, understand the importance of making eye contact when engaged in conversation. The majority are able to speak in whole sentences, but prefer to use short phrases. Lower attainers with little or no speech can sign hello, please and thank you. Most pupils and students select the right words from a small range of choices to complete a sentence, mainly by correctly identifying the first letters. They become confused if words seem to be too similar. Some students have to concentrate so hard on reading individual words that it is difficult for them to develop comprehension. Higher attainers read all the words from simple sentences. Literacy is included satisfactorily across the curriculum and is extending pupils' opportunities for learning.
8. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Most pupils have few or no number skills on entry. By 7, lower attainers join in 'banging' songs and show 'up' and 'down' when 'The Grand Old Duke of York' is sung. Higher attainers build up number sequences such as, knowing that 7 follows 6 and 15 follows 14, and which are the biggest and smallest numbers in a number line. By 11, pupils count to ten and recognise some of the numbers whilst by 14, lower attainers form spheres from clay and recognise some similar shapes and higher attainers recognise and name shapes such as triangle, circle, square, rectangle and cube and can count on by up to five accurately. By 16 and during post-16 studies, lower attainers have progressed and count to four whilst higher attainers count to fifty, match coins, recognise the missing number from a hundred number square and count in tens in unison with the teacher. Pupils complete successfully some of the mathematical modules in the Youth Award Scheme. Activities are provided which require pupils to use mathematics across the whole curriculum. Mathematical concepts and language are appropriately reinforced in other lessons such as recognising sequences and counting the number of times a ball has bounced in physical education and recognising sequences of colour in fabric patterns in art.
9. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory across the school. When pupils start at the school, their scientific concepts are at a very early stage. However, by 7, pupils develop a clear understanding of how plants grow through a combination of sensory work, by handling their roots, and by seeing how they grow. By 11, pupils carry out more formal experiments. They consider differences in materials such as hard and soft and observe the effects of water on materials, and of forces such as pulling and pressing. This is built on so that by the age of 14, pupils consider the experimental effects of light and heat on plant development. Pupils achieve a good understanding of the developmental and ageing process of both plants and animals. By 16 and during post-16 studies, work is closely linked to the Youth Award Scheme course. Pupils apply science to every day life in areas such as personal hygiene and how materials change during cooking. Higher attainers consider the implications well of further adding water to a solution or the implications of the exposure of a plant to sunlight.
10. Overall, pupils' achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) is good.

Pupils enter school with varying levels of achievement and experience. By 7, pupils use satisfactorily equipment such as audio and video recorders, and photocopiers. Higher attainers know how to operate their basic functions. They word process words spelt for them in order to update their Records of Achievement. The very highest attaining pupils recognise most of the letters of their names on the keyboard. By 11, pupils achievements are good. Most pupils operate a mouse and click on icons or symbols. There is good progress in developing the speed and proficiency of these skills. Higher attainers recognise the print icon and print out their own work. They know how to use the shift function to create capitals and, with some adult prompting, use the back space and delete keys to correct their own work. This progress is maintained and by the age of 14, achievement is still good. Most pupils manipulate the mouse to change colours in a painting programme. Higher attainers write their own names and use the enter function to complete a task. They load simple programmes and access E-mail and the Internet with adult help. The majority of pupils and students progress well at Key Stage 4 and post-16. They use the Internet to carry out simple research. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in developing their ICT skills. Those who are more physically able reach out and grasp a switch ball. They are aware that operation of the switch creates movement from a toy. The least able show some response to movement, sound or light and occasionally show a small degree of anticipation. Pupils throughout the school make good use of their ICT skills in English lessons, which enhance their skills in the recognition of keyboard letters and functions. Many are able to follow an on-screen story by its pictures and click on when one sequence has finished. ICT is not used regularly in other subjects.

11. Overall pupils' and students' achievement is satisfactory in religious education at the ages of 7, 14 and post 16. No lessons were observed with the 8 – 11 year olds but discussions with staff, evidence from photographs and pupils' attitudes support the overall judgement. By 7, pupils listen attentively to the story of Jesus 'calming the waters' and remember an experience or object that frightens them. By 14, pupils have progressed onto connecting Lent with Shrove Tuesday and pancakes whilst by 16 and with post-16 students, they understand and discuss death and bereavement, and empathise with the sense of loss.
12. Overall, achievement is satisfactory in art, history, music and physical education. In art by 7, pupils develop their co-ordination skills to use scissors and glue spreaders, and paint with brushes and natural materials such as straw and sticks when relevant to a story such as the 'three little pigs'. Higher attainers develop sufficient control to increasingly paint within set boundaries, often with little adult help. Lower attainers carry out the same activities with adult support. By 11, higher attainers work more independently. Their manipulative skills have developed so that they cut, paint, print and stick various materials together with a greater degree of accuracy. They also show a developing understanding of the effects of mixing colours and of different design and paint techniques in the style of different artists such as Van Gogh and Seurat. By 14, with some adult support and signing, higher attainers know that William Morris was famous for designing wallpapers and fabrics. They recognise pattern sequences within his work or in similar designs, and subsequently choose colours by name and decide how to replicate his work.
13. In history, from limited evidence, achievement is good by the age of 7, and satisfactory by 11 and 14. At the beginning of their topic, 5 to 7 year olds had little experience and knowledge of famous people such as Brunel, Florence Nightingale and Alexander Graham Bell. By the time of the inspection, pupils knew and signed that Brunel built tunnels, bridges and ships and that Florence Nightingale worked in hospitals. By 11, pupils work well practically towards an understanding that clothes can be different in different countries, and between now and the past. Pupils dress in 'Greek chitons' and subsequently decorate them with geometric borders. In music, by 7, pupils' experience of listening to music covers a range of musical forms such as classical and jazz. The pupils use a range of musical instruments and generate percussion sounds. By 11, these early experiences result in pupils developing skills through the use of more complex instruments such as hand chimes, and performing English folk music. By 14 and post 16, pupils build on these skills and have confidence to sing in public productions. Pupils know number songs in numeracy and nursery rhymes in literacy and this helps pupils to appreciate the importance of music in everyday life. Pupils of all ages combined to make a CD of Christmas songs.

14. In physical education, most pupils start school experiencing difficulties in co-ordination, memory and, spatial and body awareness, However, by 11, pupils develop hand eye co-ordination through the practice of ball control and balancing activities. Co-ordination and confidence are developed through a range of activities. In swimming, they improve stamina and muscle tone and in horse riding, they improve their balance and ability to work in unison with both animal and adults. These early experiences enable older pupils by 14 to undertake more sophisticated activities which lead them to awards in swimming and horse riding as well as the ability to play team games in football and boccia.
15. Geography was not timetabled during the inspection, and there is insufficient evidence available to make a judgement on achievement. There is also insufficient evidence to make a judgement on achievement in design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. As at the time of the previous inspection, the attitudes, values and personal development of pupils are good. Throughout the school, pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning. They show pleasure on entering the classroom, an interest in what is happening and are usually co-operative. In lessons, pupils are eager to contribute and concentrate well at all levels of ability. Across all areas of the curriculum higher attaining pupils help and support others within their group.
17. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils relate well to adults, including visitors, and are generally co-operative although there are some pupils who display challenging and inappropriate behaviour. When this happens, they invariably respond positively to staff who almost always deal with it in an effective manner according to the school's behaviour policy. However, strategies specified by this policy focus on the management of the misbehaving pupil which on occasions, interferes with the educational experience for the majority of pupils in the group. One pupil was permanently excluded from school during the last year but this is a rare occurrence.
18. The pupils show very clear respect for each others' feelings. Examples of this were seen when a post-16 pupil waited to escort a pupil in a wheelchair back to their classroom after assembly and in Key Stage 1 when one pupil shared his 'special' break-time snack when requested by another.
19. There are very good relationships between all adults and pupils and good relationships between the pupils. This contributes to a caring, positive ethos within the school and a supportive environment in the classrooms. Personal development of pupils throughout the school is satisfactory. The younger pupils have high levels of social skill and become increasingly independent in the social aspects of their work. However, as they progress through the school this level of skill is not sufficiently built on or extended into increasing independence in learning. The introduction of the Youth Award Scheme is going some way to redress this in Key Stage 4 and post-16.
20. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. Parents report their children to be enthusiastic to attend school and this is evident in pupils' attitudes in school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good for all pupils and has improved since the last inspection. It is a strength of the school. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons, good or better in 75 per cent of lessons and very good in 25 per cent. One lesson in mathematics at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory when implementation of the school's 'positive behaviour management' approach did not work sufficiently in maintaining control of three pupils who severely distracted others from their work. The best teaching is consistently evident at Key Stage 1, where it was good or better in 88 per cent of

lessons and very good in 41 per cent.

22. Overall, teaching is good in all subjects and key stages except in ICT at Key Stage 4 and post-16 with profound and multiple learning difficulty pupils where it is satisfactory. The quality of lesson planning has benefited from the recent introduction of schemes of work and provides teachers with a clear framework for their subject teaching. Lessons have a clear structure which enables pupils to effectively acquire new skills and knowledge. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is also structured in such a way that pupils are enabled to be successful. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations in literacy and numeracy with confidence and display a willingness to answer questions as well as enter into discussion. Teachers' expectations in other subjects are equally good. The range of activities involves the pupils in exercises which develop their skills of observation and discussion as well as extending their subject knowledge. Exemplary examples of very good lesson planning were seen in Key Stage 1 which result in pupils showing very high levels of interest and concentration, such as their wholehearted participation in a range of ball control exercises in a physical education lesson.
23. Teaching methods place an appropriate emphasis on discussion and good use of open-ended questions which encourage pupils to discover answers and solutions for themselves whilst also helping to maintain their concentration. Resources, such as the big books in literacy lessons, tactile methods in science and those of the wider community, such as visits to the swimming baths, are used well and play a significant part in both maintaining pupils' interest and enabling them to make progress. A noteworthy feature of the teaching is the effective way in which teachers' engage pupils attention through using their voices well so that pupils are read to in a way that they enjoy. Similarly, teachers' knowledge of signing is used well to support the development of pupils' communication skills. Teachers' awareness of the wide spread of abilities within each class is an important factor in the setting of work which is matched to the pupils' needs. This clear differentiation of work ensures that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language(EAL) and additional learning needs, are challenged by, and involved in all aspects of the class work. All pupils who have EAL come from families who also speak English. Usually lessons move at a brisk pace but there are occasions when classes, particularly those with a high proportion of pupils with challenging behaviour, when the start of lessons is disorganised which results in a late start. The support staff make a significant contribution to the work in lessons through direct teaching, such as in food technology, and the support of small groups of pupils, such as in physical education and literacy.
24. Pupils are well managed. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils. A mutual regard exists which enables teachers to develop pupils' social skills and give them the confidence to attempt new tasks. Pupils enjoy their lessons and participate with an enthusiasm which reflects that enjoyment. A further consequence is that behaviour in lessons is good. However, there are some occasions when the pace of lessons is slowed, despite the best efforts of the teacher, because the school's behaviour management planning lacks sufficient detail to ensure its effective application. Whilst teachers' do record the work that pupils have covered, there is frequently a lack of detail of what pupils have achieved which makes it difficult for teachers to monitor pupils' progress and learning in detail. The level of work carried out by pupils at home is comparable to other similar types of school but the potential for this is largely unexplored and does not yet fully form a part of teachers' planning. A consequence of this is that the interest that pupils develop in lessons is not further enhanced by developing links with parents.

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

25. The curriculum has satisfactory breadth, balance and relevance to the needs of pupils, including those at post-16. At Key Stages 1 to 4, pupils now study all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, except for a modern foreign language. Pupils are disapplied from this by using appropriate procedures through the Code of Practice Annual Review process. The few pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) have a sensory curriculum appropriate to their needs and in line with their Statements.
26. Appropriate schemes of work are in place for this academic year, but their development has

been slow. As a result, unsatisfactory progress has been made in developing the curriculum since the last inspection. The science programme of study at Key Stage 4 is not yet fully developed and the study of resistant materials is not yet fully included in design technology. 'Desirable learning outcomes' are planned well for pupils who are under five years of age. Although pupils currently in the school are all aged over 5, when appropriate, this continues into Key Stage 1 until pupils are ready to move onto the National Curriculum. The school is following the guidelines for the National Literacy Strategy and developing its approach to the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily. Planning for ICT has improved since the last inspection, particularly to support English but it is not yet included sufficiently in curriculum planning in other subjects. In physical education, pupils make good use of off-site facilities such as swimming and hydrotherapy pools, and the gymnasium at Drake Hall to supplement the inadequate provision available within the school for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4.

27. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16, appropriately study programmes from the 'Transition Challenge' and 'Towards Independence' modules of the Youth Award Scheme and have vocational education taught as part of the introduction to college. Whilst post-16 students have some opportunities for work experience, organise the school shop and study horticulture in the school's sensory garden, overall, the provision for work related education does not sufficiently extend pupils' capabilities and is unsatisfactory.
28. Overall, the provision and emphasis that the school gives to personal, social and health education, (PSHE) including sex education, is appropriate. However, the length of the taught day is only sufficient at Key Stages 3, 4 and post-16 with the inclusion of PSHE as taught time at lunchtime. Currently there are no planned teaching schemes or assessment criteria used at this time and as such, the benefits for most older pupils except PMLD pupils, is unsatisfactory. A further weakness of the current scheme of work is that the awareness of illegal drug misuse is not yet fully included for older pupils.
29. The local community plays an important part in the learning opportunities of the pupils. There are good links with a local food supermarket, Drake Hall open prison, Stoke City football club and Riding for the Disabled Association. There are also good integration links with the nearby primary school, which is attended by some pupils on a regular basis. Pupils involved in this are socially and intellectually challenged, and on rare occasions, this results in pupils transferring full time to the primary school. A few primary school pupils visit Marshlands on a weekly basis to take part in a joint mathematics lesson. Older pupils attend the further education college. Extra-curricular activities are curtailed by the transport requirements of the pupils, but the school has a satisfactory number of lunchtime activities and residential opportunities. The school's aim that pupils should have equality of access and opportunity is paramount and all staff strive successfully to meet this aim.
30. The provision for developing pupils' spirituality is good. The main world faiths are covered in religious education and through displays. Daily assemblies include an act of collective worship and opportunities are taken to celebrate the main religious festivals of the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Visits to a range of places of worship give opportunities for pupils to appreciate and understand the beliefs and traditions of other peoples. Pupils present an assembly on a weekly basis. Most lessons have a plenary or review session in which pupils can reflect on their performance and progress.
31. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are reminded of the need for good behaviour on a frequent basis. Many of the daily assemblies have a time for 'mentions', when good work and behaviour is acknowledged by all and where moral and social standards are promoted. The personal, social and health education curriculum appropriately stresses this aspect of life. Pupils are given opportunities to help others such as by regular collections for different charities and the current and very evident recycling project. The school's annual prize-giving day is always very well attended and appreciated by pupils and parents.
32. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Even very young children are given small responsibilities, such as collecting and returning the attendance register to the office and pouring the mid morning drink into glasses. The school shop and café give opportunities for older pupils to serve younger ones and gain responsibility in handling money and keeping a

check of stock. Visitors, such as the football coaches for lunchtime practice, give pupils opportunities to converse and communicate with people from outside school. All staff have good relationships with the pupils and present good examples by extending courtesy and respect.

33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is also good, including both local and world culture. There are examples of famous artists' work on display in the school and a wide range of music can be heard. Celebrations include Chinese New Year, Divali, Hanukkah and Ramadan. During the last school year, an Indian art and drama team spent a week in school, presenting the Hindu story.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school places high priority on the welfare of its pupils and has created an environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Relationships between all staff and pupils are very good and the school has very good relationships with physiotherapists and speech therapists, all of which contributes to the pupils' welfare and development. At times, the provision of speech therapy is reduced due to illness and staffing difficulties within the local Health Trust. The second in a series of workshops organised by speech therapists for those parents wanting to study Makaton signing, has not yet taken place.
35. The school has a good health and safety policy that is well implemented in the main. However, the implementation is not sufficiently robust to trigger all necessary checks or ensure that practice always follows policy. For example, at the time of the inspection, the school had not ordered the check of its portable electrical equipment in accordance with its service level agreement with the Local Education Authority. Consistent, effective attention is paid to health and safety during lessons. Child protection procedures are in place and follow locally agreed practice. However, as at the time of the previous inspection not all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and it is a number of years since any training has been undertaken. Pupils' good attendance is a high priority and absences without explanation are immediately investigated by the school.
36. Throughout the school there are high expectations of behaviour and even pupils with behavioural difficulties generally respond well to the teaching they receive. On occasions when this does not happen in the classrooms, the school has a policy for dealing with these incidents which is adhered to by all staff. Some staff have received training in non-aversive techniques of handling pupils with behaviour difficulties. However an appropriate strategy has not been implemented to support those staff who have not yet been trained and this is unsatisfactory. The recording of incidents is informal, as is the wider spectrum of monitoring pupils' personal development. Opportunities for personal development are not consistently identified within pupils' IEPs. This makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate effectively the speed at which pupils are making progress in developing skills. As a result, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are unsatisfactory due to the lack of rigorous, formal recording and monitoring of detailed, specific needs. Pupils have Records of Achievement, which are a useful vehicle for raising pupils' self-esteem, but these are not yet consistently dated or annotated to support judgements on pupils' progress.
37. The school has a satisfactory assessment, recording and reporting policy. However, the implementation of this policy is not yet fully effective and, as at the time of the previous inspection, the school still lacks an effective means of assessing pupils' academic progress. Annual reviews of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs are held but the records of these reviews show no review of past targets or present achievement but simply outline the teaching plan for the coming year. They also do not record any participation from the pupil or any indication of their wishes. All pupils in the school have IEPs. However, although reviewed and amended regularly, they are insufficiently detailed to support good assessment in subjects and areas of personal development. This is due to the poor quality of the objectives set for the pupils. In the worst cases they are not objectives at all, but simply outline planned experiences. Where there are objectives they are not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and challenging. As a result of their lack of precision, IEP's do not provide specific information that

can fully inform teachers' planning and as such are unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory; parents are pleased with the school's provision and achievements. Parents consider Marshlands to be a good school. The questionnaires completed for the inspection reveal that parents are particularly at ease when approaching the school with questions or a problem and are very pleased with their children's enthusiasm for school. They consider the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible and are pleased with the school's expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. A majority of parents either do not know if their children are getting the right amount of work to do at home or are dissatisfied with the amount. A significant minority feel the school does not work closely with them and that they are not well informed about pupils' progress and what is happening in school. In general, the inspectors' judgements support parents' views about the school. However, inspectors consider that higher attainers at Key Stages 3 and 4, and post-16 could be more independent and that parents are insufficiently informed about their children's progress. The broad range of extra-curricular activities carried out by the school and the amount of work pupils do at home are satisfactory for this type of school.
39. Across the school the home/school books ensure contact and good exchange of information with parents who do not come to school daily because their children are transported to school by the Local Education Authority. This contact ensures parents have a comfortable and mutually supportive relationship with the school, and both school and home have the opportunity to exchange behavioural and medical information about the child. Occasionally a teacher will use this book to convey progress information to a parent. The school is very supportive of parents in particular situations and will make individual arrangements to accommodate the needs of the parent and child.
40. There is a Parent, Teacher and Friends Association which, despite dwindling numbers attending meetings, receives very good support from parents when fund-raising, and makes significant financial contributions to the school. The number of parents who help in the school is very low, however, a significant number of parents regularly accompany the school when riding or swimming. It is the involvement of parents in these activities that ensures equality of access to these elements of the curriculum for all pupils.
41. Information to parents, particularly about pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The report which accompanies the Annual Review, contains no element of review. It looks twelve months ahead and sets a teaching programme, but without any specific targets. It contains no measure of progress against any previous targets. IEPs are not shared with parents on a regular basis. Pupils' work in all subjects is reported annually to parents and in the best cases they contain detailed, specific information about what their child can do. However, this is inconsistent across the school and across subjects and some reporting, even of core subjects, is just a list of experiences. Whole school information for parents contained in the prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report for Parents is pleasantly presented and informative but some statutory information is omitted. For example, the school currently has no Special Educational Needs policy.
42. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Most have signed a home/school contract but as this is a recent initiative it is too early to assess its impact. Due to the lack of specific targets in IEPs and the lack of curriculum information in newsletters, it is not possible for parents to be fully involved in their children's learning at home. However, some pupils do take reading books home regularly. In addition, the school and parents work closely together in matters of social education and co-operating to provide the children with a consistent approach to the acquisition of certain skills.
43. Overall, the schools partnership with parents is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection, with improvements in some aspects of the partnership and decline in other aspects.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. For much of the period since the last inspection, the headteacher and key staff have been ineffective in seeking to improve the school. The headteacher has been distracted by differences with members of the former governing body and has failed to provide clear leadership. This has led to a poor response to the key issues from the last inspection and slow progress in implementing the school's development priorities. Until recently, the school has lacked a clear educational direction and has relied on the day-to-day efforts of individual members of staff to maintain standards. Substantial periods of staff absence, most notably those of some members of the senior management team, have weakened the school's ability to improve.
45. Only in the last year have firm actions been taken to enable the school to make substantial progress. Closer relations have been established with the governing body, which has led to a good level of co-operation with the headteacher. Advice has been sought from the Local Education Authority, which has given priority to the school's needs. The headteacher, deputy head and subject co-ordinators have benefited from this advice and the improved level of training which has taken place. Subject co-ordinators are now more aware of areas for improvement and better planning is taken place, including in literacy and numeracy.
46. The quality of teachers' planning is now monitored by co-ordinators and the deputy head to ensure a balanced curriculum is being provided. However, there is an unsatisfactory level of monitoring of pupils' progress in all areas except English. Co-ordinators do not yet have sufficient information on areas of weakness within their subjects so are not able to direct planning and resources to meeting these shortfalls. Formal monitoring of teaching does not take place. The headteacher and governors rely on occasional, informal visits to classes. The school does not have an induction policy for new staff, although there is considerable informal support from colleagues which new staff value. The appraisal system has been suspended. In the interim, the deputy head conducts occasional professional discussions with teachers, and proposed actions are recorded, but this does not provide a satisfactory level of appraisal of teachers' performance.
47. The governing body is supportive of the headteacher and individuals show an interest in the school. New governors have taken advantage of local training schemes to increase their awareness of governors' responsibilities. A suitable range of committees has been created. These meet regularly and help the governing body to fulfil its basic statutory responsibilities in areas such as health and safety and financial control. However, governors do not monitor the performance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and have not evaluated the school's pace of improvement with sufficient rigour. They are not sufficiently clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and their current approach does not enable them to identify these. They are over-reliant on information and guidance from the headteacher.
48. The school's strategic planning is unsatisfactory. The previous development plan came to an end in 1999, but a new plan has not yet been written. Subject action plans are only slowly being implemented. The headteacher has written a brief proposed development plan which has been discussed but not yet built upon by the governing body. The headteacher and key governors have an informal understanding of some of the priorities for future development. However, this does not provide a sufficiently rigorous method for making the best strategic use of resources, or for monitoring the progress towards targets set. The school does not yet plan strategically for the breadth of special needs for which the Local Education Authority expects it to cater.
49. The headteacher and governors maintain satisfactory levels of financial control. Regular information is available about budget spending and care is taken to avoid overspends. The governors' financial committee has reliable methods for monitoring spending. There has been a positive response to the relatively minor issues raised in the last audit report. Some of the principles of best value are applied. The services which can be supplied by a variety of providers are compared on the grounds of cost and quality. Current budget planning procedures are unsatisfactory and lead to uncertainty and inaccuracy in predicting the extent of annual budget surpluses, particularly when budgeting for extensive staff absences. In 1998/99

this amounted to 16% of the budget, which is unsatisfactory. However, there has been sensible use of the surplus from last year's budget to improve the quality and range of educational resources, and strengthen staffing for information and communications technology (ICT) and library skills. This has had a beneficial effect on staff knowledge and pupils' achievements in ICT and English. The school has not yet fully evaluated these procedures to ensure more precise strategic planning.

50. The headteacher and governors deliberately direct financial resources to provide a high level of support staff, when compared to similar schools. This helps to meet the variety of pupils' needs and ensures the school's declared aim of providing equality of opportunity and access for all pupils is well met, and that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The high expenditure on staffing has tended to lead to underspending on learning resources in past years. The increased allocation this year has helped to raise the range and quality of resources to a satisfactory level in all subjects. Particular improvements are noticeable in the number of big books and picture books to support literacy and in the range of software in ICT. However, the headteacher and governors have not yet analysed the school's expenditure to find out if best value is achieved by high expenditure on staffing and relatively low expenditure on learning resources.
51. The school has satisfactory accommodation. The building is clean and well presented. The rooms for the Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2 offer a good amount of space, which can be used for a variety of purposes especially when classes are divided into groups. Recent modifications have ensured that the Key Stage 3 class has sufficient space. Accommodation for the Key Stage 4 and post-16 group is inadequate. It does not allow for a sufficient variety of activities for pupils and students and there is not enough separation from the remainder of the school to create a more adult atmosphere. There is a good amount of outside space, which includes a variety of hard surface and grassed playground areas as well as an extensive cycle path. The school has regular access to additional outside facilities, such as the nature area, at the neighbouring primary school.
52. **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**
 - Put in place school development planning with short, medium and long term targets which are clearly prioritised and costed so that the governing body can plan strategically and all staff can plan coherently and efficiently;
(Paragraphs 46, 48, 50, 78 and 83)

- Introduce procedures by which the governing body can monitor and measure the performance of the school's leadership and senior management team in meeting agreed targets;
(Paragraphs 46 and 47)
- Collect and analyse data from the school's recently introduced assessment procedures to
 - i) inform planning further and raise standards
(Paragraphs 37, 71, 74, 78, and 83)
 - ii) measure progress which can be reported to parents;
(Paragraphs 41, 74 and 83)
- Set more precise targets in pupils' Individual Education Plans, to enable progress to be measured and analysed to inform planning further;
(Paragraphs 37, 42 and 68)
- Put in place formal procedures to monitor and develop the quality of teaching;
(Paragraphs 46, 50, 68, 74, 83 and 106)
- Introduce a Special Educational Needs policy for the school which includes success criteria which can be measured and reported to parents annually in the governors' report
(Paragraph 41)
- Ensure that the school's strategic planning takes into account the Local Education Authority's admissions criteria for pupils so that the school can plan appropriately and consistently to meet pupils' special educational needs;
(Paragraph 48)

In addition to the Key Issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the school action plan:

- ensure ICT is included in curriculum planning for all appropriate subjects;
(Paragraphs 26 and 92)
- ensure that the school's strategies in non-aversive techniques of handling pupils with behaviour difficulties are fully understood and implemented by all staff;
(Paragraph 36)
- ensure that portable electrical equipment is tested annually in accordance with the school's procedures for implementing service level agreements;
(Paragraph 35)
- review the use of lunchtime as taught time for higher attainers at Key Stages 3, 4 and post-16 and ensure that sufficient taught time is offered for these pupils;
(Paragraph 28)
- ensure the opportunities for vocational education and personal development for higher attainers at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 are challenging.
(Paragraph 19, 27, 28 and 108)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	50	23	2	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	49
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.5	School data	0.02

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages

The pupils' attainment levels and the size of year groups makes it inappropriate to report comparisons.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.1
Average class size	10

Education support staff: YR – Y14

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	317

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	1
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	455350
Total expenditure	423968
Expenditure per pupil	8652
Balance brought forward from previous year	40540
Balance carried forward to next year	74694

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	51
Number of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	52	5	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	18	15	7	42
The teaching is good.	54	35	9	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	35	7	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	32	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	50	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	33	11	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	27	7	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	21	10	2	5

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS

OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

53. Pupils' achievements are good by the age of 7. They make particularly good progress in speaking and listening, and reading and use these skills well in other subjects. In history at Key Stage 1, pupils recognise and discuss pictures and issues connected with famous people such as Brunel and Alexander Graham Bell. Pupils' achievements at 11, 14 and 16 are satisfactory. post-16 students make satisfactory progress.
54. At 7, pupils' achievements in listening are good. Pupils coming into school often lack confidence in expressing themselves but after a short time, they respond to simple instructions and understand key words in speech, such as remembering characters from stories like the 'Three Little Pigs'. Most pupils understand some basic Makaton signs and answer questions with a relevant reply, sometimes incorporating signing in their response. Pupils make good progress in developing their vocabulary. The majority know that two words can have the same meaning such as nap meaning to sleep. They are starting to incorporate new words in their speech. Most pupils speak in short phrases; higher attainers use whole sentences with a content which shows some sense of the listener's requirements. Lower attainers vocalise with increasing accuracy, although pronunciation is often indistinct. They realise that gesture or signing can help them to convey meaning.
55. Pupils age 7 achieve well in reading. Within two years of starting at school, the majority recognise some individual letters, but not whole words. Pupils handle books correctly, holding them the right way up, turning the pages and looking with interest at the pictures. Most pupils recognise significant characters, such as 'Spot the Dog', from pictures. They know where there are words on a page and know that they have meaning. Higher attainers know that title pages give an idea of the content of a book and express choices about which book they are likely to find interesting.
56. Pupils age 7 achieve at a satisfactory level in writing. The majority copy-write a few letters, although not in an even size. Higher attainers use a correct pencil grip and remember how to write a few letters without adult prompting. Lower attaining pupils show an increasing ability to shade within picture outlines and, with some adult help, draw reasonably straight horizontal and vertical lines.
57. By the age of 11, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The majority are able to follow instructions to the whole class and recall a few of the main aspects of a story read to them. For example in history, they link the 'g' sound well to words such as Greece and gold in the story of King Midas. A few need one-to-one reinforcement to emphasise meaning. Higher attainers speak in whole sentences, but usually prefer to use short phrases. There is a tendency to shorten words in speech and not include clear endings. All pupils indicate yes and no clearly by speech, gesture or signing. Pupils handle books correctly and gain meaning from the pictures. Higher attainers recognise the letters of their own name and most of the letters on a computer keyboard. They guess at some common monosyllabic words. Most pupils have developed an adequate pencil grip, although a few need adult support to sustain their drawing. Higher attaining pupils remember how to write some letters, especially if they are related to their own name.
58. By the age of 14, pupils' achievements in speaking, listening, reading and writing are satisfactory. There is a wide range of achievement in speaking; higher attainers frame whole sentence responses such as describing pattern sequences from the work of William Morris in their art lesson. Lower attainers, and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, indicate their meaning by vocalisation and gesture. The majority cannot read text, but recall the main elements of a story. They know several single letter sounds, but cannot sound out combinations of letters. They guess at the content of a book by its cover and describe what a big picture character is doing. Higher attainers read familiar words especially if set in an easy-to-understand context, where they can use pictures to help them. Most pupils copy-write letters and begin to understand the need to leave spaces between words. Higher attainers produce

short sentences on a computer keyboard. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties reach out and hold an object and show some capacity to explore it with their fingers, especially when encouraged by an adult.

59. By the age of 16, and during post-16 studies, pupils and students make satisfactory progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils are better able to adjust their speech to the needs of the listener, especially when they are explaining what they are doing. Most pupils describe a few events in sequence and include sufficient detail to explain their meaning. A few will become muddled if they try to recall too much information. Higher attainers, especially those who are post-16, understand the importance of making eye contact when engaged in conversation. The majority speak in whole sentences, but prefer to use short phrases. Lower attainers with little or no speech sign hello, please and thank you. Most pupils and students select the right words from a small range of choices to complete a sentence, mainly by correctly identifying the first letters. They become confused if words seem to be too similar. They gain the general meaning from a book, but sometimes have difficulty in explaining what is meant by a particular sentence. Some students have to concentrate so hard on reading individual words that it is difficult for them to develop comprehension. Higher attainers read all the words from simple sentences, such as from Level 1 of their reading scheme.
60. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The standards achieved by pupils are similar, although the implementation of the Literacy Strategy is having an effect on pupils' achievements, especially in reading both in English and in other subjects. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are achieving at a more consistently high level.
61. Teaching and learning is good. Throughout the school, teachers and classroom assistants have a good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of English. There is a good emphasis on the key words when reading a story or the rhyming words when reading a poem. This leads to good levels of concentration and an enthusiasm for learning from most pupils who often start to mimic words and gain a sense of their sound and rhythm. Pupils are asked relevant, direct questions to test their memory of plot and character, which helps them to listen more carefully. They are encouraged to pronounce words more clearly and there is particular emphasis on distinguishing between similar sounding letters, such as b and d.
62. Staff know the pupils well and have a good appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses, which leads to a clear focus on the acquisition of skills which are of particular relevance to individual pupils. All staff have a good understanding of the need for a structured approach to pre-reading and pre-writing and have developed regular tasks which help pupils to progress towards reading and writing. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to focus on objects and reach for them as a necessary precursor to developing a pencil grip. Expectations are usually high and persistent prompting encourages pupils to overcome any temporary lapses in attention. At Key Stage 2, some lack of attention is tolerated as part of a means of managing complex needs and, as a result, a few pupils only make a very small amount of progress in lessons.
63. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to make the best use of Literacy Strategy techniques. A full hour is seldom used but there are longer sessions which focus on whole class and group work. These are supplemented by shorter lessons which emphasise speaking, listening or reading, and are often closely related to pupils' learning in personal and social education. The good stock of big books are well used to demonstrate the narrative of a story. Teachers point out important elements of pictures and relate them to particular words, enabling pupils to develop a better word memory. Classroom assistants are well deployed to support group work and have a good understanding of the level of support needed. They make good judgements about when to intervene and prompt pupils. Group work is well managed with careful decisions being made about groupings, which are organised on ability, social or mixed ability basis depending on the circumstances and the teacher's intentions. Of notable benefit are the mixed ability pairings at the computer when higher attainers help lower attainers to identify particular letters.
64. There are good arrangements to help pupils understand the importance of books. Staff allow pupils of all levels of ability to handle books regularly. As a result, pupils' curiosity is well

developed and they handle the books with care. Additional sessions in the library are well organised. Pupils know where to look for books and know the basics of borrowing, such as returning the books on time and the significance of the library ticket inside the book. ICT is well incorporated into lessons, especially to encourage those whose handwriting skills are weak to write longer words and short sentences.

65. Formal homework is rarely set but most pupils are encouraged to take a suitable reading book home. The planning of the subject is well balanced, with appropriate elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Teachers' planning is regularly monitored by the co-ordinator to ensure content and balance, although there is less awareness of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements. The subject has benefited from increased expenditure on big books, and more up-to-date reading and reference books.

MATHEMATICS

66. Pupils' achievement in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding in mathematics is satisfactory. Most pupils have few or no number skills on entry to school. By 7, lower attainers join in 'banging' songs and show 'up' and 'down' when singing 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. Higher attainers tell the class that 7 follows 6 and that 15 follows 14. They also know which are the biggest and smallest numbers in a number line. By 11, pupils count to ten and recognise some of the numbers whilst by 14, lower attainers form spheres from clay and recognise some similar shapes and higher attainers recognise and name simple shapes such as triangle, circle, square, rectangle and cube. They count on by up to five accurately in number lessons and put this knowledge to use well in other subjects such as in 'circuit training' in physical education. By 16 and during post-16, lower attainers count to four and higher attaining pupils count to fifty and match coins up to fifty pence piece. They recognise which number is missing from a hundred number square and count in tens in unison with the teacher. Pupils complete some of the mathematical modules in the Youth Award Scheme.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is almost always good, but ranges between good and unsatisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is at least secure and combines well with the very good knowledge that both they and the learning support assistants have of the pupils. This ensures pupils settle quickly to their lessons and enables a range of appropriate learning opportunities to be presented to the pupils. Pupils enjoy the short mental session that begins most lessons. Planning is generally in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and at its best, carefully details objectives and activities. However, the targets in Individual Education Plans are often insufficiently specific for the lesson objectives to be readily linked to the individual targets. Teachers have high expectations of both work rate and behaviour which enables lessons to move along well, with little time wasted. Pupils are generally keen to learn and respond well to the continual challenge offered by the introduction of increasingly demanding exercises. Much of the teaching is oral with the pupils having to respond after completing the necessary calculation using supporting apparatus such as coins when adding money and working out change. Written exercises are also enjoyed by the pupils' who are pleased to show their skills. They are keen for others as well as themselves to do well. As pupils progress through the school they take greater pride in the presentation of their work and many files are well maintained. Although teachers make frequent oral assessments of an individual's learning any progress made is not noted and often only general half-termly evaluations are recorded. In the rare unsatisfactory lesson the implementation of the school's positive behaviour management approach did not work sufficiently in maintaining control of three pupils who severely distracted others from their work.

68. There has been a satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection, including its use in subjects across the curriculum. However, further development is essential. The subject is soundly led and teachers are now working to a whole school scheme of work, which is supported by a published scheme. However, at the time of the inspection, the assessment and recording schedule which accompanies the scheme and which would make gains in achievement more identifiable, has not been introduced and implemented into lessons. Individual Education Plans are not yet sufficiently specific and measurable to enable progress to be monitored or in relation to the Annual Review targets. The curriculum co-ordinator is aware that monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not yet in place. In-service training has been used well to enable the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school, though designated lessons are not yet timetabled on a daily basis. Both resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall.

SCIENCE

69. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory across all key stages. When pupils start at the school, their scientific concepts are at a very early stage. However, by 7, pupils develop a clear understanding of how plants grow through a combination of sensory work; by handling their roots and by observation through seeing how they grow. By 11, work with materials leads pupils to consider such differences as hard and soft and enables them to carry out more formal experiments. These enable pupils to observe the effects on materials of water and of forces such as pulling and pressing. By 14, these experiences of observation form the basis for work on plant growth where pupils consider the experimental effects of light and heat on plant development. Pupils thus achieve a good understanding of the developmental and ageing process of both plants and animals. By 16 and during post-16, the work of pupils is closely linked to the Youth Award Scheme. The emphasis on the application of science to everyday life in areas such as personal hygiene and the change of materials through cooking is appropriate for this age group. During these lessons the teacher's use of focused and open-ended questions allows pupils to think about their observations and to formulate ideas about possible consequences. Well thought out activities enable the higher attaining pupils to think further, such as the implications of adding more water to a solution or the implications of the exposure of a plant to sunlight.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching at Key Stages 2 and 3. Where it is very good, teaching has certain consistencies across the full range of topics taught. The very effective use of introductory sessions combined with the very good relationships with pupils, ensures that pupils undertake lessons with confidence and use resources safely, such as during the study of human pregnancy. Work on materials is helping pupils to develop good skills of systematic enquiry and to make links with their own experiences to understand the importance of science in their daily lives. Pupils work well. Their good behaviour is a reflection of the enthusiasm and careful planning of the teacher which encourages a questioning approach on the part of the pupils. The purposeful atmosphere of lessons gives pupils the confidence to contribute to discussion and carefully observe their work.
71. The recent schemes of work are detailed and have clear objectives. Despite this, because Key Stage 4 and post-16 pupils are taught in the same class, and the work is very much focused on the Youth Award Scheme, Key Stage 4 pupils do not have full access to the National Curriculum. The current structure for the recording and assessment of pupils' achievements is insufficiently developed to ensure that the items recorded reflect the achievements of individual pupils and avoid generalisations. Although resources are satisfactory, the need to rely on "windfalls" of money from other sources is inappropriate. The money allocated by the school to the development of science is insufficient to meet its long term needs. Science has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teaching is now good and linked to an effective scheme of work.

ART

72. Achievement in art is satisfactory. Owing to the constraints of the school timetable, art was only observed in one lesson at each of Key Stages 1 and 3. Judgements have been substantiated with evidence of pupils' work on display and minimal information in portfolios of pupils' work, and in the school's Annual Reports to parents. Comparisons cannot be made with the last inspection when no judgement could be made because of insufficient evidence. During the early years, pupils develop the co-ordination skills to use scissors, glue spreaders and paint with brushes and natural materials such as straw and sticks when relevant to a story such as the 'Three Little Pigs'. By the 6 or 7, higher attainers develop sufficient control to cut, glue given shapes and increasingly paint within set boundaries, often with little adult help. Lower attainers carry out the same activities with adult support. By 11, some pupils work more independently. Their manipulative skills have developed so that they cut, paint, print and stick various materials together with a greater degree of accuracy. They also show a developing understanding of the effects of mixing colours and of different design and paint techniques in producing paintings in the style of Van Gogh and Seurat. By 14, with some adult support and signing, higher attainers know that William Morris was famous for designing wallpapers and fabrics. They recognise pattern sequences within his work or in similar designs, and subsequently choose colours by name and decide how to replicate his work. They print on fabrics mostly without adult support although some pupils still need help with their co-ordination and hand movement to be successful.
73. Teaching and learning are good and particularly effective on occasions at Key Stage 1 where pupils are constantly challenged to remember facts from previous lessons and to make relevant choices about current lessons. Throughout school, staff and pupils discuss work constantly. This is often related to knowledge of colours, different shapes and counting requirements in the work which encourages pupils' speaking, listening, signing and numeracy skills. Teachers and support staff manage the pupils well, have good relationships with them and enthuse about the pupils' work and progress. This encourages the pupils to think more deeply about their work and enhances their spiritual development greatly. Younger pupils are exceptional in the way they offer ideas and make choices, and await their turn such as when two pupils decided they wanted to help each other complete a painting of the 'straw house'. Short term planning is linked well to the subjects' four-year plan and extends the pupils' cultural development well through clear historical links to famous artists and designers. The use of resources is well planned including those provided by staff themselves. They are readily accessible for independent use by the pupils. For pupils with additional needs, resources and techniques are suitably modified. Across school, those pupils able to show initiative and control their behaviour relate well to each other and help organise and tidy away resources for their lessons.
74. The subject is not co-ordinated at the present time but there is oversight of the subject by the deputy headteacher. Whilst full planning is in place for the subject, monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' progress is not currently carried out. The school is aware of the need to review the subject policy in the light of the new National Curriculum which becomes statutory in August 2000. Assessment procedures are in place but not yet effective in measuring or monitoring pupils' progress, and in subsequently reporting that progress to parents. Appropriate portfolios of pupils' work are kept but these are not yet dated or annotated consistently to support the monitoring of progress. No strategic approach is currently evident for developing or funding the subject in relation to school priorities. Art has a high profile in school and is linked well to other subjects such as the current history topics on 'Stories'. Artists in residence are employed on occasions to extend pupils' work very well and the 'picture of the month' award and subsequent 'picture of the year' award are celebrated and culminate on the Annual Prize-Giving Day which is very good in recognising the pupils' successes throughout the year.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

72. It was not possible to form a judgement on pupils' achievement due to insufficient information on pupils' prior work, particularly in the resistant materials element. However, pupils' progress in lessons is good. During Key Stage 1 pupils investigate the use of a range of materials which involves the skills of tracing, cutting and jointing to produce moving figures. Pupils apply these skills to their work in art. They also prepare food such as biscuits based on their story, 'Three Little Pigs'. Food technology skills are further developed in Key Stages 2 and 3, so that by 14, pupils prepare a range of foods including a simple meal. By 16, pupils apply making and jointing skills to the production of 3D models. Well planned lessons and a positive learning atmosphere encourage pupils to think about their work, such as the examination of the effectiveness of different types of jointing to make moving figures and to form judgements on their effectiveness. The good relationships between staff and pupils encourage discussion and give pupils the confidence to share their observations and to answer questions.
73. The pupils' work in design technology also enables them to make progress in other areas. Working with jointing materials to produce human figures enhances their knowledge of the human body and enables them to practise skills of observation and decryption. Lessons in food technology, where support staff play an effective role, are used well to broaden the pupils' vocabulary by the use of specialist words.
74. Pupils collaborate well and, because lessons often provide interesting and challenging tasks, pupils behave well. Lessons are characterised by enthusiasm and good humour. The provision for older pupils to complete Youth Award Scheme modules based on food preparation is a further motivation to pupils and is relevant to their needs.
75. The recently introduced schemes of work, aided by good teaching, means that pupils are achieving well in lessons. Similarly, the recently introduced assessment and recording system will enable teachers to measure pupils' progress more effectively and to monitor their acquisition of skills. The school has accommodation for food technology but the resources for work on resistant materials require further development. The current financial provision made for design technology is inadequate and requires review and only the provision of resources by the Local Authority makes it possible to teach resistant materials.
76. The previous report drew attention to the lack of schemes of work and the over-emphasis on food preparation. An improved scheme of work, which covers the full curriculum, has been introduced recently by the newly appointed co-ordinator. Senior management has yet to address the shortage of resources identified in the previous report.

HUMANITIES (GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY)

Geography

77. Geography was not the focus of the school's topic during the inspection and did not feature at all on the timetable. From evidence in Annual Reports to parents and teachers' planning, by 7, pupils have focused on work such as food and farming and the weather. All pupils experience feeding animals, holding chicks and collecting eggs. Higher attainers know that food comes from animals, such as milk from cows and meat from pigs. They recognise weather symbols and use speech and signing in developing an awareness of hot and cold days. They select the appropriate clothes for different types of weather. By 11, higher attainers follow simple directions in the classroom and around the school. This is extended appropriately in physical education lessons. They become aware that their world extends beyond home and the school. This is developed so that by 14, pupils begin to compare similarities and differences between Stafford and other places such as Brewood, and between England and another country such as the Northern USA. All pupils experience Indian festivals and try foods and clothes native to other countries. Throughout the school, the work is always linked well to 'first-hand' experiences for the pupils by fieldwork. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16 do not study geography formally but develop satisfactorily their independence and awareness of their

locality. Much of this work is appropriately carried out both verbally and by signing, and by tactile experiences for the least able. As little written response is expected of pupils, individual pupils' progress over time is not clearly evident from school documents. Whilst some evidence from teachers' records confirms what pupils knew and understood of their work at the time, assessment and recording procedures are not yet fully effective in showing clearly pupils' progress over time. As such, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' achievement and thus to compare this with the previous inspection in which pupils' progress was judged satisfactory from limited observations.

History

78. Given the time constraints of the school timetable, and evidence from the limited amount of pupils' work and information in teachers' records, achievement in history is at least satisfactory. This cannot be compared with the last inspection when no judgement could be made because of insufficient evidence. History is the focus of the current humanities topic but only two lessons could be inspected at Key Stages 1 and 2 during the week of the inspection. However, from this limited evidence, by 7, achievement is good and is satisfactory by 11. At the beginning of the topic in Key Stage 1, pupils had little experience and knowledge of famous people such as Brunel, Florence Nightingale and Alexander Graham Bell. By the time of the inspection, pupils know and sign that Brunel built tunnels, bridges and ships and that Florence Nightingale worked in hospitals. They show good understanding of the concept of 'poorly' and why cleanliness is so important to a hospital environment. When the class is questioned, one pupil signs spontaneously that a telephone is something invented in the past. Pupils recognise pictures of these famous people on a 'poem/timeline' poster, and help suggest with some adult support, where these people should be placed on their classes own timeline. Those pupils who require significantly more adult support with their work also achieve well. By 11, pupils work well practically towards an understanding that clothes can be different in different countries and between now and the past. Pupils dress in 'Greek chitons' and subsequently decorate them with geometric borders. They know the colours blue and green, and one pupil knows that the 'yellow' colour being used is really 'gold'. One label written independently by a higher attainer for a classroom collage of the Trojan Horse, shows his understanding that soldiers hid in the horse. Comparison cannot be made with the last inspection when no judgement could be made through insufficient evidence.
79. Teaching and learning are good overall and particularly effective at Key Stage 1 where the staff team links very successfully their comprehensive knowledge of the range of the pupils' special educational needs to their clear intentions of what they want the pupils to learn. This results in most pupils knowing exactly what is expected of them and no time is wasted during the lesson. Teaching is exciting and follows a set style, which incorporates initial recaps, development of lesson objectives, simple investigation and a final evaluation. This provides a structured routine in which very good use is made of discussion and questioning, involving good signing, to probe and assess the ideas and understanding of the pupils. The lessons are carefully managed to ensure that the small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties are involved, but supervised in a way which does not impede the majority. Humorous and very supportive teamwork also provides pupils with the initiative and self-esteem to work confidently. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are excited by their work for most of the time. They try very hard and are very keen to show what they know by verbal response and signing. Pupils generally react well to each other, behave appropriately and take turns when required. On occasions at Key Stage 2, teaching is less effective when lessons do not always get off to a prompt start. However, resources are generally ready for use and additional staff support those pupils with additional needs. Teaching is well linked to literacy work such as the letter 'g' given prominence in words such as **G**reece, **g**rapes, **g**old and **g**eometric. Much interaction between staff and pupils ensures a constant refocussing of attention. Supportive targeting of particular pupils who find it very difficult to relate appropriately to each other maintains a good focus to learning for the majority of pupils. Teaching in history was not inspected at the last inspection to allow current comparisons to be drawn.

80. The co-ordinator of humanities is aware of the need to review the policies for geography and history in the light of the new National Curriculum, which becomes statutory in August 2000. Long term planning is in place but medium term planning is still being developed in order to ensure schemes of work are in place by September 2002. Much work has been carried out on this in the last two terms but overall progress in planning and co-ordinating humanities is unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Whilst time is available to advise staff on their planning for lessons, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor teaching and pupils' learning in the subjects across the school. Assessment procedures are in place but not yet fully effective in measuring or monitoring pupils' progress in the subjects, and in subsequently reporting that progress to parents. Whilst the co-ordinator and deputy headteacher have developed a detailed subject action plan for humanities, particularly until September 2000, no strategic approach is currently evident for developing or funding the subjects in relation to school priorities.
81. Every opportunity is taken to broaden pupils' geographical and historical understanding in visits to places of interest such as Shugborough Hall, Jodrell Bank, Severn Valley Railway and in regular fieldwork. Work in humanities is linked excellently to other subjects such as art and literacy which allows pupils to gain knowledge and skills in a broad and natural context and thus perceive the links between different strands of the same topic. As a result, the subject contributes very well to pupils' personal and social development. The subject also provides pupils with greater understanding of themselves and what they think, and to their knowledge of their current lives in the context of past events.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

82. Pupils enter school with varying levels of achievement and experience and by 7, satisfactory progress is made. Higher attainers know how to operate the basic functions of common electrical equipment, such as audio and video recorders and photocopiers. They type words which are spelt out to them in order to update their Records of Achievement. The very highest attaining pupils recognise most of the letters of their names on the computer keyboard.
83. However, by 11, pupils' achievements are good. Most pupils operate a mouse and click on icons or symbols. There is good progress in developing the speed and proficiency of their mouse skills. Several pupils operate the mouse while maintaining a focus on the screen. They choose a favourite game from pictures on screen. Higher attainers recognise the print icon and print their own work. They copy-type simple sentences with accuracy, and know how to use the shift function to create capitals and, with some adult prompting, how to use the back space and delete to correct their own work.
84. Pupils' achievements remain good by 14. Most manipulate the mouse to change colours in a painting programme. They choose symbols for their favourite responses from 'Smart Alex'. Higher attainers write their own names and know of the use of the enter function to complete a task. They load simple programmes and, with adult help, access E-mail and the Internet.
85. By 16 and during post-16, the majority of pupils use the Internet to carry out simple research. They enter the names of items they wish to search for, such as favourite pop groups. With adult help, they centre their titles and create space for photographs in their work records.
86. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in developing their ICT skills. Those who are more physically able reach out and grasp a switch ball. They are aware that operation of the switch creates movement from a toy. The least able show some response to movement, sound or light and occasionally show a small degree of anticipation.
87. Pupils throughout the school make good use of their ICT skills in English lessons, which enhance their skills in the recognition of keyboard letters and functions. Many follow an on-screen story by its pictures and 'click-on' when one sequence has finished.
88. There has been satisfactory development of pupils' skills since the last inspection and the

increasing use of ICT, particularly to support English indicates that there will be sustained improvement in the future. ICT is not yet included sufficiently in curriculum planning in other subjects.

89. Teaching and learning in ICT sessions and in English lessons where computers are used to support learning, is good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Teaching of ICT was not observed at Key Stage 4 and post-16, except for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, where teaching is satisfactory. Staff have a good knowledge of basic keyboard skills. This knowledge has been enhanced by the support of a classroom assistant with special responsibility for ICT, and who has provided basic training. This has increased staff confidence in the use of a good range of computer programmes, which in turn has encouraged pupils to be enthusiastic about ICT and as a result, they are keen to investigate their functions. Some pupils who are not fully motivated by other types of work, sustain their concentration very well when working on computers. Teachers and support staff use ICT well to support literacy, and English planning includes arrangements for group and individual ICT work. Planning in other subjects rarely includes ICT. Teachers, classroom assistants and the ICT specialist have high expectations of pupils' work. They expect pupils to concentrate for extended periods at the computer, which helps to foster good learning skills, especially the ability to work through a programme in a logical manner. When in difficulty, pupils request adult help and continue working once they have been helped to overcome their problem.
90. Arrangements for individual, paired and group work at the computer, are well managed with a suitable amount of time devoted to ICT activities. Higher attaining pupils are keen to achieve a degree of independence in their computer work and will explore unfamiliar functions. Some higher attainers help those with lesser ability by guiding them in the use of the mouse. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, ICT is well incorporated into the normal course of English lessons and helps pupils to develop a good awareness of the importance of clear presentation of their written work. Praise for pupils' achievements and frequent prompting helps to develop pupils' independence skills. An ICT skills-recording form is well used at Key Stages 2 and 3 to record pupils' progress, and often includes appended work to illustrate the skills that have been mastered. There are good arrangements to ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have access to ICT. Staff know that it is important to encourage an awareness that the operation of a switch results in noise or movement, and good efforts are made to encourage pupils to focus carefully on what is happening.
91. In the absence of a teacher to co-ordinate the subject, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have overseen developments, but much of the recent improvement has been as the result of the efforts of a classroom assistant, who has provided suitable training for staff and teaches individual pupils and groups. A scheme of work has not yet been developed, which makes it difficult to ensure pupils' progress during and between key stages. An existing member of the teaching staff is about to be appointed as ICT co-ordinator.

MUSIC

92. Pupils' achievements in music are satisfactory. During Key Stage 1 the pupils' experience of listening to music covers a range of musical forms such as classical and jazz. The pupils use a range of musical instruments and are aware of how to generate percussion sounds. These early experiences result in pupils by 11, developing these skills through the use of more complex instruments such as hand chimes and performing English folk music. Older pupils build on these skills to the point where they have the confidence to sing in public productions. The effective use of music in other areas of the curriculum, such as number songs in numeracy, nursery rhymes in literacy and performing in assembly encourage pupils to develop their musical skills and to appreciate the importance of music in everyday life. Pupils of all ages combined to make a CD of Christmas songs.
93. Pupils make good progress in the limited number of lessons seen. They consider how to generate sound from a range of extemporary materials such as metal plates and a shopping trolley. They also progress in their understanding of related topics such as an appreciation of pitch and volume. Similarly, in performing a pop song in the school assembly using signing,

they develop their communication skills and self-confidence.

94. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good and consequently, pupils progress well in lessons. Schemes of work contain clear objectives and teachers' planning for music provides challenges, such as the production of a CD-Rom or for school performances. This enthuses and motivates pupils well. Teaching does take account of individual needs through well planned support both by staff and other pupils. This sensitive approach is characterised by the involvement of a PMLD pupil as the centre point of a performance in the school assembly. Resources are satisfactory for current needs and, whilst the budget provided for music is small, the school management is sympathetic to requests for the purchase of equipment. Pupils collaborate well and are prepared to work together effectively in groups.
95. Pupils' behaviour is good, and sometimes very good, because teachers are both enthusiastic and encouraging of the pupils to perform. Older pupils show a maturity and self-confidence that is praiseworthy. During the integration lessons with a local primary school, Key Stage 2 pupils perform confidently and collaborate well.
96. The previous report was positive in its judgement of music. Provision of music has maintained these strengths and the introduction of a clear and effective assessment policy will improve the ability to record pupils' achievements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97. In physical education, most pupils start school experiencing difficulties in co-ordination, memory, and spatial and body awareness. During Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in developing hand eye co-ordination through the practice of ball control and balancing activities. Co-ordination, and confidence are developed through a range of swimming and horse riding experiences. These early experiences enable older pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 to undertake more sophisticated activities which lead them to awards in swimming and horse riding as well as the ability to play team games in football and boccia. In swimming, pupils develop stamina and muscle tone whilst on horse-back, pupils come to terms well in working in unison with both the animal and the supporting adults. Cross-curricular links with mathematics are well established. Counting and social skills are also enhanced by the opportunity to work in groups and in a range of situations such as the local swimming centre and the gymnasium at Drake Hall. Additional activities are available to pupils through clubs held at lunchtime and through the opportunity to play competitively against other schools in football.
98. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good. Teaching is well structured to take account of individual pupils' needs and often this is achieved through sensitive and well-focused support, to which the support staff make a positive contribution. Because teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging in their approach, pupils work well and their behaviour is good. Expectations are high and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils display good ability to work individually and together in a range of gymnastic and swimming exercises.
99. The recently introduced schemes of work are detailed and include clear objectives across the curriculum. However, assessment and recording procedures do not yet give a sufficiently clear picture of the progress and achievements of each pupil. The school's facilities for physical education are satisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2 but their shortcomings at Key Stages 3 and 4 are effectively addressed through the usage of community facilities. School's resources are adequate for their current use although the funds allocated to the subject are currently low.
103. The previous report was critical of the lack of schemes of work. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Since then good progress has been made recently in the provision of a detailed scheme of work and in improving the quality of teaching which is good overall with some examples of very good teaching being observed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. Overall achievement is satisfactory. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, but discussions with teachers, evidence from photographs and pupils' attitudes support the overall judgement. By 7, pupils listen attentively to the story of Jesus 'calming the waters'. In response to this, they remember an experience or object that frightens them. By 14, pupils connect Lent with Shrove Tuesday and pancakes whilst by 16 and during post-16, pupils understand and discuss death and bereavement and empathise with the sense of loss. The quality of the discussion shows that pupils have both a good sense of self-worth and respect for others. Daily assemblies generally have a Christian focus and always have some time for prayer and reflection.
105. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject. Planning is generally effective, with the main points of the lesson clearly specified, though planned assessment for lessons is frequently missing. Most teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and pupils are able to meet them. Teachers usually manage behaviour well and all have a good relationship with pupils, allowing them to express their opinions and treating their views with respect. This encourages pupils and they are keen to answer questions and communicate their knowledge. Concentration can be sustained in the older classes for long periods and discussion is at a mature level. They listen to each others' answers politely, showing good skills in speaking and listening, and demonstrate a growing independence of thought. Older pupils complete written work in a competent manner. In all lessons there is a realistic balance between oral, recorded and reviewed work.
106. The previous inspection reported that the subject did not meet statutory requirements and that improvements in the provision for religious education were needed. These are now in place, and further development is planned to ensure that the subject builds progressively across the school in a systematic way. Monitoring of the curriculum and teaching in this subject is not yet fully established, but the subject co-ordinator is aware of the shortcomings. Accommodation is satisfactory. The library provision and other resources and artefacts which support the teaching of this subject are good.

POST-16

107. Students' achievement is satisfactory. Progress in speaking and listening skills continue to improve. 'Hello' and 'thank you' sessions are used frequently and correctly. Higher attainers know the importance of eye contact and politeness. Lower attainers tend to use one word or very short sentences as answers, but sign many frequently used words as well. In number the more able find missing numbers in the one hundred number square and count on from any starting point. They handle and use money up to one pound confidently in the school shop and café. In a food technology lesson one student was able to purchase, prepare and cook ingredients, lay the table, serve and eat with a friend with little support from the class teacher.
108. Teaching at post-16 is good. It is always at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. Targets are generally relevant to the students' capabilities, but expectations are insufficiently high for the most able students. Teaching literacy and numeracy through life skills is satisfactory. Lessons have clear objectives and are planned effectively. Teachers and support staff, know the students well and have established a good rapport with them. This encourages the pupils to respond with enthusiasm such as, when discussing their opinions of the work of John Cage. Their answers show imagination in the way they feel they could emulate his ideas. They are willing to help one another and are very sensitive to the needs of others. The management of pupil behaviour is good, with good relationships firmly established within clearly defined boundaries. The overall breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the school has a wide range of abilities and, by using only the Youth Award Scheme, does not have a sufficiently broad range of accreditation for all students. The range of independence opportunities through work simulation, work experience and the work related curriculum is restricted for higher attainers. Support staff make an effective contribution to the overall quality of education especially for the least able.
109. Overall leadership for post-16 education is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses. The co-ordinator is also responsible for the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy throughout the

school and this workload is very heavy. There is no long term plan for development in the light of the pupils' needs as young adults in the wider world outside school. Although the school has a sound link with the local college few students take the opportunities it offers when the time comes to leave school.

110. The teaching area is shared with pupils at Key Stage 4 and although warm and friendly, does not give the students the opportunity for small privileges appropriate to the senior students in the school. For example, a room to use in breaks and lunchtime over which they own.