

INSPECTION REPORT

BENTS GREEN SCHOOL

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107169

Headteacher: Andrea Scott-Jones

Reporting inspector: Steven Parker
13033

Dates of inspection: 8th-11th July 2002

Inspection number: 192625

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ringinglow Road Sheffield
Postcode:	S11 7TB
Telephone number:	0114 236 3545
Fax number:	0114 262 1904
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sue Kirkman
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
13033	Steven Parker	Registered inspector	Art and design	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils taught?
19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14691	Jennifer Hall	Team inspector	Science Modern foreign language Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities given to pupils?
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
23643	John Ward	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music	Inclusion
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Geography History	Residential provision

The inspection contractor was:

QICS

Ibsley
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bents Green is a mixed day special school for 98 pupils, aged from 11 to 16. The local education authority currently purchases places for 45 pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and 54 places for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), but the needs of pupils admitted to the school in recent years have become much more complex than these descriptions. Most significantly, there are currently 38 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and 21 with emotional and communication difficulties. It is expected that nearly three quarters of the school roll in the next academic year will have ASD. There are increasing numbers of pupils with complex medical needs and others with challenging behaviour. As a result of this wide range of special educational need, attainment is below national expectations on entry to the school. There are 11 pupils from ethnic minority groups and six have English as an additional language. There is a boy/girl ratio of three to one. Just under a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has a residential facility that provides for up to 37 pupils, who spend a maximum of two nights a week in residence, in groups of around a dozen each school night.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bents Green is a very good school with a number of outstanding strengths. Pupils achieve very well overall and make very good progress in developing their communication and social skills as the result of very good teaching and very good personal support and guidance from the whole staff team. The school is very well led by an inspirational headteacher. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching by teachers, working in very successful partnership with classroom and residential support staff, helps pupils to make very good progress in their learning.
- The very good learning opportunities in school are enriched by a wide range of high quality activities outside the normal day, excellent educational and social inclusion opportunities into mainstream provision and superlative careers and work related education.
- Very good personal, social and health education (PSHE) results in pupils leaving school as confident, mature young people, very well prepared for their future life.
- Excellent links with parents enable them to enjoy a very productive partnership with all the staff.
- Extremely high quality relationships throughout the school encourage pupils to have outstandingly positive attitudes to school and exemplary behaviour.
- The excellent headteacher provides visionary leadership and works in an extremely productive partnership with her very good senior management colleagues and a very supportive governing body.

There are no significant areas for improvement. A number of issues relating to admissions to and funding for the school, curriculum, the use of assessment and homework are considered worthy of attention. These areas for improvement are referred to in the commentary and will form the basis of an action plan prepared by the governing body.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school had a number of issues identified in its previous inspection in February 1997 and has been very successful in rectifying them, most particularly in relation to curriculum management, the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and teachers' planning. The school's wish to keep on improving has also resulted in significant advances in the quality of teaching and learning, increased opportunities for pupils to gain externally accredited qualifications and much greater involvement in and collaboration with the wider community. There are many other examples of improvements mentioned throughout the report.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils achieve very well and make outstanding progress in the priority areas of communication and social development. This is most notable for pupils with ASD. All pupils' achievements in reading and mathematics are very good and they make consistently good and often very good progress in all other subjects. Challenging targets are set for all pupils in their IEPs, across a wide range of activities. As the result of these high, but realistic ambitions, and individualised teaching, all pupils achieve equally well. There is no variation in achievement for boys and girls or different groups of pupils. Pupils achieve very good results in a wide range of certificated courses by the end of their time in school. This overall picture is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their studies. They enjoy their work and consistently try hard. As a result, they develop as enthusiastic and successful learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are very well behaved. They are courteous to all adults, in lessons and during social activities, both in school and the wider community. Their respect and acceptance of each other is very impressive.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent, both between pupils and between staff and pupils. Pupils become confident and independent as a result of the encouragement and responsibilities they are given.
Attendance	Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching is very good throughout the school. Over half of all lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be very good or excellent. This is a very significant improvement on the standards at the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been very well adapted to become thoroughly embedded in the school's practice, and this has resulted in considerable improvement in teaching and standards across the subject. The very good teaching of mathematics has benefited considerably from appropriate application of the National Numeracy Strategy, again having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement and progress. Teaching in science by the recently appointed co-ordinator is good and pupils make good progress within a currently limited curriculum. Their achievements and progress in this subject over time are, however, difficult to judge because of the lack of records. A whole-school commitment to teaching personal, social and health education (PSHE) means that pupils receive very good teaching and support, enabling them to develop confidence and maturity. Across all subjects, teachers' very good subject knowledge and the very effective teamwork between teachers and the whole team of high quality support staff enable pupils to learn very successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Learning opportunities during the day are greatly enriched by wide-ranging after school activities, educational visits and excellent links with other schools and agencies.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Appropriate support is provided for individual pupils and their families, according to their need. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that they are fully included in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' personal and social development is excellent. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development very well. They are taught clearly the difference between right and wrong and how to value and help each other. There are very many good quality opportunities to experience other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	An ethos of care and concern for the individual permeates all aspects of school life and pupils are treated with considerable respect. All staff are extremely skilled at promoting and supporting good and appropriate behaviour. There are very good systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.

There have been some important improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection. Most notably, these have been in the significant expansion of opportunities for out of school learning, for example summer club developments and involvement in a Connexions pilot in South Yorkshire, which has led to the award of the Sheffield Careers Standard. Very successful links with mainstream schools enable pupils to be included in those settings to study specialist subjects to GCSE standard. Teaching resources for information and communications technology (ICT) have also much improved, but there is still work to be done to embed its use across all subjects. There are good plans in place to achieve this. The school uses the wider community very effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly for outdoor education, physical education and PSHE. Parents are highly appreciative of the productive partnership that the school nurtures and maintains with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The excellent headteacher leads by example and motivates the whole staff team to give of their best. She works in a productive partnership with her very able deputy and a supportive senior management team. Together, they have created a shared approach to

	development planning that successfully involves the whole school community in an impressive commitment to continuous improvement.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The school is very well supported by interested and involved governors, who are very knowledgeable about the effectiveness of the school. This enables them to make a very well informed contribution to strategic planning. They are actively involved in negotiations with the LEA and have often proved themselves to be very effective advocates for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good, for all aspects of its work. There is a wide range of very effective systems for checking how well the school is doing and setting challenging targets for future development. This is particularly evident in relation to teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective use is made of staff, time and resources to support pupils' learning. The headteacher is very successful at identifying and gaining access to opportunities for additional resources. Financial planning, management and monitoring are very good.

Efficient organisation and administration help the school to run smoothly. Whilst funding for the school makes it difficult to employ an appropriate number of teachers, the headteacher and governors have done very well to sustain a full establishment of high quality staff. Very good induction procedures and ongoing training and professional development have ensured that all staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge successfully to meet the needs of the rapidly changing school population. This is particularly evident in relation to ASD pupils, who are extremely well supported. Accommodation and learning resources are good overall, but there is a recognised need to improve provision for science and design and technology. Every effort is made to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • As a result of the school's high expectations and good teaching, their children have excellent attitudes and behaviour and make very good progress. • All staff are approachable and supportive, working in close, productive partnership with them. • The residential provision and after school activities. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for homework.

The inspection team fully endorses parents' very positive views and recognises that the school has worked very hard to consolidate and maintain a very productive working partnership between home and school. They agree that, whilst there is a clear policy on homework, it is not consistently applied throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Pupils achieve very well. They make outstanding progress in the priority areas of communication and social development and consistently good and often very good progress across all other subjects during their time in school. As a result, they achieve very good results by the time they leave, in a wide range of accredited courses, including GCSE, GNVQ, AQA, AEB and ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
2. The school has very high, but realistic, ambitions for its pupils and has developed good systems to plan for and measure their progress against well-focused targets, for both individuals and the whole school. In relation to the targets set at their annual statement reviews and their good quality IEPs, pupils are making very good progress overall. There is a very wide range of ability and skills in the school, but all pupils, including those with the most significant learning needs, achieve as well as they can, as the result of very good teaching and pastoral support. This is particularly so for the rapidly increasing number of pupils with autism, who are impressively well integrated into the life of the school. There is no evidence of any differences in the performance of boys and girls, or any other distinct group of pupils.
3. Very successful adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy and good collaboration between the subjects two co-ordinators has ensured that all pupils now make very good progress in reading and developing their speaking and listening skills and, as a result, communicate confidently and effectively. They make good, steady progress with their writing. There has been some delay in developing opportunities for pupils to have their efforts in English accredited by external bodies, but this has not prevented many of them from producing good quality work during their studies.
4. The National Numeracy strategy has had a significant impact on the way the subject is taught and, consequently, on pupils' performance. Pupils now make very good progress, both within lessons and in their use of mathematical skills in other subjects. This is a noteworthy improvement on the last inspection, when pupils' overall progress was judged to be satisfactory and opportunities to practice their skills in other subjects were under-developed. Last year, a small number of pupils achieved GCSE passes and 11 gained Level 3 distinction in the AQA Entry Level Certificate.
5. Pupils' achievements are good overall in science, albeit within a relatively restricted curriculum. The recent appointment of a subject specialist, who enthuses pupils to explore and enjoy the subject, is helping them to make often very good progress in their learning. It is expected that the improvements this teacher is planning in lesson structure and content should raise standards further over the coming year.
6. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and health education. The school teaches this wide-ranging subject in separate lessons, as well as focusing on it in many other subjects throughout the social life of the day, and in after school and residential activities. The very well planned syllabus and the strong, supportive culture of the school, made possible by the whole staff team working in successful partnership, make an extremely effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Records show that many pupils are transformed by attending Bents Green, often after previous very negative experience of school. Pupils leave the school at 16 as adaptable, mature young people, able to cope maturely with the opportunities they are offered to develop further.

7. Pupils make consistently good progress in all other subjects, often achieving very good results when taking account of their individual difficulties. This is particularly evident for pupils with ASD, when they are required, for example, to use their imagination in English, art or music. They are equally successful in subjects that are often very difficult for them to understand, like history and religious education or when dealing with the challenge of co-operating with others in drama and physical education or competing in games. This is the result of very good, thoughtful planning that takes full account of pupils' individual needs, teachers' good subject knowledge and the very productive relationships that exist between all staff and pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent and their personal development is very good. These are strengths of the school and an improvement since the last inspection.
9. Pupils enjoy coming to school and greet staff and other pupils in a friendly manner, which is maintained during break times and as they move around the school between lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are quick to settle in lessons. This has a very positive impact on their learning. This was exemplified in a PSHE lesson, where Year 11 students fully participated in a discussion about ways of managing difficult situations on buses and in shops. They enjoyed acting out scenes and were well motivated by the relevance of the issues. The good level of discussion within the group, exploring different solutions to problems and who should do what, showed mutual consideration and high levels of co-operation.
10. Pupils are well motivated and eager to participate in physical and practical work as well as written activities. They are able to work collaboratively on these tasks and show a lively interest in what they do. For example, in a year 7 Spanish lesson, pupils enjoyed recalling the Spanish word for 'hello' and were enthusiastic about speaking another language. In an assembly on how people and creatures change over time, pupils responded positively to the contributions made by other pupils.
11. The behaviour of pupils is excellent in lessons, around the school and during visits, such as a year 11 trip to Burton Street to view the development of a sensory garden. There is a calm and relaxed atmosphere throughout the school and pupils understand and enjoy the daily routines that structure their day. They show self control and respect for each other as they calmly sit and listen, whilst others respond to the teacher and talk about their work and what they want to do. At lunchtime, pupils and staff eat together in a comfortable and sociable atmosphere. Pupils are expected to conduct themselves in an acceptable way and they do, eating well and sensibly. Older and younger pupils of both genders, and those of different ethnic origin, mix well, both inside and outside of the classroom. A number of indoor activities are available during the lunch period, which pupils can opt into if they choose. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils in the 'quiet area' outside the hall socialise well with each other and staff. When playing outside, most pupils energetically let off steam during a game of football or basketball with no aggressive behaviour. They play and co-operate well, but are aware of what others are doing and do not get in each others' way. One 16-year-old pupil, who only recently joined to the school, confided that he felt 'safe' at this school and was no longer frightened, as he had been at previous schools. Another commented that he had been bullied at his last school, but felt secure that the teachers here would 'sort it if it happened'.

12. There have been no exclusions over the past year, and very few reported incidents of bullying. No examples or evidence of bullying or behaviour that was intended to be oppressive were seen during the inspection.
13. These high standards of behaviour are supported by the exceptional relationships that are nurtured, particularly between pupils and adults. Pupils are also very supportive of each other and tolerant of their individual needs. Because staff value and encourage pupils to do their best, within an atmosphere of genuine and mutual respect, pupils grow in confidence and self esteem as they progress through the school.
14. The personal development of pupils is very good. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection, when their personal development was described as 'generally satisfactory', because 'opportunities for personal initiative and responsibility are not sufficiently developed'. This is no longer the case. On the contrary, parents are particularly appreciative of the school's highly responsible approach to creating opportunities for their children to 'take risks' within a safe and structured framework. Staff place a strong and successful emphasis on supporting pupils' personal development and inter-personal skills. Pupils are happy to participate, for example, in all sporting activities, do not exhibit any concerns about failure and show high levels of confidence. This is a feature that is evident in all aspects of the school, and an important factor in pupils' developing maturity and confidence.
15. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and manage responsibilities. For example, one pupil has created and regularly maintains a garden area, which he tends during break and lunch times. Another, older pupil, who was reluctant to use buses, is now an independent traveller and successfully uses two buses on his journey to school each day. Younger pupils help willingly in their classes, giving out work and resources or reading out the number of stars awarded for completion of targets on a chart. Older pupils benefit from the good curricular provision on offer, such as the Youth Award Scheme and careers education. They are confident within college and other school settings and demonstrate highly developed independence skills and the capability to cope with life beyond school.
16. Pupils' attendance is good and has gradually improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. The attendance rate for the past year was 92.3 per cent and unauthorised absence was only 0.5 per cent. Parents work closely with the school to encourage their children to attend and consistently say that their children enjoy coming to school. Records show that some pupils often had very poor attendance records at their previous schools. These same pupils are now motivated by what is on offer at Bents Green and are rarely absent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and, during the inspection, over half the lessons seen were judged to be very good or excellent. This is a substantial improvement on the standards seen during the previous inspection, when there was a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and only eight per cent was judged to be very good or better. Regular monitoring of teachers' work by senior managers, supportive feedback and the resultant well-focused professional development have all contributed to this improvement. It is clear that teachers are now much more confident and competent in meeting the increasingly complex difficulties of their pupils. There is good evidence to show that all teachers, but especially those with long service in the school, have taken full advantage of the

training offered to them to develop and adapt their teaching very successfully to take account of the changing and very wide range of pupils' needs.

18. The very good progress that pupils make is the product of teachers' careful planning and the provision of interesting and motivating work that clearly matches pupils' varying learning styles. In the great majority of lessons, teachers build successfully on what pupils have previously learned, sharing clear and achievable objectives with them and employing teaching methods that both challenge and support them appropriately. Very good reviews at the end of most lessons are used to particularly good effect to enable pupils to celebrate their own and others' successes, confirm what they have learned and to provide a clear and logical link with future work. High calibre learning support assistants (LSAs) go from lesson to lesson with their assigned tutor groups throughout the day, providing valuable and comforting continuity for pupils and working in successful partnerships with each subject teacher. Pupils respond well to the additional and sensitively targeted help provided by support staff - and teachers are very appreciative of the guidance that is frequently offered on the particular needs or current state of mind of individual pupils. Consequently, pupils approach their learning confidently, demonstrate interest and can explain what they are doing with increasing clarity as they progress through the school.
19. The effect of the partnership between teachers and support staff, of which parents express great appreciation, is that pupils' achievements are good overall and frequently very good. Records show that pupils often arrive in the school with very low self esteem and little confidence in their own abilities. All staff sensitively communicate their belief that each individual has the potential to succeed and achieve the school's high standards. Many examples were seen, in both practical and academic lessons, of pupils coming to believe in themselves and their capabilities, working through their anxieties and actually succeeding. This was well illustrated in a number of art and design lessons, across all ages, when pupils explained what they were doing, showed in their sketch books their earlier development of ideas and shared their work, sometimes reluctantly, but always proudly when it was praised.
20. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and expertise is an important contributor to pupils' successful learning. Having a thorough understanding of both the challenges and the potential excitement of their subject enables teachers to plan their lessons to very good effect. As a result, the materials used are relevant and engaging, lessons have good pace, so that pupils' interest does not flag and often difficult and challenging concepts are successfully communicated. This was often seen during mathematics lessons, in that magic moment of a pupil understanding a difficult idea – and being thrilled by the experience. Teachers' obvious enthusiasm for their subject is also well communicated and productive. This was observed in both science and music lessons, with new teachers working very successfully with often challenging pupils.
21. Pupils are also helped to make good progress because teachers consistently use teaching methods and different approaches to classroom organisation that not only match the aims of the lesson but also pupils' different learning styles and rates of learning. In the majority of lessons, pupils have the opportunity to learn as a whole class, in groups, in pairs and as individuals. They will spend time listening, responding to questions, discussing, writing and reading and, in relevant subjects, such as art and design, food technology, science and physical education, will learn successfully through a significant number of practical activities. Such wide-ranging activity not only makes lessons interesting, but also provides pupils with the opportunity to learn through their own particular learning style. Additionally, the careful allocation of pupils to groups, as in, for example, mathematics, makes sure that tasks

are well matched to pupils' needs and any extra support which they might require can be carefully targeted. Consistently sensitive monitoring of pupils' efforts, by all teachers and LSAs alike, leads to carefully timed interventions, in order to make sure that they do not get locked into a problem for too long.

22. Staff use these various approaches effectively in their application of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Literacy is very well developed in the regular allocated lessons but also successfully promoted in subjects other than English. Mathematical skills are also very well taught initially as well as being employed in many other subjects.
23. Teachers' use of comprehensive assessment information to inform their planning is good overall and is mostly effective in demonstrating pupils' progress over time. Records and samples of pupils' work are generally informative and helpful in producing good quality end of year reports. This is one of the noteworthy improvements since the last inspection. The school does, however, recognise that further work needs to be done in a number of subjects, particularly science, art and design, music and geography, where, because of staffing changes, practice has not kept up with the high standards in other subjects. Similarly there is inconsistency in the application of the school's policy on homework, requiring a review of practice and adaptation of the policy.

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

24. The learning experiences that the school provides are wide ranging and of very good quality. Improvement since the last inspection is very good and there are no key issues for development. These learning opportunities play one of the key roles in helping pupils to gain a good level of knowledge, understanding and skill in all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. There are very many well-planned occasions for pupils to develop their personal, social, independence and communication skills; and their spiritual and moral awareness. Learning opportunities include not only time spent at lessons at Bents Green school but in many other settings. GCSE and GNVQ courses are attended in local mainstream schools. Courses in local colleges are very carefully tailored to meet individual needs. Very wide ranging work experience opportunities, and many activities in the local community, help pupils to prepare for adult life. The actual length of time pupils spend learning each week far exceeds the thirty five lessons that appear on the formal school timetable. There is a very appropriate emphasis on extending the school day with many lunch time activities and after school clubs. For pupils staying part of the week in the residential provision, their evening and early morning activities also contribute very effectively to the wealth of learning opportunities that the school provides. Every pupil also has the opportunity to benefit from residential educational opportunities away from school, including abroad where appropriate. These occasions are very well planned and carefully matched to pupils' individual learning needs.
25. The arrangements for careers and vocational education are excellent and very good for mathematics, music and personal, social and health education. In all the other subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education, learning opportunities are good, with many very good elements. There have been recent improvements in science, since the appointment of a new co-ordinator. However, in this subject, as with some others the programmes of study are occasionally not as broad as they could be. In design and technology, for example, pupils are not given opportunity to

work with metal. In physical education there are limited opportunities for swimming, outdoor and adventurous opportunities and dance. In science, there are limitations on the extent of practical work, because there is insufficient time allocated, no gas supply or blackout facility in the laboratory and few chemicals. In the food technology room, the cookers are unreliable. As yet, no external accreditation opportunities are provided in science, religious education, design and technology or art. There are, however, plans already in place to address most of these areas for development.

26. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been very well adapted and implemented to meet the very complex range of learning needs of pupils now on the school roll. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers find a good range of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their communication, number, measuring, time and money handling skills. In several subjects, like science, design and technology and religious education, for example, there are too few occasions planned when pupils can use computers to support their learning in these subjects.
27. The value the school places on the extended day is very appropriate to support learning and to prepare pupils for adult life and independence. The school homework policy has the appropriate aim of developing communication, literacy, numeracy and independence skills. The learning that takes place during the extended day activities, for both resident and non resident pupils, fulfils the aims of the policy very successfully, since nearly all pupils participate in these opportunities. There is, however, inconsistency in the application of the policy amongst subject teachers during the normal school day - and a significant minority of parents have concerns about the form and content of homework that is offered. Life clubs after school provide varied opportunities, including shopping, cooking and visiting an adventure play park. At lunch time, a varied range of opportunities caters for all tastes, from sporting activities, computers and internet access, library, board games and drawing, to an area for pupils to relax quietly on comfy chairs, and meet friends. The atmosphere at lunchtime is relaxed, pupils are very self-disciplined, and the supervision of pupils is effective but unobtrusive, reflecting the school's success in promoting pupils' personal and social development. All pupils have access to a residential opportunity away from the school, carefully discussed with parents, and tailored to meet individual learning needs. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to attend a local Youth Club, and many do. A short summer club is provided, catering separately for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and for the older pupils. This club provides Year 11 pupils with the chance to complete a work experience placement with the younger pupils.
28. Pupils have very good access to this wide range of activities. The needs of individual pupils are understood very well by all the staff and are very much at the forefront of all the planning. Adaptations made to meet pupils' additional needs are very good. Those arrangements specified in pupils' statements of special educational needs that are within the school's remit, are well met. A very good personal, social and health education lesson for example brought together, for the first time, a group of Year 7 and 8 pupils who were to be in the same class next school year. The needs of this group of boys and girls are broad; they have physical and communication difficulties, some severe learning needs; and challenging behaviours. Pupils were given the time, space, communication aids and support needed to help them all achieve success. The lesson was relocated to the school hall so that a pupil in a wheelchair could play a full part in activities that involved moving about and meeting and greeting new people. Very good use of signing and picture exchange enabled pupils with limited or no speech to play a full part in the lesson. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties, who needed time to think before they could respond, were given the time

to do so. Pupils with challenging behaviour were managed very well by the teacher and classroom assistants. A pupil starting the school next September joined the lesson so that she, too, could meet her new classmates and feel secure and fully involved. Arrangements of this kind are a consistent part of a very well planned programme for new pupils to the school.

29. The learning needs of pupils with ASD are met very successfully, because teachers have been very well trained. These pupils are given the necessary communication aids right across the school; the right balance of low and high arousal activities and study areas, a good balance between structured and informal activities and supported and independent learning opportunities. All of this support helps them to learn and cope with life in and outside school very successfully. As a result, pupils with ASD make as good progress as other pupils. Pupils with hearing or visual impairment are given the medical and learning support they need to play a full part in lessons. A Year 11 boy with limited vision, for example, is supported very well in a life skills lesson and succeeds in making and decorating shortbread biscuits. A Year 10 boy with hearing difficulties, is given very good support and is achieving very well, listening and responding in his Spanish lessons. Two Year 11 boys with very challenging behaviour are managed very well in a science lesson, so that they and the rest of the class can work safely in the laboratory.
30. Career and vocational education is excellent. It is a model of exemplary practice where the school staff, the careers service, local colleges, providers of community facilities for adults with learning needs, employers and public sector services work together to help pupils prepare for leaving school. The school's success in careers education and guidance has been recognised nationally, and the school has achieved the award of the Careers Standard.
31. The school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education. In particular, the care taken to develop an appropriate sex education programme is very impressive. The Youth Award Scheme Transition Challenge course, and the life skills programme in Years 10 and 11 make very valuable contributions to pupils' personal and social development. Life skills units are very well documented and include 'looking good', 'home skills', 'home cooking', 'smart shopping', 'eating out' and 'working somewhere new'. The list of home skills, for example, is very extensive. These programmes also extend pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and computer skills and they bring them into contact with the public. Pupils have the opportunity to achieve AQA Unit Awards in basic life skills, like using a telephone, handling money, travelling by bus, and making a snack. In other subjects, and as part of the extended day, there are many opportunities, through visits, for example, for pupils to develop personal and social skills. Staff themselves are very good role models for promoting inter-personal and communication skills. As a matter of routine, staff encourage independence, courtesy, respect, politeness and consideration for the needs of others.
32. The school's partnership with the community is excellent and these links have a substantial impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Staff work closely with a local centre for adults with learning difficulties, and in this setting, older pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences, such as painting, gardening and music workshops. Through their visits they also learn vital social skills such as meeting new people and working in different situations. The school has established very good links with local employers and these enable pupils to gain valuable work experience. Through links with the local countryside rangers, pupils learn about managing the countryside and help with practical tasks in the park. Very many visitors, such as a police officer and theatre groups, enrich the curriculum. Local clergy take part in

assemblies. The school makes very good use of local amenities, mainly to reinforce social and independence skills such as shopping and using public transport, but also for leisure activities such as bowling and adventurous play. There are good links with external agencies, for example the Health Service assists with the sex education programme. Pupils gain a wide range of sporting experiences through links with local sports clubs such as Sheffield Wednesday and Yorkshire County Cricket Club. They also gain confidence and self esteem by participating in DISPORT (sport for the disabled) competitions.

33. The school has developed excellent links with other schools and colleges to improve pupils' access to accreditation, and to ease the transition to college and independence on leaving school. The programme for including pupils from Bents Green school into lessons in mainstream schools is excellent. These schools have a very high regard for the pupils they support and, equally importantly, for the staff at Bents Green school. Great attention is given to selecting and supporting correct school placements, and to the groups within these schools to which the pupils are assigned. As a result, they progress well, and achieve good grades in GCSE and GNVQ examinations. The school has developed an excellent partnership with the Sheffield College, where additional support for individual pupils is very carefully planned through an effective link with the transition co-ordinator. The headteacher has been instrumental in promoting the best possible transition arrangements for pupils when they leave school.
34. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development are very good and for social development are excellent. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was judged to be good. Spiritual development is now very good because the school treats all members of its community with dignity and respect. The high regard paid to achievement wherever it occurs and the high quality of displays help to reinforce pupils' pride and sense of worth. There are frequent opportunities, both planned and unplanned, for the discussion of ideas, feelings and beliefs. Pupils respond sensitively and enthusiastically to the school assemblies, which promote a set of values, principles and beliefs that inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour. Assemblies always close with a moment of quiet reflection on a particular topic. During the inspection week, this was to think about how we change over time. Religious education makes a rich and varied contribution to spiritual development. It provides opportunities for pupils to experience Christianity and to learn about the beliefs of peoples of other major world faiths.
35. Opportunities for developing moral awareness are very good. Pupils are encouraged effectively to follow the school rules. At the end of lessons they are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and learn how to forgive themselves as well as others. Pupils are expected to be courteous and friendly. They respond positively to the very good role models provided for them by all school staff and are tolerant and caring towards each other. Personal and social education is very good in helping to raise pupils' self-awareness and enable them to make informed choices. For example, pupils discuss and act out examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a variety of school settings.
36. Arrangements to support social development are excellent. The strength of relationships between pupils and staff results in a strong sense of community, in which all pupils feel valued. A clear code of conduct is provided as a basis for good behaviour, which is promoted through all aspects of the school. Most lessons offer some time for pupils to co-operate in pairs or small groups, and for boys and girls to mix together. Wide use of the community has had a significant impact, with pupils

learning that they can relate very well to people outside the school and their known environment.

37. Cultural development is very good because of the wide range of well-planned opportunities which pupils receive. These allow for the exploration of British culture and also that of a wide range of other cultures. Pupils not only learn about Africa in history and geography but they explore African art and storytelling as well. They use the work of European artists and crafts people as stimuli for their own impressive creative work. Pupils have been introduced, in religious education, to other faiths such as Judaism and are given the opportunity to study the language and culture of Spain. Many visits take place such as those to museums and the theatre. For example, a Year 10 and 11 group visited Abbeydale industrial hamlet, where they studied how industries developed. Very good provision is made for exposure to good literature such as Shakespeare and professional drama groups regularly visit the school. These opportunities for access to a very wide range of cultural experiences helps pupils appreciate their own culture and that of others.
38. The residential facilities provided for pupils are good. The quality of support offered by the care team is good, properly reflecting the aims of an appropriate care policy. The extended day and evening routines, which pupils readily accept and appreciate, provide a clear focus on pupils' social and personal skills - and staff work hard in developing pupils' confidence and behaviour. Pupils are given an appropriate amount of time after school to relax before participating in an extensive range of very good evening activities. These include swimming, visits to the local shopping centre and within-school activities, using the school facilities. All of these activities are monitored well, to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate range of experiences. Arrangements for supervising pupils overnight are satisfactory, with a system of care staff who undertake waking night staff duties along with sleeping-in staff. The care team is well managed. They all work well together and appropriate management links with the headteacher are effective. Briefings held at the start and end of each day provide opportunities to report on any problems that have arisen during the school day or in the evening.
39. In the residential setting, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are relaxed and happy and get on together very well. For example, boys and girls sit in the living room, chatting with one another or members of staff, drawing, looking at catalogues or watching television. They take responsibility for small tasks, such as setting tables and clearing away after meals, and older pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their independence skills. For example, they look after their belongings and personal hygiene and they are able to make themselves hot drinks and snacks in a self contained flat. A good mixture of male and female staff provides pupils with appropriate role models. Care staff have undertaken appropriate courses and attended school staff training days.
40. The lounges in the residential unit are pleasant and most bedrooms are comfortable and well decorated, enabling pupils to feel relaxed away from the main school environment. Those bedrooms in use do, however, show little sign of personalisation and lack a homely atmosphere. There are potentially over thirty residential places available, but less than half of them are utilised. Groups of around a dozen pupils spend a maximum of two nights per week in residence, allowing only a third of the school's roll to benefit from the facility over time, even though there are always more applications from families than places available. The resource is, therefore, clearly under-used, but this is because there is a lack of clarity about the LEA's expectations of and long term plans for the facility. The recent introduction of a joint referrals panel promises to provide clearer criteria for and control of admission to the facility,

although there is still a need for longer term resolution of the facility's future role and purpose. The headteacher and governors have utilised the generous residential staffing provision and contractual arrangements very imaginatively, and to extremely good effect, to enable the school to make the outstanding arrangements it does in supporting pupils' inclusion in mainstream settings during the school day.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Pastoral care is a strength of the school because personal support and guidance is outstanding. Parents particularly value the school's ethos of respecting the individual, which permeates all aspects of school life. Tutor teams know the pupils very well and staff work closely together to develop pupils' social and personal skills. LSAs support their assigned tutor groups throughout the day and show high levels of care and concern for pupils' individual needs. They work seamlessly with the teachers constantly to encourage, support and challenge pupils to become more confident and grow in maturity. Staff in the residence provide good pastoral support, for example through anger management, confidence building and counselling. Other adults working in school, including the lunchtime supervisors, caretaker and administrative staff all play their part in developing pupils' social skills and growing independence. There are excellent transfer arrangements for pupils, both when they join the school and when they move on the next stage of their education.
42. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. Tutor teams meet weekly to discuss pupils' progress, but there are no formal systems to record and keep track of how this support links to the help and guidance given by the residential staff. More effective sharing of this important information is recognised as an area for further development.
43. The school has very good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety and, as a result, is successful in its aim to provide a happy, caring environment and a pleasant and safe place for everyone to work in.
44. There are very effective policies and procedures in place for child protection, including those children in public care. The deputy head teacher has responsibility for child protection and carries out her duties very effectively. All adults working in the school have a good understanding of the procedures.
45. Very good attention is paid to health and safety. Governors are vigilant of potential hazards and make termly checks of the building. Staff undertake risk assessments of individual pupils and for activities, and governors have completed risk assessments of the premises. The school has appropriate systems in place for fire drills and testing electrical equipment.
46. Arrangements for first aid are very good. Three members of staff are appropriately qualified and others have had basic first aid training. There is a well-equipped medical room, and very good procedures exist for the storage and administration of medication, both in school and in the residence. These latter arrangements were criticised in the last inspection and have clearly been much improved. In school, good records are kept of accidents and parents are kept well informed.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. This is not a highly regimented community, but one where the ethos of treating everyone with courtesy and consideration touches all aspects of school life. All adults working in the school provide very good role models and constantly encourage pupils to behave in acceptable and appropriate ways. This support takes many forms, ranging from

formal programmes where pupils are taught exactly how to conduct themselves in different situations, to learning to play games with lunchtime supervisors. There is a very clear behaviour policy, which emphasises the promotion of good behaviour. Rewards are effective and pupils enjoy receiving stickers and merits. There is a detailed sanctions policy and incidents are properly recorded. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. The school has a very good anti-bullying policy and any incidents are recorded and fully investigated. Parents are confident that the rare occurrences of anti-social behaviour are dealt with effectively. The school has drawn up a clear and effective policy for physical support and intervention.

48. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school has been successful in improving the attendance of a number of pupils who came to the school with very poor attendance records. Registers are marked correctly and staff follow up any unexplained absences appropriately. The school works successfully in partnership with the educational welfare service when attendance is a cause for concern. Staff keep in close contact with parents when their children travel to school independently, to ensure that the families know that their children have arrived safely. At present, the headteacher authorises holidays of more than the recommended 10 days, but the school has plans to ensure that arrangements will be in line with LEA guidelines.
49. The school's systems for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic progress were judged to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection and the report recommended considerable work that needed to be done to improve the situation. Staff have responded very well to these criticisms and considerable improvements have been made to systems and the use that the resultant information is put to.
50. There are now good quality, very comprehensive assessment arrangements in place, well described and justified in a detailed, realistic and informative policy. These enable staff to have a clear picture of pupils when they arrive in school and to plan appropriate work for them. IEPs are very well structured and used. They contain very specific and relevant targets to inform the way staff work with individuals and to provide pupils and their parents with clear objectives. Day-to-day monitoring of pupils' achievements, using a wide range of relevant systems, is thorough and informative - and work continues to ensure that appropriate tools are researched and utilised successfully to measure the achievements of lower attaining pupils. Close work with colleagues in mainstream schools ensures good practice in relation to those higher attaining pupils who go on to gain externally accredited recognition of their achievements. As a result, most staff have a good picture of the full range of pupils' achievements in the majority of subjects and other aspects of pupils' work. There is, though, still some work to be done to ensure consistent practice across the school and this is recognised in development planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. They recognise its many strengths and particularly value the way the school's partnership with parents has significantly improved under the leadership of the current headteacher. All parents have made a positive decision to send their children to Bents Green, even though many live a considerable distance from the school. Those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were very positive in their views about all aspects of school life, as they generally were in their questionnaire returns. However, a significant

minority of parents who returned the questionnaires were unhappy about the arrangements for homework.

52. The school has worked hard to improve its partnership with parents. At the time of the last inspection this was judged to be satisfactory, but it is now excellent. All staff, including teachers, LSAs and residential care workers, work very closely with pupils' families and encourage them to become partners in their children's education. Parents feel that the staff are very approachable, and staff are in frequent telephone contact with many of the parents. Staff make home visits if parents have difficulties getting into school. Home-school diaries are a very effective means of communication between parents, carers and staff. The school is constantly striving to improve its links with parents and values parents' suggestions, regularly canvassing their views. Governors are always very pro-active in their follow up on comments and concerns, leading to the many improvements in systems and approaches that have been made.
53. Information that the school provides to parents is very good. Staff are very aware of the concerns of new parents when they are choosing a school for their children, and parents appreciate the opportunities they are offered to visit the school and have valuable discussions with staff. The prospectus and annual governors' report are attractive and informative documents. They celebrate the school's special qualities as well as giving parents valuable information. During their child's first term, parents of Year 7 pupils are invited to beneficial meetings with their teachers. Regular newsletters are of high quality and inform parents of future events as well as celebrating the school's successes. The 'Buzz' magazine has in-depth articles about special events and gives families good insights into school life. Parents are offered helpful information sessions, for example on speech therapy and careers. The school does not, however, routinely send information to parents about the topics their children will be studying - and this can have the effect of limiting parents' involvement with their children's learning. Annual statement reviews give parents good information about how their children are getting on, and there are good opportunities for parents to respond before and during the review meeting. Annual progress reports are good. Most subject teachers effectively inform parents about what their children can do and the levels at which they are working. The reports do not, however, give enough information about pupils' progress in their personal development during their time in residence.
54. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Parent governors are very supportive and help to shape the school's future and the Friends of Bents Green work hard to raise funds for the school. They also organise beneficial social events such as coffee mornings and act as a helpful support network for parents. Events, such as concerts, are very well attended by families. The vast majority of parents have signed the well written home-school agreement.
55. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is very good, but nearly a third of parents who returned the questionnaires were unhappy about homework. The school has a policy that formal homework, such as writing and learning spellings, is not set on a regular basis for all pupils, but wants parents to work on developing pupils' social skills. For example, the policy talks about reading and practising skills such as mathematics in real life situations. However, a significant minority of parents is not clear about this policy and others have anxieties about its principles. Many parents do, though, work in partnership with the school in ensuring that strategies to manage their children's particular difficulties are developed and continued at home. For example, parents are encouraged to broaden their children's social and independence skills when they take their children shopping. The vast majority of parents are very keen to

support their children and attendance at annual reviews and annual consultations is high.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher was appointed after the last inspection to build on existing good practice and move the school forward, firstly by dealing with the identified areas for improvement and then to widen the school's remit. There is a very clear view amongst her colleagues, other professionals who work with the school and parents, that she has been extremely successful in achieving these aims - and that the school is clearly a very much better place for her very committed work. Her energy, drive and enthusiasm enable her to lead by example. She had a very clear vision of the sort of school she wanted to create and has worked in an extremely productive partnership with the whole school community to achieve that end. Her excellent leadership has inspired all her staff to give of their best and work collaboratively to bring about the significant improvements, referred to throughout this report, that have been effected over the past four years.
57. She has been helped very much in this process through what she values as enormous professional support and encouragement from her very able deputy, who has provided crucially important continuity from the old to the new regime. Her large senior management team has also played an important role in carrying through necessary changes and developments. Throughout this time and equally importantly, she and the school have been very well served by an interested and highly involved governing body. By developing effective systems and their good relationship with all staff, governors have ensured that they are always well informed about the effectiveness of the provision and what needs to happen to make it even more successful. In this respect, they have been the best sort of 'critical friends'; asking the right questions, expecting full and detailed answers and involving themselves willingly and effectively in the strategic planning and development work that was required.
58. One of the most important developments that the headteacher has led has been a change in culture. As the pupils who are referred to the school have become more varied and increasingly complex in their needs, the school itself has become more inclusive internally and has reached out increasingly into the wider community. Many effective systems and procedures have been established to monitor and audit the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning and wider aspects of the school's work, including the residential provision. This had led, through careful evaluation of the information gathered, to properly prioritised, shared development planning processes that have involved everyone in a commitment to continuous improvement. The impressive way in which the fast increasing ASD population has been successfully integrated into the school and their needs very well met illustrates the effectiveness of this approach. One aspect of development planning that could, however, be more effective relates to the role of curriculum co-ordinators in the process. All departments produce their own development and action plan to improve their provision and these plans inform, to some extent, the wider school development plan. These subject plans do not, however, influence the prioritisation of development work or the allocation of resources in any direct way. Some changes in this respect would improve the logic and effectiveness of planning processes.
59. The headteacher, her deputy and other staff have worked tirelessly to create and nurture working partnerships with mainstream schools, colleges and other services to provide wide-ranging opportunities for pupils and staff to be educated and work in

those wider settings. With this outward looking philosophy, the school has become an equal partner in many mainstream initiatives and has benefited enormously from the resources and support that have resulted from it.

60. This entrepreneurial approach has often counteracted the difficulties that the school has experienced as the result of the lack of a clear admissions policy, which makes it difficult to plan for the future, and an LEA funding formula that does not give appropriate recognition to the complexity of the school's intake. It has also enabled an important and valuable extension of activities outside the normal school day and made the best use of the difficult situation that prevails in relation to the under-utilised residential provision. Residential care staff have become involved in supporting some pupils during their studies at local mainstream schools and facilitated many other inclusion activities. In this way the very best use has been made of all available resources. It is in this aspect that the governors have performed some of their most important work. They have been highly involved in very effective budget planning and resource management and have acted as effective advocates for the school in the ongoing negotiations that have been pursued over the admissions, funding and residential issues.
61. The school is well staffed overall. However, because of the current funding arrangements, it is not possible to employ sufficient teachers to match the numbers recommended in national guidelines, effectively to meet the needs of the particular range of pupils being referred to the school. Good use is made of LSAs to support both groups and individual pupils. Strong emphasis on developing staff skills in the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy has resulted in improved standards in these aspects since the previous inspection. Similarly, the training given to staff in behaviour management has built upon the excellent relationships that exist and has much-improved pupils' personal development. Perhaps the most valuable professional development has been the comprehensive whole-staff training in teaching and managing pupils with ASD, which has resulted in the very high quality provision made for this increasingly significant group of pupils.
62. Accommodation is of generally good quality and the provision of specialist rooms for subjects such as design technology, science, food technology and computers has a beneficial effect both on teaching and pupils' learning. There are, however, some inadequacies in provision and equipment for science and design and technology, mentioned elsewhere, which inhibit pupils' learning in these subjects. Efficient use is made of the surrounding grounds for sport and play activities.
63. The school is well resourced. There is a good range of books and use of a specialist library for the teaching of literacy. Effective use is made of the local environment for work in a range of subjects, such as 'weaseling' (a form of potholing) in physical education and close links with local schools enable some pupils to make use of their facilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. Whilst there are no significant areas for improvement, in order to improve further the already very good provision the school makes, the headteacher, senior management team and governors should consider incorporating the following issues in their action plan:
 1. continue ongoing negotiations with the Local Education Authority with a view to:

- clarifying the admissions policy for the school, to facilitate more accurate description of and planning for the complex nature of referrals, and to inform future decisions about the residential facility (*referred to in paragraphs 40, 60 & 61*);
 - improving the funding formula for the school, to take particular account of the rapidly increasing ASD population, so that the school can afford an appropriate staffing structure that more closely matches national guidelines (*referred to in paragraphs 40,60 & 61*);
2. continue with planned improvements to the curriculum in English, science, art and design, design and technology, ICT, physical education and religious education (*referred to in paragraphs 5, 58, 62, 65, 66, 80, 86, 92, 105, 120 & 125*)*;
 3. identify existing best practice in the use of assessment information to inform planning and ensure that it is applied consistently across all subjects (*referred to in paragraphs 23, 82, 50 & 125*);*
 4. review and adapt the current policy and practice for homework (*referred to in paragraphs 23 & 51*);
 5. ensure that all staff have the appropriate skills to help pupils who use PECS and Makaton (*referred to in paragraphs 65 & 66*).
- * These issues are already identified in school development planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	39	33	4	0	0	0
Percentage	6	48	41	5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Pupils were not entered for statutory testing. Teacher assessment was, however, carried out with sixteen pupils and the results are shown below:

	W	L1	L2	L3
English	20%	53%	20%	7%
Mathematics	7%	33%	60%	
Science		53%	47%	

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Pupils were entered for a range of accredited courses and the results were as follows:

GCSE

Four passes

GNVQ

Two passes

AQA Entry Level Certificate

Mathematics 11 pupils gained level 3 distinction

Science 1 pupil gained level 3 distinction

AQA Achievement tests in Literacy

10 pupils gained level 1

5 pupils gained level 2

2 pupils gained level 3

AQA Unit Award Scheme

All pupils achieved at least 10 awards (an average of 14 awards per pupil was achieved)

ASDAN Youth Award Scheme

Bronze / Silver Challenge 2 pupils

Bronze Award 6 pupils

Full Transition Challenge 2 pupils

4 Sections Transition Challenge 3 pupils

3 Sections Transition Challenge 1 pupil

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	87
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.2:1
Average class size	10

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	15.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	475

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1350163
Total expenditure	1362117
Expenditure per pupil	14,646
Balance brought forward from previous year	34466
Balance carried forward to next year	22512

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	20	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	28	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	34	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	39	29	0	6
The teaching is good.	74	20	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	29	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	14	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	17	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	29	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	23	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	17	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	74	14	3	0	9

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

ENGLISH

65. All pupils make very good progress and achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers take careful account of individual needs and engage pupils successfully, increasing pupils' confidence in their own ability to achieve their full potential. The subject is well led and managed in an effective partnership between the English and Literacy co-ordinators. Teachers use the school's curriculum and elements of the National Literacy Strategy very effectively in helping all pupils to achieve and make very good progress in reading. Lower attaining pupils are helped by the consistent implementation of a symbol system, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). PECS also provides additional opportunities for the development of pre-reading skills because pupils learn that pictures and symbols give and provide information. However, the system is not always consistently implemented across the school. There are appropriate plans in place to train all staff. Many pupils receive effective additional support in the development of their communication skills and use of language through working with speech therapists, who provide a mixture of individual programmes on a withdrawal basis and work with larger groups in class.
66. All pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening (communication) because of the opportunities teachers and LSAs provide for them to contribute effectively to discussions or to talk about their work. A small number of pupils also benefit from the use of Makaton signing, although not all teachers are sufficiently skilled in this system to help pupils in all subjects. The school recognises this as an area for further professional development work. Teachers and LSAs provide very good speaking and listening role models for pupils and expect them to listen carefully to adults and each other. For example, in a good Year 7 lesson, pupils sat around a large table and discussed how they should develop the story 'Martin Asks for Help', which they were writing. In all lessons, pupils are confident to ask questions and contribute to discussions. This is because teachers and LSAs encourage them to join in and genuinely value what they have to say. Pupils' communication skills develop well during lessons such as in PSHE. For example, in a lesson for Year 11 pupils, they listened carefully to the teacher and responded with interest and enthusiasm when asked to discuss ideas on keeping safe on the roads and at home. An older group of lower attaining pupils used the time at the end of a life skills lesson productively to look at some old school photographs, which prompted them to recall old times and to converse comfortably with each other. Older pupils have extended opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in a wide range of settings, including college and work placements.
67. At all ages, pupils display a range of very good reading abilities. Teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy, effectively helping pupils to achieve very well and make very good progress in their reading. More able pupils are able to select their own choice of book and read with understanding and comprehension. Pupils enjoy reading and take pleasure in stories and poems, the majority reading with confidence. Younger pupils enjoy reading stories and are given the opportunity to make individual and class story books. For example, a lower attaining Year 7 pupil made a very good story book, 'The zebra and the donkey', based on an African folk tale. This was a follow up of a visit to the school by a storyteller from Kenya. Pupils take great care with such work because of the sensitive and encouraging support

they receive, and they always try their best. Teachers plan well for the provision of individual support, so that, for instance, during reading periods, all staff check that pupils understand the vocabulary. LSAs are provided with very useful reading assessment sheets, which enable them to record comments on reading progress in a uniform and informative way. The books that teachers select for their classes to read are well chosen to hold everyone's interest. For example, higher attaining pupils in an excellent Year 10 literacy lesson read with fluency and good expression from a book describing the gruesome exploits of Burke and Hare. They could also explain the difference between dialogue and narrative and correctly identified examples of both in the text. Pupils are encouraged to use the well-stocked library at lunchtime to develop further their interest in literature.

68. Pupils make good progress in writing. Most teachers are confident in teaching the basic skills, with non-specialists making good use of a guidance scheme for teaching handwriting, reading and spelling. For example, in an excellent lesson for older pupils, they revised phonemes in order to aid spelling. One higher attaining pupil was able to identify the number of phonemes and syllables in the word 'thriller'. Throughout the school, teachers encourage good standards of effort, accuracy and presentation. Some of the most effective writing is found when pupils write poems, especially when these follow a clear structure. For example, older pupils wrote Kennings poems – in which objects and people are described without using their name - after 'brainstorming' ideas on writing such a poem about William Shakespeare. They put forward descriptions including 'pen pusher', 'play writer', and 'ruff wearer', and then developed their own individual poems which they happily shared with the group at the end of the very good lesson. Displays on classroom walls and along corridors provide good examples of creative writing and promote pupils' pride in their work.
69. Literacy across the curriculum is good. The school has developed its literacy programme very well and this is now becoming embedded into the whole school curriculum. Basic literacy skills are well promoted in other subject areas. Teachers use a wide range of literacy resources in lessons and pupils are encouraged to look for information from different sources. Generally, pupils are given opportunities for extended writing across the school. For example, pupils in personal, social and health education, read prompt cards describing conflict situations and write possible outcomes. However, as was the case at the time of the previous report, there are still a few lessons that rely too heavily on the use of restrictive worksheets, rather than encouraging pupils to write about their own ideas. Good opportunities for drama are developed through visits from professional drama groups and school visits to the theatre. Pupils with ASD have benefit particularly from these activities, displaying unusual confidence and ability.
70. The subject leader and leader for Literacy collaborate very well. They have established a very good range of resources and teaching approaches, properly adapted to meet all individual needs. Planning and assessment is now matched more consistently to National Curriculum levels and pupils in Years 10 and 11 have increasing opportunities to study for externally accredited modules. However, at the time of the inspection, a large number of modules were still awaiting verification. Lesson planning is very good, in that it fully meets the needs of all pupils. It takes full account of their varying needs, providing work that is of real challenge to them and ensuring that they all achieve to their full potential. Relationships between teachers, the support staff and pupils are warm and positive, creating an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe to take the risks in learning necessary to make progress. During the inspection, little use of computers was seen in English lessons and this is an identified area for development.

MATHEMATICS

71. All pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. This applies to pupils of all ages and levels of ability, including those with ASD, who often find the subject difficult.
72. By the age of 14, the most able pupils count to a hundred, make estimates of large numbers, and can double and halve small numbers. They understand fractions, such as a half and a quarter, and can demonstrate this in many different contexts. For example, they know that half a kilometre is 500 metres and half a metre is 50 centimetres. Pupils recognise coins up to one pound and they can make up various amounts when buying grocery items in a shopping game in class. Two and three-dimensional shapes are identified and sorted into matching sets, but pupils sometimes forget what the shapes are called. Pupils tell the time accurately, and are beginning to measure distances, weights and volume using centimetres, grams and millilitres. They draw block graphs and picture graphs to illustrate simple surveys they have carried out. Less able pupils struggle with some of the concepts, but they still make very good progress in their learning because of very good teaching that is sensitively adapted and well focused support given by LSAs.
73. By the age of 16, the most able pupils have developed their skills very well. They measure confidently and accurately in centimetres and metres, and in grams and kilograms. In mental activities, they count reliably, and add and subtract numbers up to twenty. Many know and use their 'times' tables successfully. Calculators are used to check the accuracy of their work, such as when adding numbers in hundreds. Pupils understand angles, and they know the names of some different varieties, measuring them accurately in degrees. Pupils handle money more confidently and shop successfully out in the community after practising the skills in class. Fractions and percentages are understood with greater clarity, with pupils understanding that, for example, a quarter is 25 per cent. These pupils are mostly following courses that have their results externally accredited, such as through AQA awards and GCSE at Entry Level. A small number of pupils study successfully for Foundation Level, or full GCSE awards at local comprehensive schools.
74. Less able pupils are equally successful. They tell the time to quarter hours, using digital as well as analogue clocks. They recognise the basic shapes, and know what a right angle is. In measuring, they use metres for large distances, but have difficulty with smaller distances, when using centimetres. These pupils also follow externally accredited courses, which are taught in modules, such as Time, Money, Measuring and Calculators. They achieve very well. The least able pupils find many of these concepts difficult, but are enabled to achieve very well at their own level by teachers' careful and sensitive adaptation of their approach. As a result, pupils know, for example, that the day is split into time periods in which they do different things, and that these times and activities can be shown on clocks, and on timetables with symbols.
75. Teaching – by two very experienced and well qualified teachers - is very good. Their planning is very clear, well organised, and based on a good long-term plan of what is to be taught. The work in each lesson is different for many pupils. Groups are taught in different ability groups, often with several sets within each group, and there is a lot of planning for the work that individual pupils do. Teachers and LSAs provide a great deal of individual help during lessons, and their relationships with the pupils are excellent. Teachers make very good efforts to involve all pupils as fully as possible, and the resources they use are good and imaginative. Lessons are very well structured. This was well illustrated in one excellent lesson, when the teacher began with a quick-fire mental warm-up that involved adding nine to each number he gave.

The class then went on to a series of activities of increasing difficulty, such as adding numbers up to a hundred, over a hundred, with carrying figures, with and without calculators. Finally, there was a game of 'beat the pupil' – adding up a number over a thousand, trying to be the fastest pupil in the class, but with the rest using calculators. The pace of the lesson was tremendous. The teacher and pupils were extremely enthusiastic, and the challenge was very high throughout the lesson. LSAs worked very well with the less able pupils, and relationships within the class were very positive. The work was very well planned for all pupils, and the support was individual to each of them. This lesson was typical, in that it made mathematics fun. In the lower-ability classes, the level of challenge is just as great, but the pace is necessarily slower, as they cannot cope with the rush. Teachers have extra, harder work available if pupils finish quicker than expected, and they mark pupils' work on the spot, giving very good support and explanations where needed. As a result of this inspiring teaching, pupils behave extremely well in their lessons. They are attentive and willing. The more able pupils are very keen and enthusiastic, whilst the least able pupils are very persistent in their work, and they concentrate very well. Homework is set when appropriate, and letters go out to parents to ask for their help with this.

76. This subject is led and managed extremely well. There is superb co-operation between the two teachers. Pupils are split into sets for learning mathematics, although the school as a whole reorganises the classes each year into groups spanning two years. This requires reorganisation of the maths sets each year, and makes planning for the pupils more difficult. There is ongoing debate about this challenge. The National Numeracy Strategy is very well in place, especially for the pupils up to the age of fourteen years, and pupils' numeracy is well encouraged in lessons in many other subjects. The curriculum is very good, based appropriately on the National Curriculum, but with much more besides. The computer suite is used for mathematics lessons each week by all classes. This is of great benefit in extending the breadth and variety of pupils' learning. Staff have had a lot of additional training, and both teachers are 'leading mathematics teachers'. This enables them to demonstrate their skills very supportively and productively to teachers in other schools in the area. There are very good plans for developing the subject further, including, for instance, pupils studying for GCSE Foundation level in school, rather than having to go a local comprehensive school. The co-ordinator also has plans to further develop the already very good resources, and to introduce a new scheme of teaching for younger pupils. Pupils' achievements are checked extremely thoroughly. This creates a great deal of work for the teachers, especially as some of the recording is repeated in different ways. A simplified version, with predictions of how well pupils will achieve, could be considered. This would let teachers know if pupils were actually progressing as expected, as well as easing the workload.
77. There has been a very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection, when the curriculum and assessment systems were under-developed, and the teaching was satisfactory. This subject is now a strength of the school.

SCIENCE

78. In the last term, pupils across the school have been making good progress and achieving well in science, following the appointment of a new, specialist science teacher. Younger pupils have developed a very good understanding of light and dark, because they respond very well to the science teaching and to the valuable support provided by the LSAs. Pupils' understanding of the relationship between the spinning

of the earth, the 'movement' of the sun and the movement of shadows is very good because the teacher is knowledgeable, makes very good use of resources, of different groupings of pupils, and of different locations in and around the school.

79. In Year 10, pupils with low ability gain some independence skills in their investigation of light sources and reflections. They treat equipment safely and are sensible in the laboratory. In Year 11, pupils apply their mathematical skills successfully to interpret graphs resulting from an investigation where increasingly heavy weights are hung from a coiled spring. These older pupils have not, however, had access to enough chemistry, physics, and investigative practical work, because of previous staffing difficulties. The new co-ordinator has not been in post long enough to develop Unit Awards, nor prepare pupils for Entry Level certificate. As a result, although the higher attaining pupils have demonstrated achievement within National Curriculum attainment level 4, they will not have their achievements recognised by externally accredited certificates. Excellent arrangements with a mainstream school, very carefully considered by all parties, provide access to GCSE science when this is judged to be appropriate. As a result, for example, one pupil is making very good progress towards a high grade in GCSE double science.
80. There has been some improvement in science provision since the last inspection report, but only in recent months since the appointment of a co-ordinator with specialist knowledge and experience of teaching science. Improving the time allocated for science to more closely match recommended levels, broadening the coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study, and improving assessment and reporting procedures are key areas for him to develop.
81. The quality of teaching very good, because it is very relaxed, highly engaging and good humoured, but also highly professional - and the promotion of scientific understanding and skill is at the forefront of lessons. Great attention is given to meeting pupils' individual needs, whilst also meeting the needs of each class as a whole. For example, a girl in a wheelchair, a boy anxious about a lesson requiring the room to be darkened, a pupil feeling unwell and a lone girl in a class of boys, all received the necessary support and attention to participate and succeed. The teacher assesses progress and understanding very effectively during lessons. A Year 11 boy, for example, was invited to demonstrate his understanding of a coiled spring experiment by 'teaching' about the experiment to a boy who had been absent. Thoughtful questioning, with time for pupils to think and process their answers, elicits very successfully how well pupils are learning.
82. The new co-ordinator inherited poor organisation of pupils' written work, and very little evidence of marking and past achievements. Assessment records are now improving but there is still no system to record how well pupils make progress over time. Reports to parents contain very little information about progress and achievement in science knowledge, understanding and skill. Science plans give insufficient attention to the use of computers to support learning. Laboratory facilities and resources are not as good as reported at the last inspection. There is no gas supply, no blackout blinds, poor storage of chemicals, and a narrow range of equipment for chemistry and practical work. As a result, learning has tended to focus on plants and animals. Staffing difficulties, and a narrow range of learning opportunities in science this year, have resulted in no Year 11 pupils accessing Unit Awards or the Entry level certificate in 2002, but there is now clear potential to bring the subject up to the high standards in other subjects

ART AND DESIGN

83. All pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in art and design, because of very good teaching. The previous report judged that standards were satisfactory. There have, therefore, been very clear improvements since then.
84. Records show that many pupils arrive at school with negative attitudes to the subject and little confidence in their own ability. The way the recently appointed teacher presents projects and materials to them is motivating and encouraging and many now clearly enjoy their art lessons, often producing work of an impressive standard. This was well illustrated in a lesson for Year 10 pupils, when they were building on earlier studies in which they had researched the work of their own chosen famous artists. Each of them was working on large pieces, painted in the style of, for example, Van Gogh, Monet and Hokusai. They had clearly understood the characteristics of each painter's work and were themselves painting intently and very successfully. Support by the teacher, LSA and a very sensitive volunteer artist, was subtle, but well focused. Staff were careful that their guidance was only offered when requested and that it built on the pupils' understanding of what they were doing. This ensured that pupils had a sense of 'owning' their own work and its development. Pupils were appropriately self critical and coped impressively with any difficulties and challenges. All pupils' are enthusiastic, positive and well behaved in lessons and many have clearly benefitted from discovering that they can successfully express themselves in a new medium. Consequently this has often raised their self esteem.
85. The range of work that pupils across the school are offered is comprehensive and designed to develop their understanding of line, form, shape, colour, texture, pattern and tone, using paint, drawing, collage, clay and other materials. They work on landscapes, figurative studies and natural forms and have produced some very attractive work based on Aboriginal, African and Indian art. All of their work is valued and celebrated in the high quality displays around the school. Amongst those displays are examples of exciting work that they have done with visiting artists. The dining room is decorated with wall coverings that Year 8 and 9 pupils did with a artist funded through the local Education Action Zone, in the style of Miro, which provide a very pleasing Spanish effect.
86. The current teacher has been in the school for less than two terms. She has settled very quickly and come to understand her pupils and their individual needs well. This enables her to plan work very effectively to meet their wide range of difficulties and to adapt her approach accordingly. She has already modified some of the existing curriculum and assessment approaches to take account of the need for a much finer gradation of work for the lower attaining pupils. She has other plans for further modifications of assessment approaches, which do require some improvement, and other developments, including an extension of activities to include a possible mini enterprise and other accredited opportunities for older pupils. The curriculum offered is good and it is has clearly improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Short term planning to reflect the age and needs of pupils was considered unsatisfactory and is now good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. All pupils make good progress and achieve well in design and technology because good improvements have been made in providing opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of design and evaluation activities, which are good features in both design and food technology lessons. As a result, teaching is consistently good. There is, however, no provision for metalwork and no progress has been made to develop this area of the curriculum since the last inspection.

88. Pupils in Year 7 can roll out clay, using rolling guides, and use templates to cut two shapes of different size which are joined together to make a wall ornament. In Years 8 and 9 pupils understand and follow basic hygiene rules well. Pupils learn to identify and smell spices, like ginger, garam masala and chilli powder and to remember their different colours. They practise their skills in the use of a range of kitchen utensils, such as potato peelers, scales and knives to slice vegetables with. More able pupils prepare pastry, cut out circle shapes and add the correct amount of samosa filling onto the pastry and transfer the samosas with a slice onto a baking tray to heat in the oven. They show enthusiasm for making and evaluating the finished product and are able to complete a simple evaluation sheet and describe, with their sentence makers, what they liked best about the task. By the end of Year 9 pupils, are encouraged to contribute their ideas to making desk tidies and draw their own designs on paper.
89. Older pupils are keen to carry out workshop activities and use hand tools and equipment with confidence. They accurately cut strips of wood of equal length. More able pupils follow their design drawings and measure and cut the wood to shape. Pupils also complete a more detailed evaluation sheet, which includes a consideration of their original design brief, and can suggest ways in which their wooden containers might have been improved. During Year 11, particular modules, for example, in designing and making an acrylic artefact and making a cup of coffee, are accredited within the AQA award scheme.
90. The quality of learning is always good and frequently very good, because pupils are well motivated and involved in work they feel confident with. Pupils listen to instructions carefully and follow them. As a result, they make good progress in lessons and over time - and they are developing skills and acquiring new knowledge. Pupils are learning to make decisions about their preferences in making sandwiches for a picnic or about the design of their products and following their own plans when they are engaged in practical work.
91. The quality of teaching is good and the activities and resources are thoroughly prepared and organised to meet the full range of pupils' needs. Lesson objectives are clearly communicated to pupils and this ensures that they understand the task. However, planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently developed, since no use is made, for example, of the electronic equipment in the design technology room. Pupils are well managed. Teachers and LSAs move around the class to give them very effective individual support and this maintains their interest in the activity. Staff know and understand the individual pupils very well and the quality of the relationships between pupils and staff is very good. Teachers use lessons well to promote literacy and numeracy skills. For example, there are opportunities to weigh and measure in food technology lessons and to measure lengths of wood in other lessons. There is a positive ethos in the workshop and food technology room and this further enhances the quality of learning.
92. The subject is efficiently managed and both planning for what pupils will study and assessment of their achievements are sound. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Additionally, design and evaluation activities are included in all planning and the department is well placed to make further improvements. These include developing the curriculum for higher attaining pupils and more extensive use of information technology in the design technology room. Accommodation is good and there is an appropriate range of tools and equipment. However, in food technology, the cookers are in poor condition with faulty temperature dials, which affects the quality of the finished products. In addition, the refrigerator is unable to

hold the amount of food that is necessary for the range and quantities of products stored.

93. This represents a clear improvement since the previous inspection since the issues raised at that have largely been addressed.

HUMANITIES

94. All pupils make good progress and achieve well in humanities, because teaching is consistently good.
95. Pupils make good progress in geography. Geography is taught during Years 7 to 9 and as part of the humanities course in Years 10 and 11. In Year 7, pupils study the local area and are introduced to basic geographical terms and map reading. They study a contrasting locality and look at the differences in local and international transport. In one very good lesson, pupils studied the seaside and were able to build on previous learning to complete a list of differences between this and their own locality. One lower attaining pupil observed that 'at the seaside you can swim in the sea and play in the sand'. Very good signing input from LSAs ensured that non-verbal pupils were fully included in this lesson.
96. In Year 8, pupils develop an awareness of other cultures by studying the peoples and geography of Kenya. They understand how traditional homes are constructed and their understanding is developed by the teacher's skilful use of a story describing the daily life of a young boy in a traditional Massai village. By the end of Year 9, pupils study weather and climate changes and how rivers originate. In one good lesson, pupils extended their enquiry skills and their understanding as they learned to chart the development of a river. With the aid of a big book 'Down a River' and appropriate symbols and models the teacher was able to show where rivers start and finish. By the end of the lesson, pupils could describe how rivers form in the mountains and flow into the sea. Very good relationships encouraged them to work hard to link together what they had learned. Geography is well led and managed. Lessons and projects are planned carefully, enabling teachers to meet the full range of pupils' needs well, but there is no specific reference to the use of computers.
97. Pupils' progress in history is good throughout the school. During Years 7 to 9, pupils find out about people and events from a suitable range of periods from history. They learn to appreciate how living conditions have changed over the years. For example, in one lesson, Year 7 pupils developed their understanding of everyday life in Anglo-Saxon times. Their knowledge and understanding was enhanced because the lesson took place in the ICT suite. This enabled pupils to conduct research using the internet with the knowledgeable help of the teacher and LSAs. Pupils were able to access an appropriate BBC site and effectively interact with the screen character, Hild', to prepare an Anglo-Saxon feast. They successfully used computers to observe information and answer questions about the past. In Years 8 and 9, pupils continue to develop their sense of chronology by placing events in order. They show understanding of the events leading up to the matchbox workers' strike and have studied the lives of working people in Victorian times. This subject is well led and managed. The shortfall in resources identified in the previous inspection has been remedied, although more artefacts are still needed. History makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.
98. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 study humanities, which currently consists of combined geography and history units of study, which are externally accredited.

Pupils have a double lesson each week, during which they build up their own portfolios of work, which are assessed by the school at the end of each discrete unit. Local history and the local environment are well represented in the units studied. For example, pupils now study the history of the Sheffield steel industry from 1700-1850 and living in Sheffield at the end of the nineteenth century. Pupils also have the opportunity to study environmental and countryside issues. They visit a variety of countryside sites and study the habitats and wildlife found in each. In a follow up lesson to one visit pupils were able to match photographs taken during the visit to outcome descriptors. The teacher had planned very carefully to ensure that the tasks were closely matched to pupils' needs and the available staff was suitably targeted. As a result, a higher attaining pupil was able to classify all of the photographs correctly. This effective approach was typical of the way this teacher works and ensured that all pupils were able to succeed, no matter what their difficulties were

99. Long term planning for these subjects shows that work covered is appropriate. Detailed plans provide clear guidance for teachers. However, the system for recording and assessing pupils' performance does not give a clear picture of pupils' progress over time. Resources are well used, but the lack of timetabled access to the ICT suite in Years 10 and 11 limits learning opportunities. Opportunities for learning in humanities are regularly enhanced by a good variety of out-of-school trips in the local area.
100. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching and pupils' progress in both subjects were judged to be satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

101. All pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school, because of consistently good teaching.
102. By the age of fourteen years, pupils have developed good skills on the keyboard and with the computer mouse. They enter text effectively and add pictures, such as in a recent Harry Potter series of displays. The most able pupils create simple databases, such as those based on a variety of animals that live in the rain forests. They also create graphs of the information on the databases, and answer questions about them. When using simulation programs, or adventure games, they work hard to find the logic of different situations. With help, they successfully access the Internet for information.
103. By the age of 16, pupils' keyboard and mouse skills have developed well as they practise more. They co-operate particularly well, such as when using a Roamer' programmable machine that moves over the floor, or when working on programs that simulate real or imaginary situations. When entering text, they do so accurately, if slowly, and they add pictures such as clip art, digital photographs and their own designs from a painting program. Pupils find information from databases, and produce block graphs and pie graphs from the information. Their use of the Internet for finding information about different subjects is quicker and better thought-out. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their work with computers and other high-technology equipment. They behave extremely well in lessons, put a lot of effort into their work, and are often very keen. In one lesson, for instance, pupils were heard to gasp 'Wicked!' at a particular scene on an adventure program.
104. The teaching – by one specialist teacher who has a thorough knowledge of the pupils as well as the subject - is good. Lessons are well prepared and well structured to

meet the full range of pupils' needs, with a clear revision of previous learning followed by a main activity. The final activity involves reminding pupils what they have learned, explaining things they have had difficulty with, and then talking about what the next lesson will involve. The teacher asks good questions to get pupils thinking. LSAs work very well with the teacher to support individual pupils, or groups, as, for example, in one very good lesson in which pupils were trying to find their way round an imaginary environment in a program called 'Black River Quest'. After going over the points that pupils had had problems with the week before, the teacher and LSA helped all of the pupils very well at their computers. This assistance kept the pace of the lesson going very well. All pupils were making very good progress, not only in their exploration of the imaginary environment, but also in their reading and writing skills as they read information on the screen, and gave instructions back. They also improved their geography skills, as they had to know which direction they were heading in, and to keep check of where they had been. In the final discussion, pupils were all well involved in explaining to each other how to get through some areas of the environment, and what they had to avoid.

105. This subject is led and managed very well, jointly, by the co-ordinator and senior staff. There is a very comprehensive plan of what is to happen in the future. This involves a great deal of money and organisation, including a long period of staff training that is part of a government scheme. This training is aimed largely at increasing the skills of all staff so that they feel confident to use computers in more of their own subject lessons. Teachers of other subjects, such as mathematics, geography and Spanish, do use information technology soundly in some lessons, but this wider use is not widespread and consistent in many subjects, such as science, religious education and design and technology. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than a year, but he has a good view of what pupils' standards are, and how good the provision is. He has been responsible for buying a well thought-out range of new equipment and software, and the resources are very good. The accommodation is very good, with a suite of computers. There are also computers and many other pieces of equipment around the school, such as scanners, digital cameras, printers and programmable toys. The subject policy is clear and practical. The scheme of what is to be taught is well based on official guidelines, as well as involving very good links with other subjects, such as mathematics, geography and English. There is a good system of checking pupils' progress, based closely on the units that make up the long term teaching plan. The co-ordinator is redeveloping this to take account of a new scheme that allows progress to be checked in smaller steps. A technician has been appointed part-time to help to maintain and develop the equipment, as well as to support teachers and pupils in lessons when possible.
106. The quality of teaching in this subject has improved well since the last inspection and pupils progress and achievements have also improved as a result.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Spanish

107. All pupils make consistently good and sometimes very good progress and achieve well in Spanish. This is because of the high quality teaching of the subject.
108. By the time they leave school, pupils reach the Unit Award standard for pupils with learning difficulties, and they are currently awaiting validation of their achievements by the examination board. The Unit Awards they have studied cover a very wide range of

topics, to enable them to converse confidently about themselves and others and to understand about Spain and its culture.

109. Units of work become more challenging as pupils move from Year 9 into Years 10 and 11. They make good progress in Spanish, especially in their speaking skills. Their reading and writing in Spanish is not as advanced as the progress they make in speaking the language. This is because the main aim of the course, and the focus of the planning and the teaching, is to develop listening and responding skills. Learning to speak Spanish builds pupils' confidence and self esteem at school, at home, on Spanish holidays and when the school hosts Spanish visitors. All the pupils confidently and cheerily greet the teacher in Spanish. They recite their names, understand directions, know colours, numbers, months of the year, and how to book a hotel room. They sing to well-chosen tapes of Spanish songs. The Spanish they learn is relevant, and very well matched to their learning needs. Spanish 'realia' is used wherever this is appropriate, but the teacher takes care not to present Spanish text too difficult to understand, as on many food packaging labels, for example.
110. Provision for pupils to learn a modern foreign language is very much improved since the last inspection report. Then, progress and teaching of French were reported as unsatisfactory, and younger pupils were poorly behaved in lessons. Now pupils are very well taught, they are managed very effectively, their response is very good and they enjoy their Spanish lessons.
111. The quality of teaching is very good, because, since the last inspection, the school has appointed a specialist teacher of Spanish. His teaching is energetic, good humoured, enthusiastic and engaging. All pupils warm to this approach and respond very positively. Their Spanish pronunciation may be approximate, but they are given the confidence to make mistakes and 'have a go' because the teaching is so very sensitive to their individual needs. The needs of the quieter girls, pupils with hearing impairment, and pupils with physical difficulties are all carefully taken into account, so all pupils can successfully access the different activities and achieve appropriately. Lessons are conducted at a very good pace to keep pupils' motivation high, and changes in activities are managed smoothly without loss of momentum.
112. The assessment procedures currently in use are not sufficiently refined to record the small steps in progress as pupils access the National Curriculum attainment levels. This is an area for development that the co-ordinator has already identified. The overall plan for units of work from Years 7 to 11 is not presented with sufficient clarity for the senior managers to monitor its implementation and to check if individual pupils are receiving their entitlement. Nor does it indicated if pupils are making sufficient progress over time, especially when they stay in the same class for more than one year. As the focus of lessons is on speaking and listening, the relative quiet location of the assigned classroom is ideal. Pupils feel secure in their Spanish 'home base', surrounded by good quality displays and resources for Spanish, that are readily accessible. From here, pupils have produced very attractive displays of Spanish designs to decorate the dining hall.

MUSIC

113. Pupils make very good progress in lessons and achieve very well because of the high quality teaching of the very recently appointed co-ordinator. Their long-term progress is less certain, as there has not been any regular teaching for most of the past year. Pupils' standards of achievement are, however, rising rapidly as the new teacher's presence takes effect. Pupils are presently learning much the same skills throughout the school, at a similar level. This is so that the teacher can check on how well they

are achieving now, and how quickly they learn new things. Several pupils in Year 8 are more able, and are progressing better than most pupils in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils understand basic musical notation, and understand the relationship between the notes and the letters on the keys of the xylophone, for instance. They successfully play rhythms on the drums, xylophone and glockenspiel across a range of styles, including rock and twelve bar blues. Pupils understand what rhythm is and how it affects the mood of the music, along with the speed and the pitch. The most able pupils play in three groups, each playing a different beat pattern, or they play in two groups, with one playing a melody, and the other group playing an accompaniment. Many pupils are developing a very good sense of being part of a performance, and they listen attentively to the music that their classmates make, as well as appreciating music by professionals. Pupils co-operate very well alongside each other, doing their best to stay together as they play the drums or xylophones, for example. They are very keen on their music lessons, behave extremely well, and respond to the challenges with great effort and concentration.

114. The teaching of music is very good. It is all by one specialist teacher who is very new to the school. Lessons are very well planned and prepared. The teacher has very high expectations for pupils' attention, effort, concentration and behaviour. She also has particularly high expectations that pupils will make progress in their musical skills and understanding. Activities are exceptionally well structured to give an increasing level of challenge as the lesson progresses. In one excellent lesson, for example, the teacher began by using a large symbol timetable as she explained what the lesson was going to include. She continued with a practice of some different rhythms, with each pupil having a drum to play. This developed with the pupils accompanying the teacher as she played the piano, and then a tape of a background beat. When the pupils played the backing beat together for a recording of 'We will rock you', they all thought it was wonderful. It was! The main activity was learning to play descending notes on xylophones and glockenspiels, ending with pupils playing along to a Baroque tune called 'Pachelbel's Canon'. The progress that pupils made during the lesson was remarkable, changing from an unco-ordinated noise at the beginning to a steady rhythm in time to the music by the end. The session ended with a quick vocal exercise that involved singing a new 'Boom Chick-a Boom' song loudly, softly, slowly or rapidly. Both this exercise, and the melodic canon tune are the foundations for much wider and deeper aspects of music. The lesson was very much enjoyed by all of the pupils. It was a great success.
115. This subject is led and managed very well. There has not been a co-ordinator in place for almost a year, but the very recently appointed teacher is imaginative, enthusiastic and very well qualified and experienced. She has already begun to assess the overall provision and pupils' standards. She has good plans to modify the long term scheme of what is taught to suit her own views, skills and high expectations, starting in the new term. The present curriculum is already good, being well based on official guidelines. There are also plans to continue to develop the way pupils' progress is checked. The resources are very good. The co-ordinator has already added to them, and has good ideas for developing them further, including obtaining some computer-related equipment and software. Music is taught in a separate room, with good space and the right atmosphere for music. There are also plans to develop a music club, and to try to set up a course for external accreditation. This new situation in music is very promising for the future.
116. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the quality of the teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. The progress pupils make is good across the school and all pupils achieve well. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
118. In Year 7, most pupils successfully take part in exercises involving throwing and catching and develop skills in bouncing a ball accurately into a hoop on the floor before it is caught by a partner. They use other techniques well, such as rolling and throwing, to pass the ball from one to another. Pupils are developing good ball skills for throwing, catching and hitting and their reactions are becoming faster as they practise exercises and learn to remain alert and concentrate for longer periods. They learn to copy and repeat simple movements in dance and form fixed shapes, using as an example, the theme of Spiderman stretches. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher as a routine is developed for starting and stopping an activity. They gain in their ability to follow instructions and can stop their movements and stay in fixed positions. By Year 9, pupils show good development of their ability to play together as a team as well as in skills such as the control and passing of a ball. Most understand the basic rules of rounders and cricket and join in both batting and fielding. More able pupils learn how to stand in the correct position to throw a javelin and what the basic safety rules are to place a javelin when not in use. Older pupils develop movements in tennis, such as side steps, and move from one set position to another whilst holding their tennis rackets. They respond quickly to variations in the teachers' instructions, to move towards named positions. Pupils learn to review each other's performance and to offer constructive suggestions on how to hit a softball accurately against a wall. Care is taken to ensure the productive involvement of all pupils including those physically less mobile and pupils who, for reasons of culture and religion, do not wear customary clothing for PE. For example, in one class where a pupil was in a wheelchair, an LSA sensitively ensured that she participated fully and took part in all activities.
119. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. The planning for each lesson was good, demonstrating a thorough understanding of pupils' individual needs. Lessons were planned to ensure that all pupils were able to take a full part and that, for most of the time, all were challenged by the activities they were expected to do. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and high expectations always resulted in pupils being very well motivated and achieving well. Teachers use clear demonstrations and explanations to enable pupils to perform confidently and successfully. Imaginative warm up activities lead pupils into their main activities physically well prepared and with very positive attitudes. Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils, who, in turn, show complete trust in the teachers. Pupils' attitudes and response to learning are very good. They show keen interest in lessons and are happy to take part. All are pleased to applaud the successes of others and to offer encouragement where needed. They co-operate well, are keen to improve their performance and enjoy their successes.
120. Since the previous inspection a narrower range of skills and competencies are currently being taught. For example, the school does not comply with national curriculum requirements through the lack of any provision for swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities. This is largely due to constraints within the timetable and lack of funding. Leadership of the subject is good. The department is well co-ordinated and is fortunate in having the services of both a teacher who is keen on dance and another visiting specialist. The curriculum is well planned and documented, although there are plans for a review of programmes in the near future. The recording and monitoring of individual pupil progress is now satisfactory and this has improved since the previous inspection. At Years 10 and 11 all units of study are assessed by the AQA Unit Award Scheme. This provides additional accreditation,

which motivates and raises the attainment of many of the older students. The co-ordinator is a subject specialist who has developed his skills as a 'Topsport' trainer and has been successful in obtaining a range of additional resources from this scheme. Additional links have been established with a number of sports clubs such as Sheffield Tiger Rugby Club and Sheffield Wednesday Football Club which have contributed to the extra curricular activities at the school and by sports trainers offering skills coaching to pupils. The school's existing accommodation and resources are good and appropriate attention is given to maintenance and storage of all equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Pupils' achievements are good because they make consistently good progress in learning about Christianity, Judaism and other faiths. They are also learning well about life, values and beliefs. Religious education makes a very good contribution, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11, to pupils' spiritual development, their appreciation of the wonders of nature, and to their thinking about the meaning of life and their appreciation of the needs of others. Girls and boys, pupils from minority ethnic groups, and pupils across the full range of learning needs, make equally good progress because care is taken to give them all opportunity to participate in activities. For example, by judicious grouping of pupils with the various staff present, all in a class of Year 10 pupils contributed at least one thought to the class Talmud in a lesson on Judaism. In another lesson on Judaism in Year 11, for pupils with more severe learning difficulties, all the class participate in a role-play about the 'Shabbat', the Friday evening meal celebrated by those of the Jewish faith. Candles and herbs provided engaging sensory experiences.
122. By the end of Year 9, all pupils have some understanding about Christianity and the early life of Jesus. Lower attainers can recall outlines of religious stories and higher attaining pupils can tell the story of Jesus, using role-play. They can recount aspects of their own experiences and feelings, and recognise some religious words specific to Christianity and Judaism. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils regularly achieve all the lessons objectives fully. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties always achieve at least the first objective for a unit of work, and this represents good steady progress on their part. For example, in Years 10 and 11, the teacher has assessed that all of the pupils are sensitive to other's feelings, whilst the higher attainers are assessed as having a more advanced understanding of the values and beliefs of other peoples and faiths. As they progress through the school, pupils achieve, to varying degrees, an understanding about homelessness, charity, epiphany, the story of Jesus, and most recently, they have learned some of the traditions and ceremonies of Judaism.
123. The quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils progress have improved considerably since the last inspection report. The curriculum has improved, having undergone a thorough review. Units of work now draw appropriately on national guidelines and on the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The quality and range of resources for teaching about Islam and Judaism have improved. More resources are now needed for teaching about Christianity. This is already in the co-ordinator's plan.
124. Teaching is good throughout the school. The teacher's subject knowledge is very good and this has a very positive impact on planning and learning. The promotion of pupils' spiritual development in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Through well-planned, thoughtful and sensitive teaching, pupils are developing a good understanding of one God and many faiths. Interesting use is made of artefacts to promote understanding

of the rituals and ceremonies of the Jewish faith. Younger pupils are learning how strings of beads are used in some faiths for praying and saying 'Thank you' to God. In a unit of work about the natural world, older pupils are very thoughtful about statements presented to them from Jewish texts. They discuss, for example, 'If a tree is killed before its time, is it like killing a soul?'; and they discuss 'See to it that you do not destroy and spoil my world because there will be no one to repair it'. Their responses are used to create a Jewish Talmud. A Year 11 boy, for example, tells the rest of the class of his thoughts, that when a daffodil dies its soul goes into the bulb until next year. All pupils have access to a brief, but very successful and innovative, period of mental relaxation and reflection at the start of lessons, sometimes accompanied, very effectively, with background music. This prepares them very well for learning, by creating a very positive and settled atmosphere.

125. The co-ordinator, although only part-time in school, leads the development of the subject very well. Regular review of what is taught keeps the subject relevant to pupils' learning needs. The recent introduction of the relaxation techniques, for example, is improving pupils' response and willingness to learn. Procedures for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements are at an early stage, but there are clear plans in place for their further development. There is insufficient ready access to computers in the classroom to support learning in the subject.