

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL**

Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 116273

Headteacher: Mark Swaine

Reporting inspector: April Dakin  
25441

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 192900

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special; Severe Learning Difficulties, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and Autism
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Springfield School Crewe Green Road Crewe Cheshire
Postcode:	CW1 5HS
Telephone number:	01270 582446
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Appropriate authority:	Cheshire County Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Allcock
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
April Dakin	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Music; Under fives; Sixth Form.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils or students taught?
Bob Miller	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Links with the community and partner institutions; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lily Evans	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; French.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
Alan Tattersall	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Information technology.	How well is the school led and managed? (Finance and staffing)
Gillian Lawson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Design and technology; Equality of opportunity.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; Personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Christine Emerson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education; Special educational needs.	
Nick Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	Accommodation and resources.
Frank Price	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education; Humanities.	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Springfield is a large day special school for 106 pupils aged under fives to Post 16, with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A significant minority of pupils have additional needs, including high dependency (19 per cent) and autism (7 per cent). All pupils and students have statements of special educational need. There has been little increase in numbers since the last inspection and the school is currently full. Planned places are 106, a number of pupils being on a waiting list. Currently, 80 pupils have severe learning difficulties and 26 have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Four of the five children in the under fives class attend the school on a part-time basis. No pupils of school age are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The school has a wide socio-economic mix, and 33 per cent of pupils in receipt of free school meals. This is a slight increase since the last inspection. There has been a minimal change in the ratio of teachers to pupils, which is approximately seven pupils for each teacher. The ratio of pupils to teachers is high compared with other schools of this type. There is one adult for three pupils when classroom support assistants are included. The ratio of approximately three boys for every two girls is typical for this type of school. Attainment on entry is generally well below the national average. The school is situated in Crewe in Cheshire local education authority. Pupils come from areas as far afield as Staffordshire, as well as Middlewich and Congleton. The majority of pupils are transported to school in taxis and mini buses funded by the local education authority, and some travel up to 45 minutes to get to the school. The school has been involved in the development and use of Qualifications and Assessment Authority Performance Indicator scales ('P' scales). A special feature of the school is the interface between educational provision and the Health Support Services.

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

This is a very good school with some excellent features. The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, who is supported by a very strong senior management and a good subject management team, are well aided by the governors and support assistants. Together, they ensure that pupils achieve well, and students achieve very well, through the good, and often very good or better, teaching they receive. The behaviour of pupils is exceptional, and the school ensures that pupils with more challenging behaviour are well managed. Attendance is good. The school has maintained and improved the high standards found at the last inspection; it is constantly moving forward and improving quickly. The school gives very good value for money and the Sixth Form gives excellent value for money.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- The school managers are adept at monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and in taking effective action. The commitment to a common purpose, teamwork and communication is a significant strength of the school.
- The school gives a very good start to children's education. The teaching of children and pupils aged under five to seven is very good and ensures they make very good progress.
- Students who are over sixteen achieve very well and make very good progress, and the school prepares them well for life after school through a very good careers programme.
- The school's very effective links with parents/carers and outside agencies ensure that consistent approaches are used to learning and behaviour, both at home and at school.
- The school monitors pupils' with more challenging behaviour very well to ensure that all pupils make very good gains in personal and social development, including spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- The range of extra-curricular visits and residential experiences is very good and actively promotes learning. The school has very good links with the community and this enhances the opportunities for learning and resources that the school has available.
- The school cares very well for its pupils. It monitors their academic and personal development well, and the very good support and guidance it provides for all pupils are informed by the good use of assessment.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- The use of symbols, signing and information and communication technology could be used in a more effective and consistent manner, to ensure lower attaining pupils and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have more successful methods of expressing and recording what they enjoy, know, understand and can do.
- Symbols could be used more effectively to allow lower attaining pupils to read simple texts and subject vocabulary displayed in the classroom and used in lessons.
- Policies and planning documents and resources for each aspect of English could be improved to provide guidance to teachers on how they will provide a broader and more balanced range of age appropriate contexts for reading and writing as pupils move through the school.

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

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

The school was last inspected in July 1996, when it was found to be a very good school. It has maintained these high standards and made some very good improvements to become a very good school with some excellent features.

The school has been successful in implementing very effective improvements to accommodation since the previous inspection. This has been achieved through judicious financial planning and exemplary co-operation with the local health trust. The new building provides well for pupils' needs and reflects a very high commitment for pupils' well being and the fulfilling of pupils' potential. No dedicated science room has yet been provided, although plans to provide a multi-purpose art and science room are in the school development plan.



The provision of teaching and support assistants is now good. The school has given a lead locally by increasing support assistants through improving the match of roles to pupils' needs. This has a significant impact in promoting a high standard of care, and is reflected in the increased progress pupils make. Class sizes have been reduced because the new accommodation has made it possible to form an extra class. Occasionally during the day there are shortages of staff because of therapy needs, but the school is seeking ways to rectify this. In addition to these improvements, the school has raised the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching to good, when previously they were sound.

**STANDARDS**

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

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>By age 5</b>	<b>By age 11</b>	<b>By age 16</b>	<b>By age 19</b>	<b>Key</b>
Speaking and listening	A	A	B	B	<i>Very good</i> A
Reading	B	B	C	C	<i>Good</i> B
Writing	B	B	C	C	<i>Satisfactory</i> C
Mathematics	B	B	B	A	<i>Unsatisfactory</i> D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	<i>Poor</i> E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

The school has set targets against 'P' Levels after whole school assessment of standards of achievement. The school aims to move each class group up one 'P' Level this year in numeracy, literacy and in personal and social education. Progress is good towards these targets. Standards of achievement are very good in personal and social education, art, and music and listening; good in English, mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology, humanities, French and physical education. Standards of achievement in information technology to support communication, including writing, are satisfactory overall, and good for higher attaining pupils, but could be better for lower attaining pupils. Symbols could be more effectively used to enable lower attaining pupils to 'read'. There is an appropriate action plan to further improve pupils' skills in information and communication technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to work and school are very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic, and very involved and interested in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, considering the nature of pupils' difficulties, is excellent. Pupils are kind to one another.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils' personal development during their time at school is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good; a number of pupils arrive late to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	Aged 5-11	Aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good	Very 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 good overall. It is good or better in 83 per cent of lessons, with 46 per cent of lessons being very good or better. It is unsatisfactory in 3 per cent of lessons observed. It is good in English overall, in mathematics and science, and in personal and social education. The teaching of art, music and religious education is a strength of the school. It is very good in the under fives, Key Stage 1 and in the Sixth Form, and good at all other key stages. The strengths are in the teachers' and support assistants' enthusiastic presentations of a variety of stimulating activities, and in their knowledge both of special educational needs and of the methods to be used to get the best out of the pupils they teach and support. Subject knowledge is particularly strong in mathematics, and numeracy is taught well throughout the school. Behaviour management is a particular strength of the teaching. Good teaching strategies are now in place for pupils with autism through the implementation of the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications Handicapped Children programme. Occasionally the pace of lessons for older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is too hurried. In other unsatisfactory lessons, the pace is too slow, and does not keep the interest of pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It is rich, broad and relevant, and meets statutory requirements. It provides all pupils with exciting and stimulating multi-sensory experiences. The amount of time given to English varies across the classes; some pupils have more time for reading and writing than others.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school's commitment to reflection on all aspects of school life, and life in the community, and the development of self worth is of particular note.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Child protection, health and safety arrangements are excellent. Good behaviour and attendance are very well promoted and monitored. Assessment is strong and promotes good learning.

Parents view this as a very good, supportive and caring school. The school has very effective links with parents and the parents' involvement has a good impact on the work of the school

The strengths of the curriculum are the richness of the provision and the way the curriculum is adapted to meet a range of needs so as to ensure that pupils, on the whole, have satisfactory equality of opportunity. The school has not yet agreed how much time should be spent on different subjects and some timetables are better balanced than others. The curriculum for Sixth Form pupils is very good. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The very good links with the community give additional breadth and richness to the curriculum provided. Integration opportunities are very good for those pupils who take part in them. Personal development is particularly well monitored through the good quality individual educational plans.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, and a very effective senior management team and good subject managers ably support him. All members of staff and other agencies work together to provide a highly co-operative and co-ordinated team whose sole aim is to ensure pupils reach their full potential.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Very good relationships with the school allow it to act as a critical friend. The school fully meets statutory requirements. Recent appraisal of the headteacher has led to appropriate targets being set for him to further improve standards at the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Pupils' achievements, the provision for autistic pupils, and the quality of teaching are improving as a result of careful evaluation of the school's performance in these areas. The school management team monitor performance in the classroom, as do some co-ordinators. Appraisal is carefully linked to targets set in job descriptions, which are reviewed annually. The headteacher is fully aware of the areas of development needed for individual teachers and subjects.
The strategic use of resources	This is a very efficient school. The schools' spending decisions fully relate to improving standards of achievement. The school applies best value principles of competition and works innovatively to make best use of its funds.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school is reflected in the very good improvements made by the school since the last inspection. Change is managed very well through the careful delegation of responsibilities. The school has a high performing team of professionals and they inspire each other, lead by example, and take their responsibilities very seriously. The school thinks well ahead and plans prudently to secure the best value for money it can get and to ensure finances are available for prioritised developments. The school constantly monitors and evaluates its performance in relation to standards of achievement and costs; sets targets to improve, and meets them. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How approachable the school is, and the way the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• How well the school is led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework provision.</li> </ul>

The inspection team wholeheartedly agree with the parents' views. A small minority of parents believe that the amount of homework expected of their children is dependent on individual teachers. The home-school agreement does not go far enough in explaining the definition of homework or what the expectations are. The school is currently taking steps to clarify the position with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgments about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population*
2. Pupils' and students' achievements are improving. Pupils make at least good progress. Pupils and students achieve best when they are aged between under fives and seven, and then again when they are over sixteen.
3. Overall achievements in English are good following the satisfactory introduction of a modified literacy hour linked to 'P' Levels and pupils' targets within individual educational plans. Higher attaining pupils and students have maintained the good standards in communication and literacy seen at the last inspection. However, lower attaining pupils and students could do better in some aspects of communication, including reading and writing, if they were consistently provided with additional methods, such as symbols and information and communication technology. Pupils make good progress towards literacy targets within individual educational plans or accredited courses at all key stages. However, progress is variable in literacy overall and is very dependent on the degree of access to alternative methods of communication, and on how often teachers teach reading and writing. Older pupils make satisfactory overall progress in literacy within a narrow range, but some pupils spend more time on literacy than others. As a result, progress is slower for some.
4. Achievements in numeracy are good overall, and have improved since the last inspection, when achievement was found to be satisfactory. They are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, and satisfactory at Key Stage 3 where the teaching does not always meet the needs of all pupils, and where occasional staff shortages in lessons slow the pace of learning. The good improvement is a consequence of better planning and the good implementation of a modified numeracy framework. Recent training has improved teacher knowledge of the subjects' new demands. The school is on line to achieve the targets for improved performance against 'P' Levels and nationally accredited courses in literacy and numeracy
5. Science achievements are also better than at the last inspection and are now consistently good across all key stages. Pupils make good gains in scientific skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of science. This is due to the consistently good teaching of the primary teachers and of the science co-ordinator, who now provides specialist teaching in the secondary department. Planning is also much improved and now provides good guidance for teachers.

6. Pupils' achievements in information technology are good in lessons, but only satisfactory over time due to inconsistent planning of the subject. They are very good in the Sixth Form and good in Key Stage 4, where the co-ordinator teaches the subject, and where it is integrated well into daily teaching and learning. A very good action plan is already in place to deal with this disparity. Pupils' achievements in art, music and personal and social development are very good, and are good in all other subjects. The improved levels of achievement in science, mathematics, art and music are mainly due to the provision of specialist teaching or specialist co-ordination of the subject. Pupils make very good progress towards additional targets within individual educational plans, those for behaviour, for example. These are devised and monitored in collaboration with the headteacher and parents.

7. Children who are under five make excellent progress in personal and social development. They achieve very well in language and in their physical development. Children's achievements are also good in literacy and creative development, and they make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in mathematical skills and understanding. This is directly related to the quality of the teaching they receive and the support given by therapists.

8. Pupils with autism respond well to the structured Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications Handicapped Children approaches, which are now being consistently implemented throughout the school. A strong feature of this programme, which the school plans to develop further, is the use of distraction-reduced workstations to provide intensive one to one support for pupils. These pupils have improved in many aspects of communication, literacy and personal and social development and are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment, as their programmes are carefully devised to meet their individual needs. The good links with outside specialists, such as the Hearing Impaired Service, ensure that pupils with additional special needs are carefully monitored and that there is good support for staff. This promotes pupils' progress well. Feeding, positioning and physiotherapy programmes promote the personal development of younger pupils, and pupils with additional needs, very well. Pupils with additional special needs make good progress across the key stages towards achieving the targets set in their individual education plans. This is because appropriate specialist provision has been developed within the school. The health and movement, and therefore the personal development, of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are promoted well through the Mobility Opportunities Via Education programme.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They arrive at the school with enthusiasm, clearly looking forward to the day's activities, and they begin work promptly. The stimulating lessons and the confidence pupils have in their teachers lead to this positive response to school, and impact strongly on learning. There is a general air of purpose in lessons and pupils show a willingness to learn. Even the youngest pupils listen to their teachers carefully, try their hardest, and persevere with quite difficult tasks. They are proud of their work. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond well to sensory stimulus, and pupils with autism co-operate well and begin to manage their own behaviour and function well in the classroom.

10. Pupils behave very well in classes and around the school, and their behaviour outside the school on visits and at college is excellent. Parents feel that all pupils are happy to come to school, and that the school encourages their children to be polite, have good manners, work hard, and give each other mutual support and tolerance. Pupils are clear about how to behave through the clear teaching of values, and the good links the school has with home. They understand and value others and have excellent relationships with their teachers.

11. Pupils with autism are generally able to function well and join in with the life of the school. They tolerate, and are often interested in, the other pupils in the class, and have developed close relationships with support assistants. Pupils with autism show an increasing capacity to take responsibility as they progress through the school. For instance, a younger pupil offered to take the register, and an older pupil managed his own behaviour very well, avoiding becoming upset and angry, by taking himself to sit outside the classroom door for short periods when he felt unable to cope with being with other people. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are usually happy and responsive in school. Those pupils who also have additional challenging behaviours respond well to the structured regime that has been established in a designated class, so that inappropriate behaviours do not significantly impede their learning.

12. Pupils are polite to each other and respectful to teachers. Dinnertimes and playtimes are orderly pleasant, social occasions when pupils can confidently eat, play and enjoy themselves. There was no inappropriate behaviour, bullying or unkindness observed during the inspection. However, pupils are aware of the actions that lead to bullying and oppressive behaviour, and know exactly what to do if it occurs. All members of staff are very aware of the vulnerability of pupils and teach them from the earliest age to be kind to each other. Older pupils look after younger ones well.

13. Relationships within the school are excellent. Teachers value the pupils and celebrate every achievement. Even the youngest know they are valued and in turn value one other. Pupils trust their teachers and each other. In a discussion during the inspection, one 12 year old said the headteacher was the group's best friend. Pupils know members of staff care for them and for each other. This sets a good example to pupils who in turn are caring. Pupils reflect on what they do and understand its impact on others and they respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs.

14. Throughout their time in school, pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible, to recognise their own needs, and to have regard to the needs of others. They show increased initiative and take on more responsibility as they go through the school. At Post 16, students are noticeably more mature and adult in their conduct and relationships. They take on a variety of responsibilities around the school, for example the recycling paper project and a range of mini-enterprises, and they participate successfully in college links and work experience.

15. The school's attendance rate, at around 94 per cent, is good and compares favourably with the national average for similar schools. The punctuality of some pupils, as identified in the previous inspection report, continues to be of concern. The late arrival of transport causes some disruption to lessons already in progress.



## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good overall. It is good or better in 83 per cent of lessons, with 46 per cent of lessons being very good or better. It is unsatisfactory in 3 per cent of lessons observed. It is very good in art, music and religious education and good in all other subjects, except for Information and communication technology where it is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the under fives, Key Stage 1 and in the Sixth Form, and good at all other key stages. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, when it was judged to be sound. The school has employed specialist teachers in mathematics, science, art, and music, and this has enhanced the quality of teaching. The teaching of pupils with additional needs is now good. The school has improved provision for autistic pupils and for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties through training, raising adult/pupil ratios and the monitoring of provision.

17. The strengths are in the teachers' knowledge of special educational needs and of the methods and resources to be used to get the best out of the pupils they teach. Sensory approaches are used well for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and over learning is a common feature of lessons to ensure pupils remember facts and skills. The teachers are skilled in presenting a range of stimulating activities and resources that excite and inspire pupils to be curious, interested and involved. Pupils are animated in lessons because learning is fun.

18. The vast majority of teachers are enthusiastic in their presentation, plan carefully for lessons to develop knowledge, skills and understanding, and assess pupils very well to find out what they have learnt, or what they can do. They use this knowledge to prepare further challenging lessons to build on this good learning. Questioning skills are of a high order, and teachers know their pupils so well that a range of questions is used to involve all pupils in discussions. For example, the least able are asked '*what is it?*' and the most able are asked '*why does this happen?*' This is developing language skills and understanding well.

19. Subject knowledge is a particular strength in science, music, art and religious education, and teachers are not afraid to use subject specific vocabulary and to aim high in order for pupils to reach their full potential. Consequently, higher attaining pupils become familiar with, and learn and use this vocabulary, but lower attaining pupils find it more difficult to assimilate because it is not always consistently signed. Literacy is generally taught well. For example, the teaching of phonics is planned well and is taught systematically, and the lower attaining pupils have targets set against a modified literacy framework. However, not all teachers use symbols to exemplify written and oral language in displays, or recording sheets, and few pupils are given opportunities to record their work, using information technology and symbols, for example.

20. Subject knowledge is also strong in mathematics, and numeracy is taught well in the majority of mathematics lessons and in other subjects, and this ensures pupils have opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning. For example, in music the concepts of short and long, and longer than, were taught effectively by using a simply composed graphic score.

21. Behaviour management is a particular strength of the teaching. Almost all teachers are calm and sensitive in their approach; consistently follow behaviour plans; give praise to encourage pupils to persevere, and have high expectations of how pupils should behave. This results in pupils being productive, attentive and involved in lessons. Good teaching strategies are now in place for pupils with autism through the implementation of the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications Handicapped Children programme. Visual timetables with a timeline are used throughout the school and visual symbols are used successfully with individual pupils to promote their learning. Consequently, pupils with autism make good progress in developing their communication skills and establish basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

22. Where the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is well adapted to their particular needs, they focus well, remain alert and show evidence of good learning. However, on occasions when the pace of interactions with some older pupils is too hurried, they are not relaxed and this impedes their learning at times. Slow pace is also a feature of occasional unsatisfactory lessons for older pupils, particularly at the end of the day when pupils are less able to concentrate.

23. Support assistants play an important part in the pupils' learning. They are almost always well briefed, manage behaviour well, and are fully aware of pupils' next steps in learning. They are generally deployed well to assist pupils, and to use their own strengths, such as Makaton, or working individually with pupils with autism. However, in occasional lessons they are not deployed well; consequently pupils are uninvolved for long periods of time, and this slows the pace of learning.

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

24. The curricular provision is rich, broad and relevant, and meets statutory requirements. It provides all pupils with exciting and stimulating multi-sensory experiences. Pupils with additional special educational needs have access to a broad and relevant curriculum, delivery of which is appropriately adapted to meet different needs. Mixed key stage class groups are well matched for ability, and all pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum, which ensures equality of opportunity. There are good opportunities for pupils to integrate into appropriate classes within school, and some very good opportunities for some children, pupils and students to integrate into mainstream provision. However, these opportunities could be usefully extended to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

25. Particular strengths across the school are in the provision for personal and social education, mathematics, religious education, art, science and music. There is accreditation in all core subjects and in art, design and technology and a modern foreign language. Information and communication technology is developing well in relation to the school action plan. However, not all provision is fully secure and there is still a need to develop medium term planning further in information technology, music and personal and social education, for example.

26. Good provision for pupils with autism ensures relevant specialised teaching and management programmes.

27. The school has implemented a modified literacy hour satisfactorily. It has linked modified Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 'P' Levels to the literacy framework well. The modified numeracy hour, which also has linked 'P' Levels, is implemented well. The balance of the curriculum is reasonable. The school has not yet agreed the amount of time to be spent on different subjects, and time for teaching English, French and religious education is low overall compared to national averages for schools of this type. It also lacks parity between classes within key stages. Within literacy hour, there is also some imbalance between attainment targets.

28. The curriculum provided for the under fives is rich and diverse and meets the individual needs of pupils. A balanced programme covers the areas of learning through a topic-based approach, with an emphasis on language, literacy, mathematics and play. Some pupils have very good opportunities for learning in integrated pre-school settings, and there are plans to extend this provision to all pupils. This results in a broad, relevant and generally balanced programme of work, which is driven by individual programmes of work for each subject. However, it is not formally planned to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning.

29. The curriculum for Sixth Form students is very good. Its strength is in its relevance and preparation for adult life. It is distinctive and highly relevant to their needs. Pupils have good opportunities to discover about the life in the community and the world after school. For the oldest pupils these opportunities include work experience and college links. The emphasis is well directed at developing independence skills. Students work towards Northern Examinations and Assessment Board accreditation in life skills, including relevant numeracy and literacy modules. Opportunities to have work experience within school are good, and students take responsibilities, which helps them towards independence. The programme of visits to places of work, and the opportunities to make choices of work experience and to take decisions about what they will do on leaving the Sixth Form are very good. When necessary, appropriate support is provided for students in their work experience placements. Students also have valuable, weekly, college-accredited courses at Reaseheath Horticultural College, where they have excellent opportunities to develop an understanding of work practices and to use their social and independence skills.

30. Careers education is very good and is open to pupils from Year 9 onwards. Individual planning to meet the needs and interests of pupils and students is formulated through joint planning with outside agencies, students, and parents at the transitional review. The school enjoys a good, long-standing relationship with a specialist careers officer. The students work towards Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network Workright awards and Project Trident Gold Awards. Where students in Key Stage 4 are in classes that have pupils at a lower key stage, there are opportunities for every one to learn about work and to find out about the jobs people do, using an appropriate careers education programme. The involvement of parents and students at this stage of their education is particularly note-worthy and includes a successful annual careers evening.

31. Extra-curricular provision at the school is very good. It includes sporting activities such as football and cricket, and cultural occasions, such as visits to the theatre and trips on the canal. A number of residential activities take place. A minority of parents wish to see some

after-school club activity. This has been acknowledged by the school and is being addressed with plans to set up an after-school sports activity, although the nature of the school and its necessary transport arrangements make this difficult to achieve.

32. The school continues to develop its very good links in the community. A member of staff has been appointed to co-ordinate these activities. They include football coaching with Crewe Alexandra Football Club, and links with Cheshire Sport Trust that encourages pupils to participate in other sports, such as athletics, cricket and swimming. These activities raise self-esteem, and increase skills and understandings of working with others. Cultural links include the Manchester Camerata orchestra, which provided very good opportunities for musical composition and performance for the Sixth Form. The older pupils help at afternoon tea dances for the local elderly, which gives something back to the community and has a significant impact on pupils' personal development. Multi-sensory experiences are extended and developed through links with the community. For example the multi-sensory garden, which is planned with Rolls Royce, will be established this year.

33. Good relationships are enjoyed with other special schools in the area, and this enables good developments in the curriculum. Links are established with mainstream primary and secondary schools and colleges, and some pupils visit these, as well as a local pre-school group, at regular intervals and gain good opportunities for social development. Each class has an integration target within their action plans. For students, the transition between Sixth Form and colleges of further education is very smooth as a result of these good links.

34. The school makes very effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and has maintained the good provision for pupils' cultural experiences. It has extended and improved the overall provision by regular review and evaluation. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Respecting the values and dignity of others and providing opportunities for pupils to do so are considered central of the work of the school, and are highlighted in the school's aims and policies. Teachers help pupils to value themselves and their relationships by celebrating their achievements and their uniqueness, and by teaching them to value those of others.

35. The spiritual dimension is highlighted in most subject areas, but is particularly strong in art, religious education, personal, social, and health education and music. As well as vibrant, uplifting experiences, strong personal support and guidance in these lessons ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and raise their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have very good opportunities in art, to study well-known artists, and in mathematics and music, to experience and reflect upon the beauty of natural symmetries and regularities and on their own and others' work.

36. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to reflect on personal experiences. Questions of deeper concerns, when they occur, are dealt with practically and sensitively. For example, the school has helped pupils to come to terms with the issue of bereavement by discussion and in very practical ways. Pupils place a table in a central place in the school with a photograph of the person who has died on it, surrounded by evidence of their achievements and their favourite things, decorating it with cards, and flowers. This enables pupils to come to terms with their loss and to celebrate the life of their friend.

37. All classes say prayers during and at the end of the day and have periods of reflection throughout the day. Weekly planned assemblies are occasionally led by outside speakers and are broadly Christian in character, but celebrate other religions and other cultures at regular intervals. Assemblies celebrate achievements, big and small, of individual pupils, classes and the whole school. High quality certificates are given out and are highly valued by pupils. Religious education also makes a strong contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

38. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is strongly supported by the high quality relationships and the ethos of mutual respect, which characterise the school. Teachers are very good role models. Pupils learn to understand what is right and what is wrong by direct teaching of values in form periods, in all subjects, but particularly in music, religious education and personal and social development. Pupils also learn to behave in a morally acceptable way and to be sensitive to others in the schools' daily routines. Members of staff are quick to acknowledge good behaviour and attitudes and do so consistently. Teachers discuss behaviour plans with pupils who have challenging behaviour, so that they understand them, know their behaviour targets and try hard to achieve them. Pupils are taught to understand the consequences of actions and are encouraged to value each other and respect property.

39. The school provides very well for pupils' social development, and is particularly valued by parents. Clear aims promote a good self-image, self-confidence, tolerance, independence and initiative amongst pupils. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Its strength is in the excellent relationships between pupils, members of staff and outside agencies. Its purpose is to ensure that pupils and students grow in maturity and independence. The school has improved its provision for sex and health education, which includes drugs education, after holding a three-day workshop as part of the Health Promoting Schools' Initiative. There is now a regular planned programme of work for all secondary aged pupils to meet all pupils' needs. This very effective programme of work also includes: mobility training, feeding and dressing programmes, independence skills, healthy eating and relationships. Recent training with parents, and a governor and co-ordinator, has emphasised the importance of personal and social education and its rightful place in the curriculum. Pupils take part in community projects and feel very much a part of the larger community of Crewe. For example, as part of an art project, pupils joined with other schools, both mainstream and special, to restore and enhance local bus shelters. Pupils of all ages are part of 'Cheshire's Millennium Pilgrimage' and have links with a local hospice.

40. Pupils learn about other religious beliefs, cultures, and ceremonies in religious education, and there are good opportunities to carry this knowledge through into other lessons. Pupils learn about a range of art forms and artists, including Aboriginal art and African art. Music also helps develop pupil's understanding of other cultures. Older pupils learn French and pupils visit the 'French Café', and representatives from different cultural groups come into the school to run workshops and support celebrations. Pupils visit museums, theatres, art galleries and concerts, as well as performing in drama productions and concerts. Residential visits to Wales and other parts of England add to pupils' cultural experiences.

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

41. The school cares for its pupils very well indeed. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are excellent. Clear guidelines are laid down for child protection for all staff; key staff and other members of staff are well trained, and procedures are strictly adhered to. There is effective liaison with outside agencies and the school nurse is ideally placed in the school to offer regular health advice. Health and safety are well monitored, and regular checks are carried out on all electrical and fire equipment. Risk assessments are made of the school premises, as well as for school trips. The minor concerns raised in the recent health and safety inspection have been addressed successfully.

42. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. There are daily checks of registers, and unexplained absences are quickly followed up. However, lateness is still a problem and disrupts lessons at the beginning of the day. The school took steps during the inspection to improve the procedures for monitoring lateness and now has a more effective system to monitor its effect. The services of the educational welfare officer are used appropriately. Procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. There has been an improvement, since the previous inspection in the way the more challenging behaviour of some pupils is addressed. The very good, positively written behaviour policy was the subject of wide consultation. It clearly identifies rewards and sanctions, which are well understood by pupils and parents alike. All members of staff, including mid-day assistants, consistently apply the rules that are prominently displayed throughout the school. The draft bullying policy is very effective in eliminating oppressive conduct. Individual behaviour programmes are drawn up in conjunction with the class team, headteacher and, where appropriate, the behaviour support team and ensure that the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour are strong.

43. Since the last inspection the school has maintained good day-to-day assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development. Individual education plans are of very good quality. Most targets are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time related, and all plans include personal and social development targets. These make a significant contribution to pupils' overall good achievement. Targets are set and reviewed every term and are valuable in assessing how well pupils are achieving. Occasionally targets are vague, but to address this issue, the senior management team have taken action to monitor all individual educational plans throughout the school. As a result, good improvements have been made. Progress towards targets is continuously well recorded on index cards held in

each classroom. Individual plans for pupils with additional difficulties are reviewed each term, using a 'progress through experience' recording system. This allows progress to be measured in very small gradations. In other target areas, progress is recorded in three steps towards achievement. Links to previous targets are clear. All this information is then well used to inform future teaching.

44. Performance 'P' scales assess pupils' attainment, alongside National Curriculum Tests and accredited courses, and this information is helpful in illustrating attainment by key stage, class and individual, and by gender. This information is used as a firm basis to set whole school targets. Baseline assessment, which is linked to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning and has been specially designed to meet the needs of pupils with severe and profound difficulties, is also in place for pupils who are under five. This provides a useful starting point for analysis of which targets to be set first. However, individual educational plans for the under fives are set in the context of National Curriculum subjects, and this makes it difficult for teachers to write out their plans for children clearly.

45. Records of pupils' progress are very ordered and well maintained and show a considerable effort on the part of the school to keep them easily accessible and up to date. Evidence of work folders is produced to a high standard and demonstrates pupils' experiences and achievements well, and there are good records of achievement, which are owned and valued by older students. The school could improve pupil records by implementing this practice further down the school and sharing them with pupils and parents. This would afford younger pupils the same opportunities for reflection on their achievements as older pupils.

46. Pupils' personal development is supported by class teachers' good knowledge of pupils. Where appropriate there is very effective collaboration with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists. The introduction of the Mobility Opportunities Via Education programme demonstrates very effective teamwork, which has enabled pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to make significant progress in physical development and personal development. Pupils' self esteem and confidence are built up by regular praise, not only in lessons, but also by having a 'pupil of the week' system for each class. At the end of each term one pupil from each class is able to earn an award for achievements in personal development, and is given due recognition.

47. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for day provision as outlined in statements of special educational needs. However, statements of pupils' educational need are often vague, and targets set at the annual review are too numerous and imprecise, making it difficult to measure progress accurately at this stage. The special educational needs co-ordinator is aware of these shortcomings and has already begun to review current procedures.

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

48. Parents view this as a very good, supportive and caring school. The partnership that exists with parents is very effective and much improved since the last inspection. A small minority of parents believe that the amount of work children are expected to do at home is dependent on the individual teachers. The home-school agreement does not go far enough in explaining the definition of homework, or what the expectations are. The school is currently taking steps to clarify the position with parents. A member of senior management team is

actively addressing all the issues raised in the parents' questionnaire. The school actively encourages parents to help in school. Parents come in to bake with pupils; bring in their babies and talk about their care in personal and social education lessons; talk about their past experiences in history lessons, and help with horse riding and on outside visits. The contribution that parents make to their child's learning, both at home and in school, is good.

49. The quality of information given to parents by the school, including information about pupils' progress is very good. Home-school diaries allow a useful dialogue to take place between the parent and class teacher. Regular newsletters supplement this information, and home visits by members of staff promote co-operation and participation in pupils' learning. The end of year academic reports on individual pupils progress are clearly laid out for parents and welcomed by them. Formal meetings with staff take place twice a year, in addition to the annual review of their child's statement of special educational needs. These meetings give parents and pupils the opportunity to contribute to the academic and personal targets being set for the forthcoming year. The concerns raised by a small number of parents, in the previous inspection report, regarding information about the curriculum, have been addressed successfully.

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

50. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, and very good leadership of the senior management team provide a very firm steer to all aspects of the school's work. They are well supported by subject co-ordinators and the governing body. The great strength of the leadership and management of the school is in the way all members of staff are committed to school's aims. This is reflected in the very good improvements made by the school since the last inspection.

51. Change is managed very well through the careful delegation of responsibilities. All members of the educational staff participate in the appraisal scheme and professional development interviews. These procedures are effective in determining personal and school priorities for improving standards in relation to the objectives of the school development plan. These are linked to staff job descriptions, which are evaluated annually. The headteacher is fully aware of the areas of development needed for individual teachers and subjects, and subject co-ordinators have appropriate targets for development within their own development plans.

52. The school has a high performing team of professionals and they inspire each other, lead by example, and take their responsibilities very seriously. The school thinks well ahead and plans prudently in relation to the best value that can be got for its money, and to ensure finances are available for prioritised developments. The school is constantly monitoring and evaluating its performance in relation to standards of achievement and costs. It sets targets to improve, and meets them.

53. The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and it acts as a critical friend. The governors have ensured that the school fully meets statutory requirements and their relationship with the management team is very good. They have recently appraised the headteacher and have set appropriate targets for him that relate to



further monitoring and evaluating of standards in order to secure further improvements at the school. The inclusion of an action plan into the school development plan relating to developing their monitoring role would further improve their influence in shaping the future of the school.

54. Pupils' achievements, the provision for autistic pupils and the quality of teaching is improving as a result of careful evaluation of the school's performance in these areas. The advisor for special educational needs has undertaken recent monitoring of teaching, and given formal feedback to teachers about their performance. The school management team also monitor performance in the classroom, as do some co-ordinators, although their monitoring of teaching could be usefully extended.

55. The arrangements for staff development are very good, contributing effectively to raising staff expertise since the previous inspection. The school sets high standards for staff development and participates in 'Investors in People'. Each member of staff is awarded an annual in-house certificate to acknowledge in-service training provided both by the school and by external agencies. Members of staff are encouraged to take part in long courses and the school supports many financially.

56. Mentoring systems and other arrangements for the induction of new staff effectively enable them to understand the special nature of their tasks. The induction of the new deputy was particularly effective in that the role was gradually increased to include all aspects of the previous deputy's role, whilst other members of the senior management team temporarily maintained the old roles. This ensured a very smooth transition period. These strategies, together with the good staff handbook, enable new staff to settle quickly into school.

57. This is a very efficient school. The schools' spending decisions fully relate to improving pupils' achievements. The school works innovatively to make best use of its funds. Senior management and the governors set high standards for the school, and measure the success of spending priorities against key assessments, such as how well pupils achieve by the time they leave. They have employed innovative methods to achieve their aims to increase the provision of support assistants and to improve the accommodation since the previous inspection with a limited budget.

58. The school has given a lead locally by increasing support assistants through improving the match of roles to pupils' needs. This has a significant impact in promoting a high standard of care, and is reflected in the increased progress pupils make. At times during the day, there are shortages of assistants, but the school is seeking ways to rectify this and to reduce class sizes further. The provision of teaching and support assistants is now good. Specialist teachers in science, music, art, and physical education have had a direct effect on the good or very good achievements of pupils in these subjects. Consequently, progress has improved or been maintained since the last inspection. A specialist mathematics teacher has improved the provision, although she does not directly teach groups of pupils other than their own classes.

59. The school has made significant improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection. This has been achieved through judicious financial planning and exemplary co-operation with the local health trust. The new building provides well for pupils' needs and reflects a high commitment to pupils' care. The school is very well used and organised, and it is very well maintained and kept very clean by the premises manager and his team. All the

issues surrounding the previous inspection have been addressed, apart from that of science provision, and this is in the process of development. The accommodation is of high quality and provides a good learning environment for all pupils. The school hall is multi-purpose and has very fine facilities for drama, with stage lighting that enhances opportunities for performing arts. The provision for other agencies is a great boon, and the therapy now available on site enables pupils to receive quality care without disruption to their education.

60. The Sixth Form accommodation continues to be a particular asset with a separate flat and adult learning environment. Storage facilities have been improved and there is now an absence of clutter in the school. The hydrotherapy pool, although not large, is attractively presented and used well. The library is an excellent resource for all staff, parents and pupils. There is a good selection of books throughout the school and many subject resources are to be found in the library. Every classroom is well used, has interesting and colourful displays, and has enough space to enable all children to learn in comfort. There is space for pupils with autism to learn in a distraction free environment when necessary. The Early Years rooms are particularly spacious and interestingly set out to meet the requirements of the different areas of learning, with quiet areas, wet and dry areas and work and play areas. There is a very safe outside area for the youngest pupils. One of the Early Years rooms also has a looped sound system to meet the needs of the hearing impaired and this has a very beneficial impact on the listening skills of all the youngest pupils.

61. The rooms designated for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are particularly good, with enough space for movement with the new specialist equipment designed to increase mobility for pupils with additional physical difficulties. The resources for music and science could be more effectively managed if each had a dedicated room so that resources did not have to be carried from lesson to lesson. This would also enhance opportunities for older pupils.

62. Resources are good overall but with some shortfalls in age-appropriate resources in music and English. They are very good in religious education and science. The policy of purchasing only the best quality resources has resulted in the development of a very good resource base, which is constantly reviewed and replenished as part of the school development plans. The shortfalls in information technology hardware are addressed in the budget planning. Pupils' achievements are well documented and supported with the use of photography and video, and audiotapes. Equipment is well matched to pupil needs and great imagination has gone into the purchase of portable resources. Artefacts support and enrich work in religious education, history and geography, and provide hands-on experiences for pupils. Objects, which are used to inform pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties of what is to happen next, are agreed throughout the school and are used well to support learning. For example, a particular colour and sized cup is used to symbolise drinks time.

63. The schools' resources are regularly checked, an inventory is up to date and every item is well maintained. An extremely efficient link with the health authority enables vital equipment to be in school at all times and is significant in providing continuity of care. The school continues to improve the specialist-adapted furniture available to pupils and this very much promotes their personal and social development.

64. Financial systems are efficient, responding to need, and freeing school staff to concentrate on promoting pupils' learning. Senior managers and school administrators use

information technology effectively to maintain records. The graphic illustrations of expenditure and pupils' progress are particularly useful to enable governors and staff to gain a clear picture of the performance of the school. The school has developed very well understood practices in purchasing, to achieve cost effectiveness whilst aiming to raise standards in teaching and learning. Financial planning is very good. The school effectively employs the funds available to ensure that educational provision is good. In view of the school's many strengths and its low unit costs, the school provides very good value for money, and the Sixth Form provides excellent value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Ensure lower attaining pupils and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have more successful methods of extracting information, and expressing and recording what they enjoy, know, understand and can do by:
  - \* Monitoring the use of symbols and signing systems and information and communication technology to ensure they are used in a more effective and consistent manner;  
(Paragraphs: 3, 19, 75, 77, 78, 81, 94, 112, 137, 144, 147)
  - \* Ensuring symbols are used as support for reading simple texts and subject vocabulary displayed in the classroom and used in lessons.  
(Paragraphs: 3, 75)
  
- Improve the balance of opportunities for all pupils in English by:
  - \* Improving policy and planning documents for each aspect of English to show how teachers will provide a broad and more balanced range of age-appropriate contexts for reading and writing as pupils move through the school;  
(Paragraphs: 3, 27, 62, 75, 82)
  - \* Monitoring the timetables to ensure that an appropriate amount of time is spent on each aspect of English for all pupils, whatever their age or disability.  
(Paragraphs: 27, 75)

The governing body, and headteacher and key staff should also consider the following smaller improvements to be made:

### Continue to follow the current action plans to:

- \* to increase the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinators, giving priority to mathematics;  
(Paragraphs: 54, 85, 89)
- \* further improve standards of achievement in information and communication technology;  
(Paragraphs: 3, 6, 19, 25, 78, 89, 90)
- \* reduce times in the school day when pupils are not involved in lessons by further improving the staff/pupil ratio;  
(Paragraphs: 23, 58, 87, 88, 118)
- \* improve the accommodation for science and music;  
(Paragraphs: 59, 61, 90)
- \* monitor class plans to increase levels of integration;  
(Paragraph: 24)

- \* monitor lateness more effectively and act on the information to ensure transport lateness is kept to a minimum;  
(Paragraphs: 14, 42, 67)
- \* formalising medium term planning into schemes of work in the Early Years to show development of pupils towards Early Years goals when these become available;  
(Paragraphs: 28, 44)
- \* improve the understanding of what 'homework' means in relation to this special school and make it clear how parents can be involved through the home school agreement.  
(Paragraph: 48)

**To ensure the high standards are maintained by the following:**

- \* in music and personal, social and health education by further development of medium term plans and age appropriate resources;  
(Paragraphs: 25, 61, 62, 126)
- \* in religious education and French by extending the time spent on the subject;  
(Paragraphs: 27, 135)
- \* that annual review targets are more precise and restricted to the areas of priority in order to enable the more accurate measurement of progress at the review stage.  
(Paragraph: 47)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	139
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	40	37	14	3	0	0

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

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	106
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	31

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	0.30

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

- 5 pupils were all working towards National Curriculum Level 1 in English, mathematics and science.

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

- 8 pupils were working towards Level 1 English and mathematics. 3 pupils Level 1 science and 5 pupils Level 2 sciences.

### *Attainment at end of Key Stage 3*

- 4 pupils working towards Level 1 in English, at Level 1 in mathematics and science.

### *Attainment at Key Stage 4*

- 21 pupils of whom 50 per cent achieved a minimum of one AQA/NEAB Unit in mathematics and English. No pupils achieved an AQA/NEAB Unit or equivalent in information and communication technology.
- 21 pupils of whom 57 per cent achieved a minimum of two AQA/NEAB Unit in personal, social, health education/life skills

### *Attainment at the end of Sixth Form*

- 15 students of whom 80 per cent achieved a minimum of eight external accredited qualifications (AQA/NEAB Units, certificate of achievement, GCSE or ASDAN Work right)

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	106
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

*Teachers and classes*

**Qualified teachers and classes:**

**YR – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.36
Average class size	9.63

**Education support staff:**

**YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	25.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	763

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1998-1999</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	870546.00
Total expenditure	955966.00
Expenditure per pupil	8935.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	159500.00
Balance carried forward to next year	74080.00



**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	106
Number of questionnaires returned	53

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74.0	21.0	4.0	2.0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57.0	33.0	6.0	0	4.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54.0	40.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30.0	45.0	18.0	2.0	2.0
The teaching is good.	71.0	25.0	2.0	0	2.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75.0	17.0	8.0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89.0	11.0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71.0	29.0	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73.0	23.0	2.0	2.0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83.0	15.0	0	0	2.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62.0	36.0	2.0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60.0	25.0	4.0	6.0	4.0

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

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

65. Pupils' achievements in the under fives are very good. Children achieve very well in language, and well in literacy. Teachers give lively presentations of big book stories and rhymes, have high expectations of children to listen and look, and use objects alongside the pictures in stories. This ensures pupils make good gains in their acquisition of language and a love of books. Children become well aware of the rhythm and rhyme of stories and poems because this is emphasised, and teachers repeat them until the children begin to join in. All teachers and support staff sign key words and talk about texts well, and this ensures children who need to, sign well, and others name or point out a variety of objects and characters in stories and picture books. Sensory methods, including musical approaches, are used well to stimulate the senses of the lower attaining children, and as a result they become more responsive in literacy lessons and show increasingly consistent responses to favourite textures of objects.

66. Children are given good opportunities to make marks on paper, or in continuous materials, and are supported by hand over hand methods. As a result children learn to hold and use tools correctly for writing, make marks more easily, and achieve success. Specialist seating from the Mobility Opportunities via Education programme is used very successfully for children with additional physical difficulties. It enables them to participate in their peer group at the same positioning level as other children in order to see the texts and the teacher. This increases their opportunities for learning. Targets within individual educational plans are not as clear as they could be for literacy, although learning outcomes in lessons are well specified. This makes achievements and rate of progress difficult to measure in specific terms over time, but easier in lessons.

67. Pupils' make good gains in mathematical skills and understanding through the good teaching they receive. Some disruptions to lessons at the beginning of the day result in slower pace to some lessons, and the very good teaching could be more effective if mathematical learning took place at a more settled time. Constant repetition of numbers, and the concept of one-to-one matching being taught in a variety of ways and contexts, ensure children retain number language well and develop good matching skills. Good opportunities are given to explore continuous materials and objects of different colours and sizes with good support from adults, who talk to pupils about what they are doing. This increases their mathematical vocabulary. Children learn to use switches to change their environment through the good support they receive from classroom assistants. Sound looped systems, and brightly coloured number lines produced by the teachers, are used very effectively to motivate children to listen and watch the teacher count. Consequently, children pay attention and learn to rote count and match number names well.

68. Teaching in personal and social development is excellent, and children make excellent progress. Teachers and support assistants, including dinner-time assistants, are well aware of the personal needs of children who are under fives. Excellent feeding and drinking programmes, which are planned with the speech and language therapist, ensure all children make excellent progress in learning table manners, chewing, eating a variety of foods, and

manipulating feeding utensils. Specialist seating and tables, some of which are from the Mobility Opportunities via Education programme, ensure all children are seated in optimum positions for making gains in feeding themselves, or for being given food. Support assistants have very high expectations of children when teaching dressing and undressing skills, and give them plenty of time and praise to enable them to succeed on their own. Brightly coloured dressing cubes with assortments of fastenings encourage pupils to practise through play, increase their skills and gain pride in their own abilities.

69. Children's behaviour is very well managed throughout the day through the appropriate and interesting work they are given to do. Positive praise, in shortened speech forms such as 'Good looking, good listening,' is very successful in ensuring that pupils know when they have done well. Music therapy contributes highly to pupils' social development. Regular circle times, where all pupils are gathered together to share activities and to take part in prayers and song, instils kindness and a growing understanding of right and wrong. The promotion of play in all its forms ensures children learn to work and play alongside each other very well.

70. The quality of teaching of physical development is very good and children make very good progress. Children who have hearing impairments do not have the opportunity to swim often as this increases problems with their ears. However, they make giant strides in music and movement lessons, and learn to listen well to the music and respond appropriately. High attaining children learn to ride a tricycle in outside play sessions, and to keep their balance when kicking a ball, or climbing down steps. Very good gains are made because there is a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching. Physiotherapy staff and teachers set precise targets for improvement, and then give time and support, for the practice of specific skills. Mobility Opportunities via Education equipment is used very well in physical development lessons to enable children with additional physical difficulties to move around the hall independently. As they get older they learn to negotiate obstacles very well.

71. The teaching of creative development is good and children make good progress. Their development is greatly enhanced by the very good specialist teaching of the music therapist, who ensures children have good opportunities for performance and listening. The careful presentation of work ensures that these youngest children make good gains in learning a variety of age appropriate songs and rhymes. Children learn to make choices in creative art sessions, as there are always lots to choose from that are interesting and stimulating to touch, hold and see. They begin to learn printing skills using fruit through the good-hand-over hand techniques with reduced prompting methods that are used. The higher attaining children have good opportunities to play in role, in Literacy, music and in creative lessons. This stimulates their language development well and increases their confidence. Lower attaining pupils learn to print with their hands and fingers and to participate well in musical activities, often moving their bodies to sound of the music they prefer.

72. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good, and children make good progress. Teachers present a variety of play activities that stimulate this area of learning. Books are used to tell stories of life outside of school and family. Higher attaining children learn to explore the world using all their senses and begin to take part in imaginative play activities that encompass life outside the family and school. For example, they name and play

with wild animals and farm animals and associate some of the names of them with the small animals they play with. They pretend to be train drivers and play with toy trains. Specific lessons relating to the scientific aspect of knowledge and understanding add structure to the teaching and enable children to make good gains in skills knowledge and understanding of their bodies, for example.

73. All topics have linked songs to consolidate learning of body parts, for example. Lower attaining pupils are presented with a range of exciting textures, sounds, smells, tastes and objects. At the time of the inspection, the focus was on metal objects, and the sounds, textures and shininess of them were explored well with the very good support of teachers and members of support staff. Children with additional physical difficulties were positioned well, objects being hung over head so they could also participate at their own level of physical ability. Tinsel and metal musical instruments all were investigated to find out what happened when they were blown, struck and shaken. Children sustained their creative and intellectual effort and communicated preferences independently over long periods due to the range of activities and the good initial support provided.

## **ENGLISH**

74. Overall, the achievement of pupils in English is now good. The curriculum managers have worked hard to make improvements since the last inspection, and to satisfactorily implement the literacy strategy, and this has improved progress for the majority of pupils. The modified literacy hour is linked well into 'P' Levels, and pupils' targets within individual educational plans. This is giving pupils who are aged between five and eleven good quality learning opportunities. Mixed key stage groupings of pupils of similar levels of skills and ability assist teachers to plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils within each group across the school. Teachers use 'P' Level assessments to set pupils' literacy targets in their individual education plans well. Pupils' progress towards attaining the targets is very well recorded on index cards in the classroom. This ensures that all pupils achieve some success in working towards learning targets in basic literacy skills, although for older pupils it is within a narrower range of work.

75. Taught time for literacy is, however, variable across classes and key stages. Although teachers plan literacy targets each term, there is at present no broad overview of the literacy curriculum to plan and assure coverage of the range of literacy skills and experiences. The proportion of time spent on each attainment target is not yet monitored to ensure balance and optimise the achievement of pupils in each area. This particularly, but not exclusively affects progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 3 and 4, and in the Sixth Form. Progress in writing is also still limited by the inconsistent use of information technology and symbols systems to support non-writers. The school is using symbol systems, such as the Makaton, Mayer Johnson and picture exchange systems. This has resulted in improved speaking and listening for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, and for autistic pupils of all ages. However, these are not secure for all pupils at the school who need additional methods of communication. The contribution of other subjects to literacy development is good for writers, but is less advanced for those pupils who would benefit from symbol and signing systems.

76. Teaching and learning are good across the key stages for the majority of pupils. Three quarters of the teaching seen in English is good or better, and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Higher attaining oral speakers make good progress in speaking and very good progress in listening at all key stages. Higher attaining oral pupils are given good opportunities to listen to stories and talk about their work and news, and to take part in discussion, both in English lessons, and in other subjects. Progress is seen in the way pupils, as they move through the school, become more confident and clear. They develop an awareness of conversational style and some show they are able to adapt what they say to meet the needs of the listener by the time they leave the school. Skilled questioning, pupils being allowed time to answer, good behaviour management, and each response being valued, all ensure that higher attaining oral pupils are confident speakers and enthusiastic listeners at all key stages.

77. The use of a sound system, and consistent signing in younger classes, ensures pupils listen, pay attention and are very well behaved. High attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are given good opportunities to talk about their weekend activities and they tell their news well in simple phrases. Pupils are also given good opportunities to retell stories and many join in the repetitive refrains in 'Where's my teddy?' for example. Well organised and delivered Makaton sessions taken by support assistants encourage non-oral pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, to communicate by signing. This increases their understanding of a wider breadth of language. However, the use of signing in later key stages is less in evidence, and this slows non-oral pupils' progress.

78. Specific objects are consistently used to signal changes of routine. This ensures pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities learn that objects are associated with different activities as they move through the key stages. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to use switches for communication, although these are not used consistently in other lessons. Pupils do not have communication books that set out how individuals communicate, and this makes it difficult for others, who do not know them, to talk to them and interpret their responses.

79. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in reading and writing. Pupils enjoy books because they are so enthusiastically presented in literacy lessons. A strength of the teaching is the way textured and brightly coloured objects are used to signify characters and objects in stories. This involves lower attaining pupils in the oral texts. They eagerly hold, or reach out to touch and feel them when the story is being read. Pupils with profound and multiple disabilities listen well, watch and associate these objects with the activities within the picture texts of Mrs. Wishy-Washy, for example. Teachers then encourage pupils to take part in role-play. They become Mrs. Wishy-Washy, wearing the distinctive head square, washing with water and bubbles, and consequently learn that objects have a specific purpose. Teachers introduce the names of all of the characters well, and point out punctuation in the texts. As a result pupils begin to know some words, and about full stops and question marks. Phonic skills and a range of other reading strategies are taught well, and this ensures pupils recognise initial sounds of words and are building a sight vocabulary each at their own rate of progress. Teachers give good models of writing and this helps pupils to underwrite their names in distinguishable separate letter shapes.

80. Teachers extend their range of reading in Key Stage 2, continue to teach phonics well, and offer age-appropriate books. As a result, higher attaining pupils are beginning to identify rhyming words in poems, and are attempting to sound out unfamiliar words using phonic blends. Teachers give good opportunities and have high expectations that high attaining pupils will learn to write independently. As a result, pupils become increasingly adept in using their own vocabulary books and simple dictionaries.

81. Average and lower attaining pupils achieve well enough with reading and writing at this key stage, and in Key Stages 3 and 4, but need a higher level of support because of the inconsistent use of symbols and information technology to support their reading and writing. However, there is good emphasis on reading and understanding popular slogans seen in shops, such as, 'Buy one, get one free', and pupils enjoy reading these and noticing them in the supermarket.

82. The overall achievement of all pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory in reading and writing within narrow range of work. Key Stage 4 pupils make good gains in accreditation, but again some credits are narrow in their range. Non-oral pupils of this age make satisfactory progress overall in learning social sight words that are regularly used in lessons. Teachers plan effective use of information technology reading and spelling programmes, which support higher and average attaining pupils well in their learning. Homework is well used to help pupils to make progress in reading, and most pupils have support from parents throughout the school and in the Sixth Form. Pupils of this age however, as identified in the literacy development action plan, do not experience a wide enough range of literacy opportunities, as age appropriate resources are limited. Within all lessons, the pace is normally good and there is planned variety in the learning activities so that pupils stay focused on tasks. When the pace is slower, they become less alert and the rate of learning slows.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Pupils achieve well overall in mathematics. Pupils' achievements are very good in Key Stage 1, good in Key Stage 2, satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. The variations in the progress the pupils make are linked directly to the quality of teaching. Standards of teaching are good at Key Stages 2, and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The best standards of achievement are in Key Stage 1, where standards of teaching and learning are very good. Effective planning by teachers builds upon the baseline assessment of what individual pupils already know. High attaining pupils recognise and count from one to five without help and progress from six to ten with support. They add one more to a group of five with a growing understanding of addition. Progress is easily measurable through the good records that are kept. Pupils learn to recall numbers well during numeracy lessons. Lower attaining pupils count to four with good prompting from support assistants. They match coloured bricks to patterns, where teachers and support assistants provide pupils with plenty of time and encouragement to choose the correct solution. Pupils remain on task well because they receive good support and encouragement. This promotes good behaviour. Lesson introductions provide pupils with good information of what they have learnt in the past and pupils build upon this.

84. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress against targets set for them in their individual education plans. Teachers know pupils well and ask pupils challenging questions

during the numeracy lessons. Pupils know the routine very well and concentrate because they want to answer. They count numbers to 10 without looking at the number line, and higher attaining pupils count backwards. Lower attaining pupils count to ten with help, encouraged by the class. They count along, cheering and clapping each other's success. Pupils like mathematics lessons and enjoy learning. Teachers encourage pupils to work for the whole lesson by well-judged changes of activity to motivate pupils to a new task to deepen understanding of number.

85. The pace of learning slows in Key Stage 3 because of the variations in the teaching and learning. Standards of teaching and learning are good in over half the lessons at Key Stage 3, but there is a significant minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils make the best progress when tasks provided meet their individual needs. Teachers and support assistants are vigilant to take opportunities to guide pupils to make the next step in learning. They give good clues and encourage pupils to determine answers for themselves. Pupils have more confidence in counting on from one number when adding another because they have received this good support. They begin to solve problems more independently, estimating an answer and checking with a calculator. Lower attaining pupils recognise and match numbers to seven with confidence through playing a range of games that reinforce learning. Where standards of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, teacher's planning does not match pupils' needs. The work provided is too easy and pupils make less progress than they should. Activities are too long and pupils receive insufficient help. They become distracted and a significant minority stop working, reducing progress further.

86. Pupils make good and, on occasions, very good progress in number at Key Stage 4 during lessons and in accreditation. They count with increasing accuracy and show an understanding of number bonds. Teachers and support assistants provide effective support and interesting and relevant resources such as the class shop. This enables pupils to develop practical skills. Higher attaining pupils receive very good motivation from success, identifying coins and choosing five pounds on request. Lower attaining pupils count out up to ten pence successfully. All are keen to answer and they co-operate well with each other, showing respect for each other's efforts. This promotes a good working atmosphere for pupils to learn.

87. Pupils who have additional difficulties, such as autism or more challenging behaviour, make the same progress as other pupils because teachers know them well and support assistants provide effective support to promote their progress. Pupils who have more profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress on the whole, although progress slows in occasional lessons when classes do not have sufficient support or resources to encourage response and participation in lessons. They respond, when they are able, to counting songs and the poetry and rhythm of numbers. They make a good effort to look at the resources, such as coins used in shopping and the brightly coloured three-dimensional shapes in sensory mathematics lessons, and some use their senses and reasoning to explore or choose shapes that will roll.

88. Assessment procedures are good and teachers know their pupils well on the whole. This partly explains why pupils are achieving better than at the last inspection. Teachers provide good short-term targets for pupils to attain. Their regular assessments form the basis for planning for pupils to make further progress during lessons which promote learning of basic skills in mathematics. The provision of teaching and support assistants is good, except for the occasional lesson when assistants are supporting therapy needs and this leaves the teacher with less help.

89. Another factor in the good progress made by pupils is teachers' effectiveness in promoting pupils' learning in mathematics in other lessons, such as in physical education, music and science. Teachers promote numeracy particularly well at registration and circle time, taking opportunities to reinforce learning of days of the week, the calendar and timetable. This effective promotion of numeracy throughout the day has a significant impact on the progress pupils make. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators provide good leadership. They have made good improvements to the provision of mathematics since the previous inspection and have raised achievements and progress. The quality of teaching is better. Although the senior management team knows the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in the school, there is as yet no systematic monitoring of mathematics provision by the co-ordinators. A strong and improving feature is the integration of the National Numeracy Strategy into mathematics lessons. The subject development plan is good and should raise standards further. There are good examples of planning to promote numeracy skills further though the use of information communications technology. However, this is not sufficiently consistent throughout the school.

## **SCIENCE**

90. Pupils' achievements in science are now good as a result of improved teaching and curricular provision. The very good subject co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure the scheme of work matches the needs of all pupils and includes accreditation for older pupils. As a result, pupils make good gains in scientific skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of science. Teaching is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and this has resulted in specialist teaching being provided in Key Stages 3 and 4. The science specialist prepares good programmes, but does not see them being delivered in other parts of the school. This makes it difficult for her to monitor how they are taught. Assessment and daily records are maintained well for each pupil, which ensures progress against the targets identified within individual education plans. Resources have been improved and are now well organised, imaginative and of high quality. They are of necessity portable, as there is no designated science room. However, information and communication technology resources are under used to support learning in the subject.

91. Teaching is good overall. Teachers know their subject well and this, together with the good use of assessment, ensures pupils are learning the right things. All members of staff are well briefed and adults work as a team, so all pupils have good opportunities to learn. Skilful and probing scientific questioning ensures pupils are asked to answer the right questions and are made to think and achieve success. Teachers give good opportunities for the youngest pupils to learn about their body parts both in science lessons and in other lessons, such as physical education, so by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to successfully identify the parts of the body and know about some differences between people.



92. A strength of the teaching is that it is very practically based. This gives good opportunities for pupils to find out about science. Younger, higher attaining pupils find out about the properties of materials, paper, metal, and cloth; older pupils investigate soils and growth conditions, or how a root takes up water, for example. Teachers also give good opportunities for prediction during these activities. For example, the youngest pupils predict wood is in a bag after listening to the sound it makes, and older pupils in Key Stage 3 link heaviness (density) with floating and sinking.

93. Sensory approaches are used well for lower attaining pupils and they respond well to stimuli, such as wind and water. The youngest pupils are aware of a wide range of sensory materials; they take part in a series of explorations and their 'fantastic plastic' experiments allow them to develop knowledge of the textures and sounds they will encounter outside school.

94. Resources are very good and are used well to stimulate interest and to teach specific scientific skills. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 have access to a range of magnets and they begin to understand that magnets attract metals. Teachers expect pupils to look after resources and to work carefully and safely, and as a result, work undertaken is precise and well recorded. Another strong feature of the science teaching is the high expectations teachers have for pupils to achieve, and they are not afraid to explore quite difficult concepts with pupils. Consequently, pupils begin to grasp concepts of electricity and conductivity in Key Stage 3. Most pupils of this age are aware of the differences between solids, liquids and gases and are developing an understanding of changes of state in lessons with balloons, ice, and a variety of liquids. Teachers also give good opportunities for pupils to discuss their findings. As a result, pupils are beginning to use more sophisticated scientific language, although the use of signing and symbols is not consistent enough to enable lower attaining pupils the same opportunities. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils check their theories on conductivity and metals by using circuits and magnets. All pupils are engaged in scientific accredited schemes and are achieving well. Pupils are well managed and therefore behave very well. They are keen to learn and attend in lessons because they are interesting, magical and exploratory.

## **ART**

95. Pupils' achievements in art are very good. Most pupils enter the school with very limited experience in art and underdeveloped manipulative skills. As they move up through the school, expert teaching, clear recognition of each pupil's special needs, and a widening range of exposure to artists, colour, design and techniques, enable pupils to make very good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding of art. The subject also makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are, for

example, a wide range of resources of different types of art from around the world; the use of a variety of 'artists in residence' and work on community projects, and the valuing of all pupils' contributions, which raises pupils' self-esteem. The subject manager has clear aims for the subject and makes certain that other staff follow them consistently, through support and monitoring of teaching. Her very good leadership has guided the development of the subject since the last inspection and has led to a good improvement in this subject area.

96. Teaching and learning are very good overall. A significant strength of the teaching is that most lessons are taught or supported by a subject specialist whose enthusiasm and confidence inspire pupils. Teachers demonstrate skills well and provide a range of interesting and colourful tools and materials. As a result, most pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 use a range of resources effectively. For example, they use fruit, sticks, cotton reels and bricks to apply paint and, with support, they print patterns. Many know the names of primary colours and make their colour choices carefully. Several understand how to group their prints and recognise patterns and repeats in objects in the environment. Higher attaining pupils begin to use a wider range of materials and implements, for example crayons, pencils, paint and chalk, to make pictures. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties show preferences and choices of colour and shape and, with support, use finger-paints to make marks on paper. They communicate preferences of the textures of the materials used.

97. Older pupils are given very good opportunities to observe the patterns of nature and consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils learn to observe the detailed markings and features of still life objects, which they turn into prints. Skills and techniques continue to be well taught and pupils learn to make polystyrene print blocks, selecting their cutting tools and mixing their own paints. They learn to work in other media, such as clay and papier-mâché. Pupils print patterns and designs, as well as paint in the style of Mondrian. Lower attaining pupils use a wide variety of techniques with adult support. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils recognise how pattern and texture contribute to the composition of pictures and paintings and use this in developing collages and group and individual work. Famous artists' work is used to inspire pupils, and this inspiration is shown in the high quality of their group collages and in the way pupils used a variety of techniques, such as dripping, squeezing, sponging and rolling, to replicate some of the designs and textures seen in famous portraits, for example, those by Bronzino.

98. Teachers increase the breadth of pupils' experiences as they get older and, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils consider more than one dimension and this extends their range of work. They continue to learn about the work of well-known artists and show great delight at the 'hidden' elements (for example faces, cats, horses, and fish) in some abstract patterns of Escher and Klimt. They design patterns following the work of these artists and incorporate animals and faces into their own designs. Teachers provide set designs and ready-made patterns for lower attaining pupils, who choose colours and images to embellish their pictures by gesture, eye pointing or head movement, and look at the finished picture. Some retain their hold on their print block or brush and make movements and marks on the material with gradually reduced support.

99. Behaviour is always well managed, teachers provide good role models and have high expectations of how pupils should behave and of what they can achieve. As a result all pupils are very well behaved, respectful to each other and their teachers.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards of achievement in design and technology are good, and pupils make good progress throughout the time they are at the school because of precise and interesting teaching, tailored to meet their individual needs. The subject has maintained its good standards and made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection due to strong leadership and further development, and the extension of existing courses. Accreditation had been introduced at Key Stage 4 and at Post 16, and textiles courses have been introduced throughout the school. The department is well co-ordinated and there is a good spirit of co-operation between staff, which has enabled satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The planning and monitoring of food technology, which were at an early stage at the last inspection, are now well established with clear procedures.

101. No teaching was seen in Key Stage 1. However, skills needed for design and technology are taught in other subject areas and these are carefully monitored by the co-ordinator. This ensures that pupils have the requisite skills to build on, as they get older. Teaching is good at all other key stages. Teachers provide a good range of materials and resources, and by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding of the materials they work with, and use small tools, spoons and rollers to manipulate them. Skills are taught and demonstrated well and higher attaining pupils mix and cut material and are beginning to use joining techniques. Evidence from their work shows they have also used simple construction kits and card to make models with some support. Teachers manage behaviour well. There is an expectation that pupils will do their best and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop their concentration and improve their cutting, joining and folding skills. They use materials appropriately and learn to make templates for cutting the shapes of their chosen designs. They begin to follow the design and make process and, with support, evaluate their work and handle and choose tools for specific purposes. For example, they choose spreaders rather than brushes to apply glue, and forks for patterning their designs in work with clay. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, lower attaining pupils make collages and models of Victorian transport, and appliances as part of a history topic. This gives them additional opportunities to practise their skills, and they show obvious enjoyment and increased skills in cutting and in using glue.

102. Teachers are skilful at bringing pupils with challenging behaviour back on task and they use individual behaviour plans with consistency and sensitivity. Pupils in turn are aware of behaviour that is acceptable in the classroom and try hard to follow classroom routines. Good attention is paid to the management and needs of pupils with autism and this enables these pupils to function co-operatively in the classroom. Teachers work particularly well with classroom support assistants, who are well briefed and competent and manage pupils' learning and behaviour well. At all ages, pupils learn to listen to instructions and follow them carefully. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 work very well in groups; value each other's work, and are respectful to the teacher. They help clear away carefully after the session and they share materials sensibly. Lower attaining pupils are very enthusiastic and co-operative. They are proud of their work and are pleased to show it to visitors. Attitudes and behaviour are very good because teaching is enthusiastic and motivating, and teachers use very precise and clear explanations so that pupils know exactly what they need to do in order to be successful.

103. Teachers assess pupils' capabilities well and this allows pupils to build on previous learning, and by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils know and use a variety of joining techniques, including sewing, glue, staples, using a hole-punch and tags and paperclips. Higher attaining pupils plan and research their work with some support. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils were making a multi- coloured coat that could be used for a stage production. They practised skills of joining and cutting, and evaluated the best method. Lower attaining pupils used ready-made templates and patterns, fitting them together to follow their design. Pupils with more complex needs used glue and paint to join sequins, ribbons and bright materials to enhance the fabric used and follow the shapes chosen.

104. Pupils are given good opportunities to design for a specific function. For example, they design bags to carry their sports shoes, researching such features as size, strength, types of fastening, and water permeability of the material. By the end of Key Stage 4, many pupils follow, with support, design and pictorial instructions to make an article. Many show an understanding of the processes and skills used in simple construction. Higher attaining pupils plan work and talk about the sequence of their activity. They evaluate a given design and give sensible ideas for improvement with some support. They research their chosen designs, understanding the purposes for which their product will be used. They use a variety of different materials to make their products, including hessian for summer hats. They use fast setting plaster to make up two or three-dimensional designs. In one lesson pupils were making masks to their own designs. Using given moulds they employed a variety of different techniques to build up the layers to complete the features. Pupils with the most complex needs choose from a selection of materials and designs and give a range of positive responses to work undertaken, with increasing levels of communication through eye contact, smiles, gesture or sounds.

## **HUMANITIES**

105. The school has maintained the good level of pupils' achievements in humanities across all key stages, since the previous inspection. This is the result of the good and sometimes very good teaching pupils receive. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, but evidence of pupils' work indicates that their achievements are good. The targets set for pupils in their individual educational plans are appropriate and pupils achieve well. The subject is well managed across the school by two co-ordinators who ensure that there is continuity of learning.

106. Teaching and learning in humanities is good overall, but very good at Key Stage 4. Teaching and learning is well supported by the teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and the very good relationships teachers have with pupils. A significant strength of the teaching is the way the teachers carefully plan and carry out a wealth of opportunities to experience life in the community, and life in the past, through the good use of artefacts, visits to museums and the local environment, and trips further a field. Parents are also involved in supporting learning by giving information about weekend experiences through the diary system. All these approaches enliven learning and ensure good progress. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils point out familiar features on a country walk and recall facts from the weekend related to family events. Higher attaining pupils recognise the seasons and know the differences between town, country and seaside locations. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils know, from a carefully planned visit to a pottery

museum, that clay is used to make bricks and vases and that it needs to be fired to make it hard. Lower attaining pupils show their understanding of historical language, by sorting old objects from new objects in lessons. Higher attaining pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 know and name the four countries that make up the United Kingdom, and some of the important events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as man's landing on the moon. Key Stage 4 pupils have extended their knowledge of life in the past by visiting a cotton mill, and learnt about life in Japan.

107. Another significant strength of the teaching is the way teachers use sensory approaches to learning. These are very effective in enabling all pupils' learning to be experienced more directly and in ensuring all pupils are participative learners. For example, Key Stage 3 pupils respond well through sensory experiences to Italian food and music, whilst Key Stage 4 pupils have experienced life in the Victorian era, by dressing in this period's costume. Another example of this was when pupils enthusiastically dressed up as kings, queens and knights and as a result, pupils were able to understand that life in medieval times was very different from that of today.

108. Good behaviour management is also a strong feature of lessons. Clear planning and routines mean that pupils know what is expected of them, and this has a positive impact upon their behaviour and capacity to listen and learn. Standards of attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils concentrate well and produce sustained work. They are enthusiastic and show respect for objects that are passed carefully round the class. Appropriate use of homework is made to provide further opportunities to reinforce concepts learned in the lessons.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in information technology. Pupils are making good progress in lessons at present, but inconsistent planning for the subject slows their progress over time. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and good at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. A strength in teaching throughout the school is planning for pupils to develop skills alongside other lessons. This means that pupils always have practical reasons to learn skills with the keyboard and mouse. They have good opportunities to use information technology to support their learning in subjects such as English and mathematics. For example, higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 work with the computer during literacy lessons. They make good progress in literacy, completing sentences using word processing. They show increasing knowledge of how to change the presentation of their work, developing literacy skills by adding punctuation, for example. They are interested and motivated by the medium of information technology and, because the tasks are interesting and relevant, they stay on task throughout.

110. Teachers plan work matched to pupils' needs to enable them to proceed to independence. Members of staff demonstrate good judgement, choosing the appropriate moment to intervene to give encouragement for pupils to take the next step themselves. This builds on pupils' knowledge and confidence until they can work with independence. Pupils consolidate their learning of colours, choosing different coloured clothes to dress a bear. They select the colours with increasing accuracy because all members of staff use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to select for themselves. Pupils develop skills to manipulate the task when they change pages in the story that they follow. Teachers and support assistants provide just enough support to enable pupils to learn how to turn the page by clicking an icon with the mouse. This ensures that they build on their skills until they can eventually complete the task unaided.

111. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 use their skills in information technology well to support their learning in other subjects, for example, to draw Tudor figures to illustrate work in history and in doing so learn to save their work and retrieve it, making simple changes to the colour, for example. Pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 4 and into the Post 16 provision, because they have more opportunities to learn skills. They follow a scheme for accreditation as well as using information technology to support lessons. They develop increasing understanding of the use of information technology in the world because teachers provide good information. Pupils relate the setting of controls in the home and shops to their study. They use information technology to support learning in literacy, filling in forms as part of accredited work to prepare for life after school. They improve on their hand written versions and deepen their understanding, adding capital letters. Pupils show increasing understanding of how to save their work. They are keen to finish their news on computer at break and this promotes further independence.

112. Lower attaining pupils show increasing awareness that they can use a switch to make changes. They push a large switch to make a picture appear on the screen, beginning to understand that they can control what they see. Pupils show a growing understanding that they can cause effects to change their environment, such as switching on and turning off music. They make good progress because the tasks are appropriate to their needs and members of staff provide effective support. Pupils who have autism make progress in line with other pupils. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. They greet each other using a range of switches and recorded voices, with support, and show understanding that the switch can be operated, or progress towards looking at the switch. Pupils make good progress in listening skills when they follow instructions. Progress it is not as high as it could be because the switches are not always available outside the specialist lessons for information technology, although some good use was seen in French. When lunchtime arrangements reduce the availability of assistants to support individual pupils at the beginning of the afternoon, there are fewer supported opportunities to promote more than satisfactory progress.

113. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection to provide resources. The subject development officer has a very significant influence on leading improvements and providing effective support to staff. The comprehensive development plan highlights the need to provide more up to date equipment further staff training. The determination of best value is exceptional to provide significantly enhanced and reliable equipment at reasonable cost. This includes close co-operation with outside institutions and industry to provide the most appropriate resources and to increase staff expertise. The school

is aware that current systems to monitor progress lack consistency. The school is introducing new systems for measuring progress to enable teachers to plan more effectively to promote pupils' progress.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

114. Pupils' achievement in French is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. All pupils make good progress in learning basic language and experiencing French culture, including French traditional songs and dances. Standards have been maintained since the last report. The curriculum is continuously developing and expanding in the areas of learning and in the provision of resources through the good leadership of the co-ordinator.

115. The teaching of French is good overall. It is often very good, and one excellent lesson was observed. However, there was also one unsatisfactory lesson. A significant strength of the teaching is the way teachers plan lessons that are fun. Lessons are sometimes musical, always practical with many short activities, and there is good innovative use of a wide range of resources at both key stages. As a result, pupils' interest is sustained and renewed. Pupils and students enjoy the lessons, experience success, gain confidence and grow in self-esteem. They throw themselves into role-play with obvious enjoyment and, without realising, develop and reinforce their social skills within the etiquette of each situation. Consequently, high attaining pupils at Key Stage 3, say with some prompting, simple social words and phrases such as 'Bonjour' and 'Comment t'appelle tu?' They enjoy role-play at the 'French supermarket' and ask for drinks in the French language. They begin to count in French and to know some of the colours. Autistic pupils enjoy shopping for French food such as 'croissants' and 'pain', and eat a typical French breakfast showing an understanding of the contrast with their own breakfasts at home. Pupils enjoy the subject so much that they ask to sing the French songs they have learned in other situations, such as the mini-bus journey following a visit to the Potteries. This increases their pace of learning.

116. Teachers also use a variety of games and activities to help pupils retain knowledge and understanding of French. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils with expressive language make good progress in broadening of their knowledge of the language. Through the French medium, they also develop spiritually, socially and culturally. They use social words and phrases without prompting. For example, at the French café, they say 's' il vous plait' and 'merci'. They experience handling French francs to buy their food at the café.

117. A strength of the teaching for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is the way sensory approaches and music are used alongside information technology to help pupils communicate in response to French activities. Pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties who are non-oral communicators, respond to social exchanges such as greetings, and colours using the Big Mac response switch. They respond well to the smell of French lavender, enjoy dancing in wheelchairs to French country music, and try hard to tear paper and drop it onto paper to simulate the experimental work of the French artist Jean Arc. They show preferences when savouring Syrop de Fraises.

118. Where teaching is unsuccessful, activities are too long in duration or pupils have to wait too long for their turn, with the result that they become less focussed, and this slows their progress.

## MUSIC

119. Pupils' achievements in music are very high and are very much improved since the last inspection. Pupils are making very good gains in the knowledge of the elements of music, learning to sing and perform with instruments and to compose at their own level at all key stages. Alongside this, pupils are developing their self-esteem and their ability to communicate through music, and are making very good gains in personal and social development. The progress of pupils is directly linked to the quality of teaching.

120. Teaching is very good overall. The teaching of music is of very high quality when taught by the music specialist and other teachers give satisfactory opportunities for listening to range of music both in lessons, and in other subjects. The strength of the teaching is the music specialist's very good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum requirements, combined with an excellent knowledge of communication and self-expression through music. Teaching is often intuitive and a result of very high knowledge of the pupils' capabilities and difficulties. A significant strength of the specialist teaching is in the excellent use of voice to ensure a calm, well-managed atmosphere or enthusiastic tempo, depending on the needs of the moment. She gives an excellent model for singing and performing, and relationships, and this promotes high quality voice production, very good musicianship, and excellent behaviour and personal and social development. Activities presented in lessons aimed to increase the range of songs, and to compose, are wide ranging, exciting and stimulating; yet give opportunities for over learning and repetition. Resources are used to very good effect and are chosen with care to meet the needs of different pupils, resulting in pupils being involved, communicative, creative, productive and interested throughout all lessons.

121. As a consequence of all these strengths pupils in Key Stage 1 steadily improve the range and accuracy of the words of simple songs. They sing *I've got a body, a very busy body* and *The train song* with expression and joy. They take turns either to wear the train driver's hat or to hold the soft toy train, and confidently play the recorder to compose the sounds of the train's horn, for example. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn a variety of songs, connected to the topics they are studying. There are high expectations that these songs will be learnt by heart and sung musically. Consequently, the highest attaining pupils sing with accuracy of pitch or sign along with the words. A wider variety of musical instruments are used at this key stage. Progress is seen by the way pupils play them in pairs with good awareness of pulse, duration and dynamics, and each other, changing tempo in response to the teacher as the lead player. The teacher uses the correct vocabulary and, as a result, pupils begin to use it.

122. Musical scores are introduced in Key Stage 3 and the teacher expects pupils to begin to use them to control the music they play, and to take turns to read the score and conduct others. Musical vocabulary is extended at this key stage, and they use the terms *long time* and *short time* to express the meaning of the score. The teacher also extends the social relationships of



pupils at this key stage and gives good opportunities to play and compose in increasingly larger groups. Pupils respond well and show growing awareness of group dynamics. Her other musical skills are used well to demonstrate to and inspire pupils. For example, she plays the marimba very well and pupils play their own compositions together, and alongside the teacher, with increased consistency of rhythm and style.

123. Musical language is constantly reinforced, and the teacher uses increasingly complex language as they get older. Consequently, most pupils name a variety of percussion and tuned instruments and show a greater understanding the elements of music as they move through the school. The teacher widens the scope of songs at Key Stage 4 and pupils sing songs from World War II. Her excellent voice is used to demonstrate how songs should be sung. Consequently they sing in tune, with expression and awareness of phrase, performing with a secure sense of pulse and very good awareness of others.

124. The outstanding teaching of the music therapist ensures that pupils with autism, or challenging behaviour, or profound and multiple learning difficulties, make excellent progress in lessons.

125. Her strength is in the way she gives these pupils excellent individual opportunities to take turns musically to communicate their feelings, and in the excellent relationships she has with them. The teacher uses her excellent musical skills instinctively to cajole pupils to communicate musically with her and with others. These pupils in Key Stage 1 are calm in these lessons and are beginning to give eye contact to the teacher and helpers through their good support. In Key Stage 2, progress is seen in the way pupils with autism show a greater awareness of how to communicate through music and join in parts of the lessons very well. They greet the teacher musically, respond creatively, take musical turns and concentrate excellently throughout lessons. The teacher channels these pupils' musical strengths and uses them to raise their achievements and their self-esteem. Older pupils with autism show an increasing ability to play empathetically alongside the teacher on the marimba and one gifted Sixth Form boy with challenging behaviour channelled his gift of singing to perform *Nessun Dorma* with startling control and self-assurance.

126. Older pupils are at present making very good progress as they are catching up with the skills and knowledge and understanding they did not have the opportunity to learn before the music specialist was employed. In order to maintain these very good standards of achievement, the written curriculum for these pupils needs further development to ensure that they cover a range of age-appropriate activities that broaden their experiences as they move through the school. At present the school has few age-appropriate resources, particularly in information technology, to meet the needs of older pupils, and there is no designated music room for these resources to be placed on a permanent basis. The music curriculum is based on the Cheshire guidelines and is in the process of being adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. At present the planning does not securely ensure progression in learning for all, and the very good standards that are being achieved depend heavily on the skills and expertise of the music specialist.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Pupils' achievements are good across all key stages, and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. Good quality individual educational plans, specialist teaching, and the extensive range of accreditation and competitive opportunities made available to pupils all promote the good standards that pupils' achieve. The subject is well planned and the co-ordinator has a clear idea of how to develop the subject further.

128. A noteworthy feature is the Movement Opportunities via Education programme. This approach requires collaboration between teachers, physiotherapist and parents and is having a significant impact upon those pupils who have additional physical difficulties. It places emphasis on teamwork and consistency. Initial school-based evidence indicates that some pupils have gained greatly improved physical skills and some benefits in terms of independence and behaviour. However, the programme is in its early stages of implementation.

129. Teaching and learning are good for all pupils across the school. The subject is delivered in a manner that makes learning enjoyable, but demanding. Teachers' planning is clear, with learning outcomes identified, and this ensures that lessons have a clear focus and learning is effective. A range of teaching methods is employed, such as demonstration, explanation and questioning. This helps to give every opportunity to pupils to understand the required tasks. An example of this was seen when the teacher demonstrated a skill of bouncing a ball from standing to a sitting position. As a result, a number of pupils were able to achieve this task successfully.

130. Teachers use a range of adapted resources, such as tap sticks or specialist equipment to give mobility, and this enables all pupils to be active learners. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils are becoming more proficient at keeping a rhythm and performing a simple sequence using tap sticks. They use beanbags and other small equipment well for throwing and balancing. Lower attaining pupils develop greater head and body control and experience different movements such as sliding and spinning. Teachers teach the full range of programmes of study and link learning with other subjects well, and, by the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils know the effect that exercise has on the body and how to warm up and cool down.

131. Skills are systematically taught so that pupils' knowledge and skills are not only consolidated but also extended, and as a result they improve their skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils learn to bounce and catch a ball when working in pairs in a timed exercise. Lower attaining pupils learn to hold and feel equipment such as balls and beanbags. Many tip a ball from their wheelchair to the ground upon request. In swimming, higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 have achieved advanced water skill certificates and are further developing their swimming techniques. Lower attaining pupils achieve by using flotation aids to swim a width.

132. The pupils growing ability to work in teams is a good example of the progress pupils make. The use of community resources, such as the local sports complex, other schools and links with Crewe Alexandra, make this possible. They are successful in competitive team

games such as Boccia and gain much self-esteem. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils are enthusiastic members of a school's sports team, such as football, and enjoy the challenge of competing against other special schools in tournaments. Lower attaining pupils confidently perform simple skills of kicking a ball to a target and are improving their overall co-ordination.

133. Behaviour is managed well by teachers and support assistants and this enables pupils to be redirected to the learning tasks with minimal disruption. Support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning through their understanding of pupils' individual needs and sensitive interventions. Where possible, pupils are given responsibility; they put away equipment at the end of a lesson, for example. Relationships are excellent between staff and pupils and this contributes to good learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

134. Pupils' achievements in religious education are good overall. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 3 make very good progress in lessons. Overall, pupils in Key Stages 2 and 4 make good progress in lessons, although there is evidence of some very good learning. Pupils with additional special educational needs, such as autism, make good progress. By the age of seven, a high achieving pupil listens well to the Nativity story. She knows that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and, with some support, can name most of the nativity dolls. Younger pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties remain alert and responsive when the school nurse joins in a lesson about people who help us. As a result of some very stimulating lessons, older, higher achieving pupils understand that there are different world religions and use appropriate vocabulary such as 'Mecca' and 'Koran' when they talk about Islam.

135. The very good curriculum planning and monitoring and the generally very good teaching should promote very good progress over time. However, at the present time progress over the longer term is only good. This is because the new scheme of work and rolling programme of subject delivery are relatively newly established. Although the school fulfils its statutory obligations, in that all pupils are taught religious education every week, there is currently a variation in time given to the subject across the key stages. The headteacher is aware of this issue and is already making arrangements to increase teaching time where necessary. The strong emphasis on social and moral issues, such as the need to care for others, promotes pupils' personal development very well. Younger pupils give simple examples of how to be a good neighbour, whilst students who are in the Sixth Form know that, if you are a good Christian, you help people.

136. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Despite their difficulties, they try very hard and work to the best of their ability. Relationships with staff and with other pupils are generally excellent. Pupils are very supportive of each other and celebrate each other's efforts and successes. Most pupils listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well and persevere until they have completed tasks set. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond well to their sensory curriculum.

137. Teaching in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 is very good. Although overall, teaching at Key Stage 2 is good, there are also examples of very good teaching within this key stage. A very strong feature of the teaching throughout the school is the lively and imaginative way in which lessons are presented which is enhanced by very good resources. This makes learning exciting and fun so that pupils are very well motivated and make very good progress. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers are very good at breaking topics down into small steps, with plenty of opportunities for practising what has been learned. This means that, although pupils have significant learning difficulties, they can understand the lessons and remember what they have learned. Teachers create a very positive learning environment and their excellent relationships with pupils enable them to manage their behaviour very well. Visual symbols are used effectively to help pupils with autism to learn. However, although there are some very good examples of the use of signing and objects to help pupils to communicate, these approaches are not yet consistently implemented throughout the school.

138. The subject is very well led and managed by the headteacher and there has been very good improvement in this subject area since the last inspection. The new planned curriculum and schemes of work adapt the County Agreed syllabus very well to meet the special educational needs of the pupils. A very good range of resources has been purchased and is very well organised and managed. Very good links have been developed with local churches and the annual school leavers' service is held in Chester cathedral. The headteacher is also developing relationships with centres of worship for other faiths to enhance pupils' multicultural development. Teaching in religious education is now mostly very good. A very strong basis has been established to support future developments to promote pupils' learning and progress.

### **Personal, social and health education**

139. Pupils' achievements in personal and social education are very good. The strength of the improved provision is in the relationships developed in the school and the multi-professional approach to ensuring all pupils reach their full potential. Pupils trust their teachers and helpers, and pupils know they are valued. Therefore they are willing to try things out, extend their boundaries and make mistakes, safe in the knowledge that they will be supported until they get it right and they will be taught the skills to succeed.

140. Personal, social and health education is well planned in all classes and the clear policy and long-term planning document provide very good guidance for teachers to meet the wide range of needs in the school. Very good opportunities are given for younger pupils through daily 'hello sessions' and through well organised and planned play activities. The use of objects of reference to develop their communication skills also improves their personal and social development. Pupils learn to make choices, share with others and make friends. Support assistants provide very good support for the younger pupils' development of social and independence skills, and they follow excellent feeding, drinking, dressing and toileting programmes, devised jointly by teachers and therapists. Consequently pupils make very good gains in independent feeding and dressing, mobility and toileting skills. All support assistants have high expectations of what pupils will do independently and gradually reduce the support they provide so as to increase pupils' independence.

141. The teaching of personal and social education is good, with some very good features. It is very good at Key Stage 1 and Post 16, and good at all other key stages. Teachers provide good, well-organised opportunities to talk about and buy healthy goods in the community, using a symbolic or written list as part of their accredited work. Group discussions are well led by the teacher, who provide first-hand experiences to support learning. As a result pupils are curious about each other's lifestyles and ask pertinent questions. They brief support assistants well, and they in turn model how to use road crossings safely on their journeys to the shops. Pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility for their own shopping and for crossing safely. Therefore older pupils learn about a healthy lifestyle; make good gains in their knowledge of the world of work and the community; develop their relationships, and know how to keep safe. All pupils have personal and social education targets within their individual educational plans and these are tailored to meet very individual needs. Pupils behave excellently in the community and the very good links with local stores greatly enhance the provision.

142. Parents play an important part in the pupils' personal, social and health development. Many workshops and meetings take place to enhance individual pupils' development and parents' knowledge and understanding. This has a very positive effect on the gains pupils make throughout the school. The Mobility Opportunities via Education resources are also having a very positive effect on the progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in personal social and health education. Teachers use them well to provide better social opportunities, increased mobility and better positioning for learning for individuals within classes.

## **Post 16**

143. Standards of achievement for students in the Sixth Form are very good; standards for other students over sixteen are good overall. Students in separate classes make good progress in personal and social development and especially in the management of their own behaviour and in their ability to make choices. However, they sometimes find it difficult to remain on task without adult support. Students in the designated Sixth Form provision make very good progress in personal and social development; particularly in their development of self-awareness of the skills and knowledge they need to make career choices in their ability to work in a different environments, such as college or work, and in their knowledge and understanding of citizenship. Students show a growing maturity and sense of social responsibility.

144. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. High attaining students make very good progress in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Lower attaining students make satisfactory progress overall. Students are given very good opportunities to listen and discuss thoughtfully the strategies they use for managing their own work experiences. They also discuss how they will share their experiences with students who are less able, before taking them to visit work placements, for example. The highest attaining students take responsibility for writing the luncheon menus for the school using information technology, and enjoy reading magazines and newspapers. Lower attaining students have satisfactory opportunities to fill in application forms and read ingredients for making a simple meal, or to make gains in learning words found in the community. However, teachers of lower attaining students make insufficient use of symbols to aid their reading and writing. Teachers in mixed age classes with students over sixteen make good use of objects of reference. As a

result, students make good gains in understanding what is happening in the school day, for example. All students make good gains in accreditation in English within a narrow range of work.

145. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are very good. Pupils make very good progress towards targets within their individual educational plans. Through simplified games, they learn the value of money and how to handle and use it, or learn to weigh ingredients during food technology, for example. Some use calculators well to solve simple problems, such as how many days in six weeks. The use of practical activities, and the good use of assessment to plan learning in small steps to success, ensures that students build very well on previous learning.

146. Pupils' achievements in science are very good. The specialist teachers' knowledge of the subject and expectations of students are very high; consequently students make very good gains in skills and knowledge and understanding of science through a very good range of practical activities that encourage prediction, and safe and accurate experimentation. Students are encouraged to record their own work using simple tables. Sensory methods are used well to enable students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to explore scientific principles in an age-appropriate manner.

147. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are very good overall. Teachers of Information and communication technology in the Sixth Form have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and know how to set learning in the context of everyday life. Higher attaining students learn to use technological skills in the community, for example by video recording how they cross the road safely. They learn to save and/or retrieve information and to operate remote controls well, because the teacher explains operations very well and students are motivated by the task. They transfer the knowledge they have about storing information and show they understand that computers and tape machines store information in a similar way. When entering information and reading a database, they show that information can be retrieved, to see how much waste paper they have collected for recycling, for example. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn how to use switches to control their environment and to communicate preferences well in specific Information and communication technology lessons, although this could be usefully extended so that students use these communication skills more consistently throughout the school day.

148. Pupils' achievement in other areas of the Sixth Form curriculum are also very good. All students make very good progress in design and technology and physical education, and good progress in religious education through the very good teaching they receive.

149. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers provide an age-appropriate, well-organised and planned range of activities to meet different students' needs. Consequently students' behaviour is excellent; they are always attentive and productive and show very good attitudes to their work. Teaching is engaging and enthusiastic and motivates students very well. Support assistants play an important part in supporting and engaging students in their work. They are well briefed by teachers and know their charges well, and this ensures all students in their care make very good progress. Teachers provide a good range of accreditation opportunities to meet varying student needs and this ensures they have a full record of achievement of high quality by the time they leave the school.