

INSPECTION REPORT

THE PERCY HEDLEY SCHOOL

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108657

Headteacher: Norman Stromsoy

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 November 2001

Inspection number: 192943

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Non-maintained residential special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Forest Hall Newcastle
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	T De'ath
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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9777	David Heath	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Attendance; The care the school has for its pupils; Partnership with parents; Links with business and the community.
27053	Sheila Bewick	<i>Team inspector</i>	Personal, social and health education; Physical education.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
25441	April Dakin	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Equal opportunities.	
25340	Robert Franks	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Special educational needs.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
7042	Keith Gutteridge	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Residential education.	Leadership and management.
20444	David Hughes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Religious education.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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10099	Sue Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>		Assessment.
14943	Eric Peagam	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Modern foreign language.	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students.
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10781	Robert Thomson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Post 16.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Percy Hedley is a 185 place day and residential school for pupils who have cerebral palsy or severe speech and language disorders. The school is a regional resource, admitting pupils from 14 local education authorities (LEA). Pupils are taught in separate classes, according to the type of their disability, until Year 10, when both disability groups are taught together. The school has a Conductive Education approach for pupils with cerebral palsy. For pupils with speech and language disabilities it strongly promotes the social use of language. There are, currently, 170 full and part time pupils on roll between the ages of three and nineteen years. A small number of pupils are considered to have additional special educational needs, which include Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome and dyslexia. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected for their age because of the effects of their disabilities. However, the majority of pupils have non-verbal ability broadly in line with their peers in mainstream school. As this is a non-maintained school, there are no free school meals. There are virtually no pupils with English as an additional language and there are only a few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has recently extended its provision and now admits students in the Post 16 department. Generally these students have more complex needs than the rest of the school. A new secondary department building is under construction and, at present, pupils are taught on two sites with a distance of 1.5 miles between them. The primary and Year 7 pupils are educated at the Station Rd Lower School site and pupils in Years 8 to 14 in the temporary Westmoor secondary department site. A 16 place four night boarding facility is also provided nearby and offers residential experiences for up to 22 pupils on a part-time or full-time basis. Teachers, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists and support staff work together in teams in classrooms, each with very clearly defined, well-integrated roles.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Percy Hedley is a very good school and has excellent features. It is a very effective organisation which strongly promotes pupils' independence and their personal development. It meets pupils' individual learning needs very well, especially in relation to their communicative development, which is consistently promoted throughout lessons. Disability is not seen as a barrier, but as a challenge to which the school responds to very well. Pupils make very good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects and achieve very well. There is an excellent ethos of care and concern for all pupils and a great sense of valuing pupils' efforts and contributions. As a result, pupils' response in lessons, and their enthusiasm for school, is very good. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and key staff. There is a strong partnership between the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers, and the heads of therapy. The school's quality of provision is also strongly supported by the designated lead teachers who are responsible for sharing and disseminating good practice. The school gives very good value for money and is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school is very well led and managed and there is a very good, shared commitment to improvement.
- Financial planning and the use of resources for meeting the needs of pupils are excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and their concentration in lessons are very good.
- Relationships are excellent and pupils work extremely hard, physically and intellectually.
- Teaching is very good overall; the management of pupils by staff is excellent.
- The provision and support for children's learning in the Foundation Stage by staff is very good and some aspects are excellent.
- The way the school helps pupils with cerebral palsy to communicate and to learn in lessons, for example by using technology for writing and talking, is very good; the Conductive Education approach promotes their physical development and independence very well.
- The induction and training of all staff is excellent.
- The residential provision is excellent.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The consistency with which pupils are taught Information and communication technology (ICT), so that they can build in a more systematic way upon what they have learned previously, in all aspects of the subject.
- The use and analysis of assessment data for tracking the performance of pupils and different groups, and for setting meaningful whole school targets to raise pupils' attainment even further.

**The Foundation Stage covers all children to those rising four years old as well as those rising five in Reception. Key Stage 1 has pupils in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 pupils are in Years 3 to 6. Year 7 to 9 pupils are in Key Stage 3. Key Stage 4 pupils in Years 10 and 11. The Post 16 department has pupils in Years 12 to 14.*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in March 1997. The quality of the teaching has improved, with significantly more good, very good and excellent teaching. There are now very good performance management systems in place for all staff. Monitoring of teaching and of therapists' performance is carried out rigorously, in the pursuit of appraising and improving quality. Staff pay very good attention to promoting pupils' spiritual development in lessons and the subject policies also give guidance on how this should be done. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' cultural development, including multicultural opportunities. The provision for design and technology is good; there are detailed schemes of work and pupils make good progress. Provision for ICT has significantly improved and resources are very good. However, although the school's use of ICT to promote pupils' communication and access to the curriculum is very good, the programme of study for the subject is still narrow in parts. This does not allow pupils to make sufficient progress in a broad way. There is now detailed long-term and medium-term curriculum planning. Assessment procedures, and the use of assessment, are good, although the school could make more use of the data to analyse the progress of its different groups of pupils and to set targets for whole school improvement. The role and function of the governing body has been clarified and the instruments and articles of government updated.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 14	Key
speaking, listening, signing and watching	A	A	A	A	<i>very good</i> A
reading	A	B	B	B	<i>good</i> B
writing	A	B	B	B	<i>satisfactory</i> C
mathematics	A	B	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i> D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	A	A	<i>poor</i> E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in their individual education plans (IEPs)	A	A	A	A	

Pupils' achievements are very good, especially for the broader aspect of pupils' communication. This is because pupils are very well taught, and programmes to support their individual special educational needs are well tailored. The school's focus on the pupils' developing effective ways of learning, thinking and communicating is well founded and very successful. The school meets the pupils' individual needs very well and prepares them very well for the life ahead of them. Their individual targets appropriately set communication and personal development as a priority, as well as physical development and access for pupils with cerebral palsy, and progress towards these is very good. Overall, pupils make good progress in English, which is well supported by the school's approach to teaching literacy and communication. Pupils' progress in all aspects of communication, including speaking and listening, is very good indeed. In mathematics their progress is good and is well supported by the numeracy strategy. In science pupils' progress is good, but the lack of facilities in the secondary department's temporary building currently limit the school's ability to fully provide opportunities for investigation and experimentation. Progress in pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is well supported by the PSHE programmes and the high quality of care, which promotes their physical independence very well. The programmes for supporting pupils' thinking skills, the sensory integration programme, and the Conductive Education approach, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, physical and personal development. They give pupils good support in taking responsibility for their learning and movement. Pupils' achievements in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (Kindergarten), in art and design, music, and physical education are very good. A small number of pupils achieve in line with national expectations, and in mathematics higher attaining pupils achieve passes at GCSE. Current award-bearing courses are well matched to pupils' individual needs and abilities, and the school has the capacity and commitment to provide higher-level courses as the need arises. Some whole school targets have been set in relation to raising pupils' achievements but the school is seeking ways of broadening this further.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested and responsive in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well around the school and are courteous to staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school council helps pupils take responsibility for the school life, and relationships are excellent in the school. Every effort is made to help pupils to be responsible for their own learning and to help them work and communicate as independently as possible.
Attendance	Good. The on-site clinics reduce the need for pupils to be absent from school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1–6	Years 7-11	Year 12-14
Lessons seen overall	very good	good	very good	good

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

The quality of teaching is very good and has excellent features. This positively contributes to pupils' good learning in lessons. Pupils' communication skills are very well promoted overall. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (Kindergarten), in Key Stage 1 and in the secondary department is very good. It is good in Key Stage 2 and in Post 16. As a result of the very interesting ways of teaching and the high quality of individual support, pupils attend very well and try very hard in lessons. Teachers, therapists and support staff have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils. Staff overall are very committed to providing interesting experiences to help their pupils learn, and meet their needs very well. The teaching of English, including literacy, is good overall and is very good for the pupils' priority needs of communication. These include speaking, listening, signing, watching, use of symbols and the use of augmented communication systems. The teaching of mathematics (including numeracy) and science is good. The teaching of PSHE is very good. Pupils are managed excellently and lessons very well organised. This results in pupils putting very great, and often excellent, effort into their work and using every minute for learning. Pupils aim to achieve the highest standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the requirements of pupils' Statements of Special Education Need with the exception of a modern foreign language (MFL), which is currently not taught at Key Stage 4. The curriculum provides a very broad, rich and relevant range of experiences with very well integrated approaches to therapy and teaching. Very good planning in subjects allows pupils to make progress in a broad way, enabling them to gain a depth of knowledge, at a relevant pace. The Foundation Stage programme is excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies, lessons and the celebration of festivals. Staff are very good role models and pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong. Staff have excellent relationships with pupils, talk about a range of matters sensitively, and promote moral development very well. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils have very good opportunities to respond to staff and to other individuals, through the high levels of support they receive. Pupils have access to a very good range of cultural and multicultural experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides educational and personal support and guidance of very good quality, and monitors pupils' academic performance and personal development well. There is very good attention to health and safety and the monitoring of any risks within the school. Staff know the pupils very well and they work well as a team to promote the pupils' personal welfare and to make them feel safe and secure. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment is good. Residential provision is excellent.

The school's links with parents are very good. The school works hard to maintain regular contact despite the large distances pupils live away from school. A range of high quality training, on-site, is provided for parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school. The very strong senior management team have clear lines of delegation, support the school's aims and values well, and manage their areas very effectively. School changes have been managed very well, including the move to temporary accommodation and the induction of new staff. The high quality staff team have a very good commitment to improvement.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. Governors support the school well and are well informed. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They have a very clear view of how their responsibilities contribute to the leadership and management of the school, and make a very strong contribution to shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior staff have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching, therapy practice and pupils' standards. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff very well and give very good support to them. Co-ordinators' roles are mostly well developed and they too check on quality and standards in the subjects. The school's induction programme for new staff is very good. The school's appraisal systems are very good and a very good start has been made to the formal performance management of all staff. Whole school target setting, to improve pupils' achievements further, needs more development.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. There are high quality procedures for financial planning, which is very well tied into school improvement priorities. Governors regularly monitor budgetary spending. Specific grants are used very well. This a highly efficient and very well run organisation.

The accommodation is good. Staffing levels are very good. Although there are some relatively new and inexperienced teachers, staff have a very good level of competency in promoting pupils' communication. There are excellent levels of experienced, and highly skilled, therapy and support staff. Excellent training opportunities are provided to support staff's professional development. Learning resources for subjects are good and very good for communication, access devices and ICT. The school applies principles of best value excellently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like to come to school. • Children make good progress. • Children show improving independence, maturity and confidence because the school promotes their social development and gives them self-esteem. • Parents feel welcome in the school and the school works closely with them. • The good relationships between teachers and staff. • Children are expected to work very hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of parents. Over 60 per cent of the parents replied to the inspection questionnaire, expressing 'glowing' views of the school. Individual comments by parents use words such as 'excellent', 'brilliant', 'dedicated' and 'hardworking' to describe the school and staff. One parent wrote 'it was like winning the lottery when my son was accepted' into the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, which has a significant impact on how well they achieve. The headteacher and staff work very hard to encourage parents to participate in school life and to support their children. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs and residential visits. The school works very closely with parents.

B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

Pupils' achievement across the school

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. Judgements about progress and reference 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.

1. Pupils' achievements are very good overall. The extremely strong teamwork between teachers, therapists and support staff makes a significant contribution to pupils' main needs of communication and physical development. The high degree of knowledge and understanding of these needs, and of pupils' personal circumstances, together with very good teaching and well constructed programmes, mean that pupils make very good progress. Pupils with cerebral palsy are supported very well by the school's very strong emphasis on the specific teaching of physical skills through the Conductive Education programme, and on the use of augmentative and alternative communication systems (AAC) to help pupils with little spoken language to communicate. Large amounts of time within the curriculum are appropriately given to language, literacy and communication, personal, physical skills and physical education, and social and health education (PSHE), including the life skills programme. This strengthens the progress the pupils can make. In addition, the staff's very skilled and sensitive approach to developing the communication skills of pupils with language disorders means that they achieve very well. As a result of this strength, pupils' behaviour is very good and the frustrations that can arise out of their disorder are kept to a minimum.

2. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress and achieve very well. This is because of the very good teaching and the very good range of opportunities provided to underpin their learning. They make very good progress in every area of learning, as a result. In Key Stage 1, pupils' achievements are also very good. The curriculum is similarly strong, and staff, despite some being new, have a very good knowledge of the pupils and how to adapt the curriculum to meet these needs very effectively. In Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils' achievements are also very good.

3. In Key Stages 2 and Post 16 the pupils' and students achievements are good. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good and directly influences pupils' good progress. The Post 16 provision is very new and has not yet made a full impact on students' skills, knowledge and understanding. Yet despite this, their gains are good. The strong and very relevant curriculum supports their preparation well for post-school education, which for most will be at specialist colleges.

4. The school meets the needs all of its pupils very well, and those with additional special educational needs also make very good progress. Staff have a very good knowledge of these and the provision and support for these is very good. Very good achievements are equally made by pupils with cerebral palsy and those with speech and language disorder.

5. In some subjects, some pupils achieve in line with the national expectations, or even above them, for their age. This varies from year to year, and occasionally there can be significant numbers. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3, two pupils attained Level 6 in their tests, higher than the expected level for their age. In 2001 in English, three attained Level 6 in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test. Generally, pupils attain lower levels in subjects other than mathematics because of their language disorders. The higher linguistic content of GCSE courses in Key Stage 4 affects pupils' ability to work at the pace required in the subjects, although some do achieve GCSE awards. The school has a good range of award-bearing courses at Key Stage 4 and Post 16, which meet the needs of its pupils well. Awards include GCSE mathematics as well as Certificate of Achievement, and the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN), particularly for the lower attaining pupils. The courses arranged are based on the needs of pupils and, especially, take into account their language disabilities. This means that the school finds it difficult to extend GCSE courses to other subjects. Provision, however, is based on the individual needs of pupils. If a pupil does have particular talent in a subject, special arrangements for extending the GCSE provision can be made. Other pupils have a strong foundation from which to take other qualifications at colleges later.

Pupils' achievement in subjects and in relation to their personal targets

6. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall and very good in respect of pupils' communication. Pupils' communication is very strongly supported and there is very good AAC provision for cerebral palsied pupils. The teaching and support by the school's speech and language therapists makes a very strong contribution to pupils' progress. Significant importance is placed on pupils' phonological awareness and grammar and this helps them build very well on what they have learned previously. Pupils' individual targets, and specific vocabulary related to subjects, are very well promoted in lessons.

7. Pupils' attainments are strongest in speaking and listening, where they are very good, and they are good in reading and writing. Support for pupils' communication has been strengthened and is well promoted through other subjects.

8. Throughout the school, ICT is used well for writing and for speaking by many cerebral palsied pupils. Pupils find the experience productive and motivating, and achieve very well because of it. The sensory integration programme also makes a strong contribution to pupils' ability to form letters in a co-ordinated way and on the standards of handwriting of primary aged pupils. Drama, role-play, story-telling and music make significant contributions to pupils' progress in listening and watching, literacy, and self-expression.

9. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Good monitoring and improvements in teaching have raised standards in the subject. Pupils achieve well, and on occasion very well. Pupils with speech and language difficulties tend to attain higher grades in their National Curriculum test at the end of Key Stage 3 than do cerebral palsied pupils, but both groups achieve equally well. Pupils are helped to make good progress by the way in which numeracy is promoted in other subjects and by the school's strong emphasis on developing mathematical skills in a practical way, related to everyday activities.

10. In science, pupils' achievements are good, and their progress is supported by improved planning, which is now good, and the good teaching. The quality of provision is well monitored and managed, despite the fact that 20 teachers teach the subject. There is little variation in progress across the school because of this. The limited, temporary, accommodation has had a negative effect on the provision of practical work.

11. Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education. This is the result of the high priority the school gives to the subject and the way it pervades all aspect of the curriculum. Pupils' very good progress is ensured by a combination of specific teaching in personal and social development lessons and life skills, and good promotion of the subject in all other lessons.

12. Pupils' achievements in physical education and their progress in physical skills are very good. These are very well supported by the school's skilled physiotherapists, occupational therapists, teachers and support staff. There is a wide range of physical activity and a very broad curriculum in place. Swimming, team games and dance are strong areas of the curriculum, and the support pupils' progress well.

13. Pupils' achievements in music are very good because the provision is very strongly supported by specialist teaching. In art, pupils' achievements are very good. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the high quality of displayed work. In design and technology, geography, history, and religious education, pupils' achievements are good.

14. In ICT, development in the subject is relatively new. Pupils' learning has not been underpinned by a sufficiently broad and balanced programme of work, and the planning across the school has not enabled pupils to make the progress they could. There is also a limited amount of time for pupils to learn the subject and as a result their achievements are limited. In French many pupils are disappplied from learning the language, although those who study it could achieve more if additional time were given to consolidate the good learning which occurs in lessons. Within the time allocated for learning the subject, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but they could do better. However, the subject itself, and the good quality of teaching, makes a significant contribution to pupils' listening, attending and thinking skills, and this considerably supports their main special educational needs. The subject is currently offered only at Key Stage 3; from September 2001 this should have been extended to Key Stage 4, in line with National Curriculum requirements.

15. Teachers set targets in relation to what pupils should learn and achieve next in English (including communication), mathematics, and PSHE. Targets are very precisely set to identify the most important things pupils need to learn. Targets are produced from a range of information, including the school's own assessment data and the National Curriculum programmes of study and test results. Pupils make very good progress towards these.

Target setting

16. The school is very committed to raising pupils' individual levels of achievement. A range of assessment information is collected, especially in relation to personal targets, and pupils make very good progress towards these. The school has begun to analyse whole school assessment data in order to set whole school targets, but criteria for measuring their success

could be more specific. GCSE targets have been set for 2002, and pupils currently achieve between 80 and 85 per cent of their IEP targets. The management team is currently exploring how it can set whole school targets which will improve pupils' progress even further.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

17. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school, and their personal development and relationships, were identified as strengths of the school. These have been strengthened further and are now very strong features of the school, particularly the relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.

18. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is also very good. Pupils' personal development is very good and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work were judged as very good or excellent in every two out of three lessons observed. There have been no exclusions from school. The parents' questionnaire and discussion with parents confirm this very positive picture; their children like school very much and behaviour is usually very good.

19. Pupils arrive at school keen to learn and knowing that they are expected to learn and work very hard. They really enjoy school life and take part as fully as they can in lessons and other activities. Throughout the school pupils listen carefully and contribute well to discussions. Staff and fellow pupils wait very patiently when pupils need time to say their words or to organise their communication device in order to make a response. Pupils try very hard in lessons. They concentrate and persevere with work as well as with their own personal care tasks. As they progress through the school they maintain their attention in lessons for increasingly longer periods. They are keen to contribute, to show their knowledge and understanding, and to share their ideas. Pupils value each others' efforts and show this by celebrating the work and achievements of others.

20. Pupils are clear about how they should behave towards each other and adults. Occasionally, as a result of their special educational needs, the behaviour of a very small number of pupils can show some minor disruption. The school has good procedures to deal with this, and other pupils generally wait good-naturedly or carry on with their work while it is dealt with. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors and approach them appropriately. Pupils move about the school in an orderly way, put litter in the bins, and tidy up well. Careful attention to pupils' personal needs and individual goals, and the accessibility of the school environment, means that they move increasingly independently around the school. This was exemplified by a primary age pupil who was being given 'driving lessons' in her first powered wheelchair so that she could move when and where she chose to.

21. Pupils help with day-to-day routines, for example getting the register and giving out the milk. They do this with care and regard for others, moving quietly and sensibly. Staff use every opportunity to help pupils to develop and practise autonomy. The thinking skills programme, including the way in which most lessons are organised into 'plan, do and review' elements, supports the ways in which pupils think about their behaviour and their learning. It helps them to make choices and to take responsibility for these aspects of their development. Pupils are taught self-care skills such as dressing and undressing, asking for help only when their own endeavours need additional support. After a physical education lesson, for example,

a pupil put on socks and one splint before signalling he needed some assistance with the other splint. Pupils share in setting their targets for improvement. They are also taught to check their own progress and are developing an awareness of what they need to do next to improve their work.

22. At lunchtime pupils display good social awareness in the way they behave when eating and talking or playing a range of games with each other and with staff. At break times pupils play games with each other and invite staff to join in. They take turns and share equipment willingly. Such occasions reinforce the highly social atmosphere of the school and the pupil's growing personal and social maturity. From nursery onwards pupils learn personal awareness of self and others, social responsibility, rules, and fairness. They know right from wrong, and they listen to each other and take turns. When taking part in games at break, lunch time or in the after school sports club, older pupils show good awareness of the rules, take turns well and applaud one another's success and efforts. For example, pupils clapped and laughed supportively to encourage an inexperienced Year 10 pupil to send the ball in a Boccia game at the correct angle when the shot went in the wrong direction. This humorous and supportive response encouraged her to try again.

23. No incidents of intimidation or bullying were observed during the inspection. In discussion with an inspector, a cross-section of pupils said that they all felt safe, and that they were listened to and knew what to do if they had a problem. In the secondary department, the school has a 'bullying box' where any disclosures can be made confidentially.

24. Pupils show a high degree of concern and care for others. They are interested in each other and care about how their friends are feeling. They are quick to act and show they care and understand, for example when a pupil become upset in a lesson, the class waited quietly and one pupil went over and stroked his arm and said 'Don't worry.' Individual personal development is promoted very well and pupils make as much progress as possible. Pupils relate very well to one another in an increasingly mature way. They work effectively together, and help and support each other with tasks.

25. Staff provide excellent role models. Relationships between teachers, therapists and support staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are used to being treated with dignity and respect and to having their views listened to. As a result their self-confidence grows and they learn to value others.

26. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development make a very good contribution to learning, and reflect the high emphasis placed on them by the school and parents. The school promotes good citizenship and this makes a major contribution to the community feeling that exists.

Attendance

27. Pupils' attendance is very good. Pupils of all age groups enjoy attending the school. Attendance levels are better than those in similar schools and attendance in the secondary department is better than that in many mainstream schools. There is virtually no unauthorised absence. The main reason for authorised absence is medical, but improved facilities at the school have helped to reduce this to a minimum. Pupils arrive at lessons on time. The very good level of attendance has a very positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching in key stages and across the school

28. The quality of teaching is very good overall and has excellent features. It is very good with some excellent features in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where teachers' exceptionally high expectations are supported by excellent planning and pupil management that show a very clear understanding of pupils' needs. Teaching is also very good in the secondary department (Key Stages 3 and 4), where teachers' very secure subject knowledge enables them to promote very good learning opportunities for pupils following externally accredited courses. It is good at Key Stage 2 and in the Post 16 department. Teaching is very good or excellent in just over four tenths of all lessons, and it is good or better in almost nine tenths. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, and this is a key factor in pupils' very good learning in lessons throughout the school. The high proportion of teaching that is good or better, and the absence of any unsatisfactory teaching, is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when 60 per cent of teaching was judged to be good or better and four per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The very important contributions made by the range of therapists in the school have a very significant impact on pupils' learning and progress; sessions taught by them are very good and have many outstanding qualities. The school's integrated approach of having teachers, therapists and learning support assistants planning and working alongside one another works extremely well.

The quality of teaching in subjects

29. The teaching of English is very good overall and strongest in Key Stages 1 and 4, where it is of very good quality. It is good in Key Stage 2 and good with some very good features in Key Stage 3. The teaching of communication skills is consistently very good across the school, and there is an outstanding approach by the teams of teachers, therapists and support staff involved. The teaching of literacy is good. Teachers share books with enthusiasm, and they are good role models in the way they express themselves. Most teachers are very competent at teaching phonic skills and the speech and language therapists are vigilant that all staff and pupils accurately blend sounds. The teaching of symbols and signs and the use of communication systems and aids is very good. There is a good balance between the teaching of communication and the teaching of literacy.

30. The teaching of the other core subjects of science and mathematics (including numeracy) is good overall. In mathematics it is at least consistently good and at Key Stages 1 and 4 it is of very good quality. Particularly strong features are the ways in which mathematical problems are set in the context of real life, so that pupils develop strong ideas about how the things they are learning can be applied to the wider world around them. Teachers also very strongly promote the learning of mathematical ideas through other subjects. As a result, pupils learn well and can apply their mathematical skills in a wide variety of practical ways. In science the teaching is good, with some very good features. Teachers use questioning highly sensitively to explore pupils' knowledge and check their understanding. This helps pupils to fully understand any difficult scientific ideas, especially where the lack of a practical facility limits the range of ways in which scientific knowledge and enquiry can be demonstrated. In addition, teachers are very sensitive to pupils' communication needs and they allow time for pupils whose verbal responses may be slow because of their disability.

31. There is very good teaching overall in personal, social and health education. In lessons, the teaching was good, with very good features. The additional teaching which occurs as part of thinking skills work, augmentative communication activity, and sensory integration work contributes to the judgement that teaching in this aspect of the school's work is very good overall. In physical education, music and art the teaching is also very good. Design and technology, French (taught only at Key Stage 3), geography, and history are all well taught. The teaching of religious education is also good. Although it is not possible to make an overall judgement in the case of ICT, it was well taught in the small number of lessons seen. The direct teaching by therapists, and their collaborative work with teachers in lessons, ensures that pupils' mobility, independence and communication skills are very well promoted across the school.

The features of teaching

32. Teachers have very good understanding of the specific needs of the pupils who have either cerebral palsy or speech and language disorders. This is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and it is excellent at Key Stage 4. Classes in Key Stage 4 contain pupils with both difficulties and teachers are highly skilled at meeting their diverse needs. Teachers are extremely committed to providing interesting experiences to help their pupils learn and they are very well supported in this by the work of therapists and learning support assistants. Overall, the quality of the teaching seen by therapists during the inspection was of very good quality. The very strong sense of teamwork is a significant strength of the school. Very well planned and prepared lessons generally have clear overall learning objectives which are shared with pupils, and planning does identify outcomes for some individual pupils (often linked to their IEPs). Activities are very well matched to pupils' needs. Lessons are well structured and follow a consistent format, with an introduction which goes over what pupils have done and learned previously, a main teaching and practical middle part, and a plenary at the end. In the best lessons the plenary sessions are particularly effective. Teachers make skilful use of these as opportunities for pupils to celebrate achievements by showing what they have learned. They also use them to assess the developments in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding which have taken place during the lesson.

33. Teachers have very good ways of helping pupils to learn, through a combination and variety of individual, group and whole class teaching. Activities are well timed and frequently changed to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils' participation and engagement is also maintained because these activities are well organised and meet the pupils' individual needs very well, and because activities are made relevant and enjoyable. In addition, there are very good quality communication aids which ensure that all pupils can become full participants in the activities on offer. Teachers and support staff assess their achievements very well in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and good quality assessment arrangements operate in other key stages and in the Post 16 department. These assessments are well considered and are used subsequently to plan the next lessons or stages of development.

34. Rapport and relationships between staff and pupils are of the highest quality. Trust and mutual respect are clearly evident throughout the school and there is an emphasis on 'listening to' and 'sharing with' others. Therefore, pupils are always willing to try out new experiences, secure in the knowledge that they are in a very supportive environment in which help, guidance and support is readily at hand. The excellent relationships between pupils and their teachers, therapists and learning support assistants are also reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Pupils listen carefully to what they are asked to do and respond very positively when

they are asked to pay attention. As a result, they approach tasks with interest and concentration and many are able to demonstrate their growing maturity as they work independently.

35. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this expertise is excellent in Key Stage 4. Key subject vocabulary is usually very clearly identified, very well promoted, and emphasised in lessons. This is particularly strong in the case of mathematics and science. In addition to teaching this subject-specific language, teachers promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well across all key stages. Pupils' communication skills are developed very well in every lesson. The development of their skills in using ICT is encouraged well by most teachers through the subjects of the curriculum across the school, although this is not always consistently done. The use of ICT to promote learning in other subjects still being developed as a skill by many teachers and varies considerably in its effectiveness. A positive example was seen in a science lesson on different habitats, where the extremely skilful use of an interactive whiteboard for a multimedia presentation made the lesson 'come alive'. In another, less successful, lesson the pace of the work was slowed immensely by lack of predictive typing for pupils using a word processor to produce examples of 'fact' or 'opinion' as part of their literacy activity; some produced very little by the end of the lesson, as a result.

36. The school's support assistants are a highly skilled group of staff who understand the learning, communication and physical needs of pupils well and make a very positive contribution to teaching.

37. They are used fully, and teachers make really good and efficient use of their time and expertise. They are particularly effective because they have good understanding of lesson planning, and as the intended learning outcomes are shared with them in advance of the lesson they are clear about their roles. Even though teachers monitor and direct activities, learning support staff are sufficiently skilled to use their initiative and intuitively support the pupils with the most needs. As a result, they have the expertise to balance their roles of directing pupils and allowing them time to think, respond and make choices. They are particularly good at supporting the communication needs of pupils with cerebral palsy and extending their involvement with others. At other times, they are used very well for observing pupils and recording achievements in lessons.

38. Homework is well planned, challenging and regularly provided for all pupils. Consequently, it contributes well to pupils' learning.

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

The range and quality of pupils' opportunities for learning

39. The school has made significant improvements in the curriculum offered to its pupils since the last inspection. Although at that time it had good features and was balanced and relevant, these features were offset by substantial shortcomings in content and delivery, so that it was judged satisfactory rather than good overall. The school has made good progress in identifying ways of integrating the various aspects of curriculum provision, and developing a clear and agreed structure for catering for pupils with a variety of needs. There are still frailties in the provision for ICT, where implementation of planning has been delayed, and there are

shortcomings in the provision for a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4. However, National Curriculum provision is good overall and meets the requirements specified, through pupils' statements. Where pupils' needs are felt to make it inappropriate to comply with specific provisions of the National Curriculum, the arrangements for disapplication are properly carried out and include a specified alternative curriculum content. At the same time, there has been an improvement in the supportive, therapeutic and individual curriculum that the school prides itself on providing. This has been the result of more integrated planning, so that this aspect is now very good overall.

40. The curriculum is broad and highly relevant to the needs of pupils. Overall, there is an appropriate balance between subjects, but the absence of clear prescription, or effective monitoring of time allocated, leads to significant variations in the balance of subjects between classes, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3. For pupils in all year groups, the provision for English / communication, art, music, mathematics and physical education is a particular strength of the school. In most subjects, the school has made good progress in developing school-specific schemes of work, based on the standardised documents produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA).

41. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are excellent. Planning for the youngest pupils is very good overall and in some respects excellent. The Foundation Stage curriculum, for pupils who are five years and under, is very well implemented, and the highly integrated planning to meet their academic and social learning needs ensures that they have a very coherent and consistent school experience. For many pupils in Key Stage 1, the school offers a Foundation Stage curriculum which is very well suited to their needs and stage of development. Arrangements for pupils to transfer from this to the National Curriculum are detailed, very well planned, and highly effective in ensuring a smooth transition.

42. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 is very good, and it is good in Key Stage 2. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, although the provision for ICT is not secure. In Key Stage 3, most pupils are offered a modern foreign language, so that requirements are well met, although again planning for the teaching of ICT is insufficiently established to make an effective contribution to pupil's learning. In Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, pupils with physical difficulties are grouped separately from those with speech and language difficulties, and this enables the overall timetable to reflect those aspects of their needs which are different. There is appropriate use of grouping by ability for pupils with speech and language difficulties in Key Stages 2 and 3, which supports teachers in meeting individual needs when they use whole-class teaching. At Key Stage 4, although the school has not implemented the recent requirement to offer a modern foreign language, pupils are offered a very broad and highly appropriate curriculum which prepares them well for the next stage of education or training. Previously, a modern foreign language has been an option on the timetable at Key Stage 4 and pupils achieved awards in the Certificate of Achievement.

43. There is good provision for externally accredited courses at an appropriate level across a range of academic and vocational areas at Key Stage 4. Links with other educational establishments enable pupils to develop particular skills and acquire certification in a range of areas such as food hygiene ceramics, construction and media studies. There are currently a small number of pupils taking GCSE in mathematics and the school has structures in place to ensure that courses at this level could be offered in other subjects to pupils for whom they were judged appropriate. In some subjects such as science, the curriculum on offer is inhibited by

the accommodation in the existing buildings. However, this is to be addressed in this school year when the new building becomes available. At Key Stage 4, where pupils are no longer grouped by disability, setting for key subjects is effective in enabling all pupils to receive an appropriate curriculum.

44. Throughout the school there is an appropriate focus on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and this provision is good. Teachers take care to plan for opportunities to develop these skills through work in other subjects and there is very good additional provision to underpin pupils' learning in reading and writing.

45. The school makes very good arrangements to supplement pupils' National Curriculum entitlement with additional therapeutic and supportive structures that are very well designed to meet individual needs. The school has made very good progress in ensuring that this support is effectively integrated into overall planning, so that there is a good link between therapeutic activities and pupils' National Curriculum objectives. This is particularly strong in relation to the 'task series' activities. For the great majority of pupils, this link is successfully achieved through high quality joint planning between therapists and teachers.

46. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good overall, and is especially enriched by the many opportunities that are firmly established in the individualised curriculum for pupils to develop their personal and social skills in other lessons. The requirements for sex education are met well. There is a well-planned PSHE curriculum which contributes well to pupils' understanding and personal development, and this is well supported by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) work in Key Stage 4. However, weaknesses in the programme for life skills at Key Stage 3 mean that this is insufficiently linked to the overall provision for PSHE. The overlap between this programme and the more comprehensive PSHE curriculum, identified as an issue at the previous inspection, remains an issue at this time. However, pupils' personal and academic progress is enhanced by a range of curricular initiatives, including those relating to sensory integration and thinking skills. These opportunities enrich pupils' programmes and promote progress across a range of other subject areas.

47. In spite of the constraints imposed by the transport system, the provision for extra-curricular activities remains good. A wide and varied programme is provided, including residential experiences and recreational activities at lunchtime. The curriculum is extended further through visits to places of worship, art galleries, and places of scientific, geographical and historical interest.

Careers and the world of work, community links, links with other institutions and integration

48. The school provides the secondary-age pupils with good quality and very appropriate careers education and guidance. In careers lessons, pupils benefit from a well-planned programme that helps them to focus on their current and future needs. It involves an individual personal development plan as well as providing the information they need to make appropriate choices. This provision is well supplemented by the programme for work experience. Since the last inspection the school has set up a Post 16 department for students. A comprehensive careers education and guidance policy has been drawn up for the benefit of the older pupils. The work experience programme is still in place for the Year 10 and 11 pupils and the school makes good use of the local careers guidance to make the time effective for each pupil. The

careers department aims to provide impartial and unbiased guidance to enable students to make their own decisions. The school makes very good use of other facilities within the Percy Hedley Foundation to provide realistic trial work placements in Year 10, before pupils experience the wide range of community placements in Year 11.

49. The good links made with other institutions are seen as an important part of the work of the school. Full information is received from contributory schools and the local education authority when the pupils first arrive in school. The school also receives information from the medical and therapy staff who have been working with the new children. If necessary, the school may visit the contributory school to gather all information and to see the pupil. All the Year 10 pupils visit the local further education college following courses in basic food hygiene, ceramics, woodwork and media studies. Taster courses are arranged for the older pupils at their own local college where this is appropriate. Residential taster courses are available in the specialist further education colleges.

50. The school has established many very good links with local businesses, and these provide an important educational resource for the pupils. A local Indian restaurant invited one of the primary classes to visit. The pupils gained experience in considering what sort of drink to order as well as learning about the culture of another country. The older pupils improve their life skills by visiting local stores, using a shopping list and the goods on display to make buying decisions. The school also receives financial support from local businesses; McDonalds recently contributed £4000 to the school library and Barclays Bank donated £1000 for the gardens.

51. The school has drawn up an inclusion policy to ensure that the needs of all children are considered appropriately. Last year three pupils were successfully transferred to mainstream schools and two pupils have been identified this year as being suitable for integration.

Provision for personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52. The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Arrangements to support the social and moral development of pupils and students remain strong and secure and continue to be a strength of the school. The school now provides for a daily act of worship, and pupils and students have opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and on the nature of humanity. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when the overall provision was judged to be sound and the opportunities for spiritual development were unsatisfactory.

53. The provision for spiritual development is very good and represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Through religious education and assemblies students and pupils learn about Christianity and other faiths and learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. They understand aspects of the religious elements of other traditions and the spiritual aspects of different religions. Assemblies give an opportunity to worship together and provide a period for quiet reflection. During assembly in Key Stage 1 a pupil was able to pray in her own language and faith and the act of prayer was understood by her peers. Further up the school, pupils understand the idea of the love of God and have time for reflection; this makes a very positive contribution to pupils' friendships,

attitudes and behaviour. Within the full school curriculum pupils are able to experience moments of spirituality, especially in religious education. The school has worked very hard to plan for ways in which spiritual development can be promoted throughout lessons. Teachers carefully identify opportunities and clearly note these in their planning.

54. Pupils' opportunities for moral development are very good. The school gives pupils a very clear moral framework, and adults provide very good models of polite and friendly behaviour. The school has a very strong moral code. Pupils form very good relationships with other pupils and demonstrate to them what is right or wrong, equipping their peers with clear and consistent moral messages. Pupils and students respect each other and each other's work. During the inspection no examples of vandalism, graffiti or aggressive behaviour were seen and there was only a small amount of minor disruption. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to a wide range of charitable causes and this, together with debate in lessons over moral issues, has a marked impact on the overall moral character of the school.

55. The very good opportunities for social development derive from the staff's very high level of commitment to the well-being of pupils and students. They range from dances and discos to theatre visits and residential trips, for example to the Yorkshire Dales and to France. Pupils and students play well together and are courteous to each other and to the adults around them. Pupils help and support each other, and the full range of pupils is included in all social activities.

56. Cultural development is very well promoted through the wide range of extra-curricular visits and visitors. The curriculum itself enhances pupils' cultural development through local activities and achievements. An example is exhibitions in the local art gallery of pupils' own work and that of others, as well as that of other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare

57. Since the last inspection the school has continued to provide a very good standard of care for the pupils. The health and safety of pupils and staff is regarded as a high priority, and the school achieves its aim to provide the best possible health care for its pupils. The headteacher takes personal responsibility for the implementation of the school health and safety policy. All pupils are seen by the school medical director as part of their initial assessment, and their health needs are reviewed at least annually. The director ensures effective liaison with the health trusts where pupils live, and this results in pupils' medical needs being met, wherever they reside. The school doctor visits each school site on a weekly basis. Most of the special support assistants are trained first aiders, so they are immediately available in an emergency. Throughout the school day the pupils benefit from the support of the lead teachers, the special support assistants, the physiotherapists, the occupational therapists, the speech and language therapists and all school staff. The caretaking staff make regular inspections of the school premises and any necessary repairs are dealt with. The school employs a technician who ensures that all equipment is checked and maintained. There are strict procedures for the issue of medication to pupils; records are carefully kept and medicines are stored securely. Effective arrangements are in place for the pupils' transport so that the risk of accidents is minimised. The residential unit receives unannounced inspection visits from the local Social Services Department, and the standards of cleanliness and service are so good that the unit always receives an excellent report.

58. Pupils' personal development is monitored effectively, particularly the priority needs of communication and physical development. All departments combine to systematically monitor the personal development of each pupil, in order to respond flexibly to changing needs. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils acquire life skills so that they can live independently. School staff have drawn up a set of booklets on the subject, and these have received national acclaim.

59. The school is effective in promoting good levels of attendance, and parents agree that their children like school. Attendance registers are kept well and up to date, and parents co-operate by contacting the school if their child is sick. On the very few occasions when there is no parental contact, the school has an established procedure that results in unauthorised absence being kept to a minimum.

60. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating any oppressive behaviour. Good behaviour throughout the school day is achieved by the observance of the behaviour and discipline guidelines. Above all, the pupils are encouraged to help each other, and during the inspection there were many instances of this working to good effect. The staff all provide good role models and manage behaviour very well. They are especially good at preventing potentially difficult situations, by increasing the pupil's involvement in the lesson. The pupils are very well supported by staff during lunchtimes, play breaks and on trips out of school.

61. There are very good procedures for child protection which are known by staff. The school has taken considerable trouble to draw up a child protection policy that complies with local authority guidelines. The designated teachers have followed the recommended training programme. All staff and visiting students are made aware of procedures and any concerns are referred to the appropriate authority.

Support for pupils' special educational needs, including those with additional special educational needs

62. The school clearly identifies the needs of all its pupils and provides specific, high quality support for pupils with additional special educational needs. It offers a broad and very relevant curriculum for all pupils and the majority make very good progress in achieving their priority learning targets. Some pupils make excellent progress, especially in using communication aids to access the curriculum. Teachers, therapists and support staff work very effectively together to provide all pupils with high quality learning experiences in an inclusive, and happy, teaching environment. The very good leadership within the school continues to reflect on ways of improving practice, and as a result of this the school operates some very good and excellent innovative schemes which support pupils. These include the School for Parents, the use of ICT for access to the curriculum, support for pupils' communication and the proposed accreditation of alternative augmentative communication. The sensory integration programme and support for 'thinking skills' considerably enhance the school's overall provision for pupils.

63. Although the school has a good special educational needs policy with clear guidelines for the annual review and clear success criteria, the monitoring and evaluating arrangements could be stated in greater detail to ensure that all staff are aware of current practice.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance

64. Since the last inspection the school has made a good improvement in the assessment and evaluation of pupils' progress. A key issue was the need to improve the quality of medium and long term planning by strengthening the existing procedures for assessment and the use made of them. At that time, although a range of specialist assessments were carried, the assessment of pupils' progress in most subjects was weaker and the use of assessments to inform teachers' planning was not consistently developed.

65. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development are now good and have some very good features. Assessment procedures in almost all subjects are good and the information gained is put to good use by staff. Although some newer members of staff are, naturally, still developing the skills in this area, they are well supported by colleagues in understanding and planning for pupils' needs. Specialist assessment work relating to pupils' special educational needs is of particularly high quality, and teachers, therapists and support assistants use the knowledge very well to support the pupils' development in all lessons.

66. The annual review cycle is well established, with very good involvement of parents, teachers, therapists, the school's educational psychologists and outside professionals as appropriate. Pupils' progress is reviewed through this and a series of '8.45 a.m.' meetings to which all key personnel contribute, and pupils' and parents' views are carefully considered. There is very good attention to the broader need of pupils, and their long term needs and opportunities, so that everyone is working towards clear goals and challenges. Strong liaison with outside agencies, such as local health trusts and LEA specialist teaching services, support the planning, assessment and monitoring process.

67. Pupils are carefully supported so that they too are increasingly involved and contribute to the target setting process. This is achieved through the preparatory discussions with pupils prior to, and during, the Annual Review. It is also accomplished through the emphasis the school places on pupils' developing thinking skills and self-awareness, and its ethos of total respect for the individual child. Individual education plans are of good quality. Most targets are specific, measurable, and attainable, and all plans include personal and social development targets. Reports are generally of a very high quality and make it clear to parents how their children have progressed in relation to the previous targets set. National curriculum levels are appropriately reported at the end of Key Stages, although there is some variation as to whether levels are included in reports at other times.

68. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a number of assessment procedures that have strengthened its monitoring of pupils' progress and planning for the next stages of pupils' development. The school has introduced a commercial LEA scheme – Performance Indicators And Value Added Scheme (PIVATS) to enable even finer gradations of assessment to be made. It also caters for the more differentiated P levels and National Curriculum levels in other subjects, although these have not yet had a full impact on staff practice.'

69. Individual pupils are, however, now monitored well for their progress and the 'value added' gains they make in relation to their starting points and their IEP targets. Most subjects have established skills-based assessments linked to their programmes of study and pupils' needs. These are strongest for music, physical education and the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Assessment procedures and their use in the Foundation Stage are excellent. In French, religious education, art and PSHE, assessment procedures are

satisfactory, but need further development to ensure that pupils' progress is being more consistently tracked and used to plan lessons. A range of accredited courses supports subject assessment and the monitoring of pupils' personal, social and emotional development at Key Stage 4 and Post 16.

70. Clear guidance and monitoring of practice is supporting more consistency in assessment and the use made of it. For example the lead teachers and deputy headteachers now monitor how well assessment is informing planning. The school recognises that subject co-ordinators' roles in this area need further development. Information gained from the monitoring, from PIVATs, and from the portfolios being devised should be helpful in illustrating attainment by key stage and different groupings within the school, and for providing a firm basis to set whole school targets.

71. There are excellent systems for identifying and responding to pupils' special educational needs. The school has its own nationally and regionally recognised specialist assessment facilities, with highly expert staff. These include medical staff, an educational psychologist, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, trained 'conductors' and support staff as well as their very skilled teachers'. Their regular and detailed assessments of pupils ensure that provision to meet pupils' identified special educational needs is very strong. The targets identified are realistic and challenging and are set within a planned programme of support. Teachers integrate these very well into their planning. The ways in which such targets are embedded into the everyday experiences and lessons is a strength of the school. In addition, the school's reflection on the needs of pupils as identified through their assessments and monitoring has led to a number of high quality assessment and curricular initiatives. These include the thinking skills programme, instrumental enrichment and the sensory integration programmes, as well as the phonological awareness and detailed communication and language assessment batteries.

Residential provision

72. The residential provision has shown good improvement since the last inspection. Not only has it maintained the excellence identified during that inspection, but it has also extended its range of activities to involvement in the 'Summer School', offering some weekend respite care and offering NVQ training to staff.

73. The excellent quality of this provision supports pupils' personal and academic development. This is achieved by following through activities to promote specific skills, by setting targets in care plans, by therapy programmes, and through the homework set by teachers.

74. The residential provision is only a short distance from both school sites. The decorative order is maintained to a high standard, with any small marks or knocks caused by wheelchairs being rapidly repaired. Specialist accommodation to support pupils' personal hygiene needs is of an excellent standard and benefits from the advice received from the school's therapists. The pupils' bedrooms are furnished to a high quality, are easily accessible and allow maximum privacy. Pupils are encouraged to personalise these, and this adds to the homely atmosphere. The living rooms respect pupils' individual preferences, offering them the opportunity to socialise as part of a large group, to take part in a range of activities, or to sit quietly completing homework, or watching television or a video. The range of activities is wide and many visits

take place. Trips to the theatre, sporting activities, shopping, and local clubs for young people help pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

75. The residential provision promotes individual pupils' health and social and emotional well-being. Medication is managed with great care and pupils are confident that they will receive any medical attention they may need. The pupils relate very well to each other and to staff. They trust staff implicitly to respond positively to any difficulties they may experience. Pupils are allowed telephone contact with parents, and staff also contact parents by phone or through the home/unit communication book as necessary. There is ready access to a confidential helpline if pupils wish to avail themselves of this.

76. The management of the residential provision is excellent. There are clear systems for dealing with pupils' complaints, should there be any, and pupils feel they have a 'voice' within the establishment. They are able to make their needs and desires known and can personalise their surroundings if they wish. Staff are clear about their duties and are offered further training to help them fulfil these. Vetting procedures for new staff are clearly in place. Some staff are now undertaking NVQ courses in order to develop their careers and enhance the provision even further. Activities such as meal times and visits are managed in an orderly, pleasant manner that takes account of individual pupils' needs. The quality of the provision is monitored annually by the local social services department and always receives very positive reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

77. Since the last inspection the school has successfully maintained and continued to develop the links with parents. The geographical location of parents makes regular face-to-face contact difficult, but the school works very hard and very effectively to overcome this problem. Parents were very supportive of the school during the pre-inspection meeting and in their responses to the questionnaire. They have very positive views of the school. Most parents agreed with 11 of the 12 questions asked. A very small number signalled that they thought that the range of activities outside lessons could be improved, though the inspection team feel that the extra curricular provision is satisfactory. It was clear from listening to parents that they feel very strongly that the school does everything it can to help their children and that the staff are committed.

78. Parents receive very good quality information from the school. This is by means of the annual governors' report, the school prospectus, the school website and regular newsletters. The newsletters cover all aspects of school life. Teachers send out curriculum information to parents at the beginning of each term to help parents be involved as they wish in their child's learning. The school makes it clear that parents can contact or visit at any time if they have a concern about their child. Parents' meetings are organised at least once a year to enable everyone to meet and discuss progress and targets. Reports of a child's overall development and progress are sent out to parents at appropriate intervals, in line with the Annual Review process. A small number of parents told the Registered Inspector that they would like more information relative to specific therapies or to curriculum work so that they can follow up at home. Inspectors found that such information was very good on the whole, but this concern from parents may be due to some inconsistencies in the information being provided by individual teachers. Parents are very appreciative of the school's residential provision and the 'Summer School'. The home-school diaries are very useful to parents.

79. The school supports its parents very well and this significantly enhances the contribution they can make to their child's mobility and / or communication. Staff make home visits as part of the induction procedure for new pupils, and give advice to parents on equipment, and on possible adaptations to the home in order to aid accessibility. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school in many ways. There is a room set up for the parents in the primary department. Parents and the younger pupils join with the staff on weekly basis in a session where the conductive education technique is used, so that parents can learn how to help their child more effectively.

80. The school's training opportunities for its parents are very good. Ten parents have completed the classroom assistant course and a good number of parents recently attended a course on speech and language. The weekly 'School for Parents' is excellent and there is high quality instruction for parents by the school's head physiotherapist. In addition, this is a taught session for pupils in the Foundation Stage; the quality of the teaching seen in this session during the inspection was excellent.

81. The school encourages parents to help in school, and some gave assistance during the Summer School project. Parents have recently helped to produce an excellent range of homework packs.

82. The very good links between the school and the parents make an important contribution to the quality of the pupils' education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

83. The school is very well led by the headteacher, governors and senior management team, which consists of the two deputy headteachers, lead teachers and the heads of therapy. They have a clear shared vision that is very well reflected in the values of the school and its aim to provide high quality education, therapy and care. The staff work extremely well together, They combine the skills and expertise of teaching, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, and they work with parents and the community to meet the needs of the pupils.

84. The school's development planning process is extremely effective, and is conducted in a very professional and rigorous manner. The plan sets out a clearly written synopsis of the school's direction and how the priorities selected for development will help achieve this. All staff are involved and they see it as an important aspect of their work. Curriculum co-ordinators, for example, produce annually the priorities for their subjects, which they also cost. They are involved in a formal evaluation of how well they have achieved their priorities, against prescribed success criteria. Senior staff monitor and evaluate this effectively. For example, the process has led to focusing on improving the links between the staff's development priorities and the effect these will have on standards. Staff produce detailed, high quality development plans for their subject or area of responsibility, and these are taken account of during the school development planning process. The school's priorities are well defined and give rise to good action in the pursuit of excellence.

85. The management team have a very strong shared commitment to improvement and are exceptionally well placed to improve further. School changes have been managed very well,

including the very recent move to temporarily revamped secondary accommodation and the induction of new staff over the past two years.

86. Overall, very good progress has been made in relation to the key issues of the last inspection. A system of performance management review, following DfES guidelines, has been introduced both for teachers and for therapists. This followed the development of new job descriptions for all staff against which performance could be reviewed. Review documents contain clear targets and the ways in which these will be met, including any necessary support the member of staff may need to achieve his/her targets.

87. The role and function of the Percy Hedley Foundation (Charity and Trust) and the governing body have been clarified. Governors now operate within clear instruments and articles of government. This includes the establishment of an appropriate committee structure. The governors are well informed. They meet generally well their obligations for provision relating to pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need, although the requirement to provide a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4, since September 2001, is not currently met because of an oversight. The governing body operates a system of school visits where nominated governors visit the school and report back their findings to their colleagues. Such a system, and the reports made by the headteacher and other members of staff, ensures that the governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors now need to consider how they might gather more detailed information on all aspects of the school. Recently, the governors have worked very well with the Trust to develop a new secondary department building, due to open in 2002, to improve the education and therapy offered to pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4.

88. Overall, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good, and subsequent action is effective. The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum. However, the variation in the balance of some subjects of the curriculum between year groups would benefit from more effective monitoring and auditing of curriculum provision.

89. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is very good and much progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. This means that the management team has a very clear view of where the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, therapists, and support staff lie and where they need to plan for improvement. The school has identified lead teachers who are available to help teachers improve their teaching. These teachers also work with subject co-ordinators to train them in classroom observation as a means of improving the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in subjects. This programme of training for co-ordinators is due to be completed by July 2002.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources of the school; induction and professional development of staff

90. Overall, the school has very good staffing levels. A major strength is the way all staff work very closely together as a whole school team. The number of teachers and their match to the curriculum and their responsibilities is good. Many of the teachers have over 10 years' teaching experience, and the majority of these have an additional special educational needs qualification. A large number of teaching staff with lead responsibilities for subject co-ordination have specialist qualifications in the areas they are leading. Specialist staff have now been appointed to teach design and technology, food technology, ICT, and music. At present,

there is one newly qualified teacher who is completing an induction year and one other member of staff has just completed the first year in teaching.

91. The numbers of support staff, including therapists, and their experience and match to their responsibilities, is excellent. The school employs a large number of therapists and special support assistants who work both inside and outside the classroom. This large group of support staff continues to offer high quality educational support and works very much as part of a whole school team towards a common goal of ensuring that all pupils make maximum progress. The large number of teaching and non-teaching staff the school employs results in the adult-pupil ratio being high in many classes. This is extremely beneficial in terms of ensuring that all pupils are very well supported in personal, social, academic and physical development.

92. The school's arrangements for training, appraisal and the management of staff performance are excellent. All staff now have regular non-contact time, and additional time is provided if the teacher's co-ordination area is a priority issue, identified on the school development plan. All staff undertake a well-established, and very carefully planned, programme of induction to ensure that they understand their responsibilities to the pupils, the school's strategies for behaviour management, and the high standards the school expects. The staff handbook is extremely comprehensive and is good additional guidance in terms of ensuring that the school's aims are clearly understood and procedures are consistently implemented. Over the last year staff have undertaken a wide variety of training courses to develop their knowledge and skills in areas like *Instrumental Enrichment*, *Moving and Handling Strategies*, *Epilepsy Awareness*, *Phonological Awareness* and *Numeracy*. All training courses are evaluated formally and their impact on teaching practice and the raising of standards carefully considered. One excellent aspect of training that the school is developing is the sharing of its expertise with mainstream colleagues and parents.

93. The school has established a very good structure for internal and external trainers which involves a multi-disciplinary team approach towards training. This initiative promotes self-esteem on the part of staff, and shares effective practice with other institutions and schools. In addition, the school promotes good links with the local education authority through their assessment service. It also acts as a 'host' school for regional conferences. The staffing structure, although complex, serves staff very well in terms of guidance, support and appraisal of their performance. Although there are very large numbers of staff, overall, there is an effective communication system. Job descriptions have recently been reviewed. The roles of principal lead co-ordinators, co-ordinators, senior staff, and the school deputies are well understood and provide staff with good opportunities to advance their experience and gain promotion. The school has a designated staffing governor who is well experienced in dealing with personnel issues and is committed to developing effective practices in school. The administrative, maintenance, domestic and catering staff make a very good contribution to the life of the school and feel valued for their efforts. Their training needs are identified alongside those of teachers, therapists, and special support assistants, and because of this the pupils receive high standards of care and support in a safe and friendly learning environment.

94. The accommodation is good. The school consists of three sites: primary, secondary and Post 16, plus the residential accommodation. The secondary accommodation is temporary and staff and pupils from Years 7 to 14 will be re-housed into new refurbished premises in March 2002. The site plans for this new school are particularly impressive and there has been much consultation to ensure that the accommodation meets the specific teaching and learning needs of all pupils. Overall, the school's current accommodation is good for primary aged

children, satisfactory for secondary and Post 16 students, and excellent in terms of the residential provision. Since entering the temporary secondary accommodation, the school has designated a large amount of its own funds to ensure that the accommodation meets the special needs of its pupils. For example, substantial funds were allocated to refurbishing the toilets and a ramp to enable pupils with physical difficulties to have appropriate wheelchair access and equipment. Since the last inspection, the school has done much to improve its accommodation in several areas, such as the refurbishment of the hydrotherapy pool, new changing rooms, the provision of two computer suites, and the reorganisation of library facilities for both secondary and primary pupils. The school now has a designated music room. The library provision has significantly improved since the last inspection, and the current facilities in the primary department are excellent. In addition, considerable monies have been spent on ensuring that all pupils with physical difficulties have appropriate furniture and equipment to enable them maximum access to the whole curriculum. This has included the purchase of height adjustable tables, wooden plinths, and hoists to assist in handling and moving pupils. The accommodation for teaching science has improved and is now satisfactory. The school makes very good use of links with the local institutions and businesses to enhance aspects of its internal and external environment. For example, links with a local bank provided the monies to establish a raised pond and flowerbeds on the primary campus, and links with the local probation provide a regular 'painting service' for the school. There are designated and exceptionally effective governors responsible for raising funds for the school. They have worked very hard with the headteacher and staff to secure large amounts of money to develop and improve provision further. The new secondary school building is one very impressive outcome of their endeavours. The headteacher is very aware of the need to give pupils a say and an active part in making decisions about their own learning environment he has set aside considerable funds to be used for the outcomes of direct consultation with the secondary-aged students.

95. The school's resources for learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall. Staff efficiently use of a range of materials and equipment during lessons, and are beginning to use ICT to support pupils' learning in subjects and to enhance the quality of their teaching. However, there is still the need to extend the range of resources in certain curriculum areas like science, design technology, geography, history, and religious education. There are now adequate resources to deliver the history and geography schemes of work, and resources in music are now very good, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Learning resources in English, mathematics, personal and social education, drama and the Foundation Stage are good. In all other areas, except a modern foreign language, they are satisfactory.

96. The school has made very good improvements to its library provision since the last inspection. It now has a greater number and range of texts and has addressed the issues of purchasing books that reflect a multi-cultural dimension. There are the two up and running computer suites in both departments, which are well equipped with up-to-date hardware. Although a recent resource audit of ICT resources indicates a growing bank of software to support learning across the curriculum, this is an area the school recognises could be further developed. The range of specialist aids, including communication aids, to help pupils access the curriculum and to meet their special educational needs, continues to be a strength of the school. Resources for physical education are now judged as very good. Overall the school has made very good progress since the last inspection in addressing the areas for development raised in the last report. The high quality support provided by all staff, the continued development of the school's accommodation, and the good quality learning resources contribute to maximising the achievements of all pupils.

Financial planning and management

97. Financial planning is excellent. The school's annual income is very carefully assessed against detailed projections of fixed and anticipated costs. Major capital expenditure is managed by the charity. This charity is extremely efficient and effective in raising funds for the new buildings. It is managed in line with the Charity Commission guidelines. At the start of the financial year the school is able to plan and proceed with confidence. All fees paid by local authorities are spent within the school, and the school considerably enhances provision from its additional resources gained through fundraising. A comprehensive list of school services is contained in the finance policy documents. Each subject area has a cost code, a maintenance sum, and a named person to co-ordinate finance. There are budget headings for such items as staff training, management development and the library. Monthly statements ensure that everyone is aware of the spending patterns, and financial control is very strong. The new building plans and priorities are very clear; they give a comparison of the current accommodation with the new site.

98. Minutes of the governors' meetings and the 'Foundation' organisation inform all concerned of the progress on performance management and target setting. Sharing of information is excellent. The fundraiser reports to meetings, and accounts are discussed. in the finance and general purposes meetings. Financial procedures are very well produced, and the Annual Report and Accounts are included in the staff handbook. The range of grants and donations received by the school for specific purposes is carefully linked to other spending. In this way there is a very good level of coherence between the different strands of spending.

99. The extent to which the principles of best value are applied are excellent. Best value is obtained on the purchase of larger items of expenditure by obtaining tenders and quotations. There is a clear view that cheapest is not always the best, and a good element of prudence is exercised in this respect on spending decisions. Value for money is also sought in many of the everyday purchases by comparing prices of different suppliers. When the school purchased computer equipment it used a local authority as an agent in order to comply with the principles of best value. The school fees compare favourably with those of similar schools, according to DfES information, and the school keeps abreast of fee levels through comparison with other non-maintained residential schools. Suppliers' contracts are reviewed. The governors with monetary connections with the school have been identified, and the governing body now complies with regulations. The administration is very efficient, and the company secretary, chief executive and headteacher work very closely to maintain a high quality process. This is a very efficient organisation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

100. In order to improve the educational standards and the quality of education the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- Improve pupils' progress in ICT** by:
 - * ensuring that a full and progressive programme of study is taught throughout the school and that sufficient time is allocated to the subject;
 - * ensuring that all documentation to support the subject and pupils' learning is in place and fully used;
 - * improving the role of co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the school's work in their subjects.
- Develop further the use and analysis of assessment data for different groups of pupils, tracking their performance in order to set whole school targets to raise pupils' attainment.

101. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- * Make provision for a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4, and extend the pupils' opportunities to learn the subject at Key Stage 3 so that they are able to build more effectively upon what they have learned.
- * Monitor the breadth and balance in the curriculum, including the role of life skills within the PSHE programme.

*** identified in the current school development plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	157
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	56	75	17	0	0	0
Percentage	6	35	48	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	170
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0*

*This is non-maintained school and pupils' meals are included in the fees charged by the school

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Attainment

Because of the small number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests and other examinations, it is not possible to report on pupils' attainment as assessed by teachers or through the tests or examinations.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	28
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	8

Education support staff: YR– Y13

Total number of education support staff	30
Total aggregate hours worked per week	881

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	2969533.00
Total expenditure	2968843.00
Expenditure per pupil	18103.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	0.00
Balance carried forward to next year	690.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

170
100

Percentage of responses in each category

Number of responses in brackets

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	34	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	44	5	1	0
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	32	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	16	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	29	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	24	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	32	10	3	9

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

102. The school makes very good provision for its youngest pupils. The curriculum, facilities and teaching offered for these pupils are all very good, with some excellent features. Children and pupils who experience the foundation curriculum are making very good progress across all the areas covered by the Early Learning Goals. This represents a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the previous inspection. On that occasion, arrangements were reported to be good overall, especially the teaching, which was good overall and very good in some areas of learning. As a result, children were making satisfactory progress overall, with good progress in physical development and some aspects of creative development.

103. The school has demonstrated its commitment to high quality provision for early years' children by providing an excellent specialist teaching block for children in the Foundation Stage and those pupils in Key Stage 1 for whom a Foundation Stage curriculum is deemed to be appropriate. The accommodation includes a fenced outdoor tarmac area and a grassed area with appropriate equipment for the children's physical development. Indoors, the children benefit from the very good use of the range of rooms available, which provide well for a very good variety of activities. An observation suite with one-way mirrors allows parents to view the school's practice with their children and it is also used for part of the training parents receive.

104. Children enter the Foundation Stage with complex special educational needs. Due to their particular disabilities, their attainments are below those expected for their age. However, as a result of the wide range of stimulating activities now provided, the very good teaching and the very effective use of accommodation, the children make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education programmes, in relation to their capabilities and compared with their prior attainment. Very good emphasis is placed on ensuring children's physical, personal, social and emotional development, as well as on promoting communication, language, literacy, and mathematical skills. This is achieved through the provision of very good and highly relevant learning opportunities which address the Early Learning Goals very well. These are effectively supported by very good assessment procedures which provide detailed information that is used very well to plan for individual needs.

Personal, social and emotional development

105. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The staff take every opportunity to provide experiences in making choices, offering scope to make decisions, and the children respond well, such as when they guide the adult taking them to the library by making and communicating a decision at each intersection or entrance. They learn to signal agreement or disagreement, using word, gesture or, in some cases, eye-pointing. Children accept the need to take turns in activities and engage very well with the teacher and learning support staff. The children are enthusiastic in their response to stimuli when lessons have an experiential structure, for example when they celebrate a birthday or enact a cultural festival such as Divali. Children respond well to one another and gain confidence through supported role-play as they choose an outfit for a fancy dress party. They are beginning to form good relationships with adults and other children. For example, they recognise pictures of themselves and each other, and notice who is present or absent when they help the teacher with the register. They develop increased self awareness when they sing 'I'm very special' and

identify similarities and differences in each other's features. Overall, however, the nature of their difficulties means that they have little personal independence and need a great deal of support in all activities, and only a small minority demonstrate the ability to work with any degree of independence. Within this limitation, children explore the environment and, for example, find the loop on a coat for an adult to hang it up. Higher-attaining children show a willingness to perform in public and to notice and comment on others' behaviour. Children are beginning to understand that people have different customs and practices, which need to be treated with respect. For example, the children experience aspects of the major world religions and show interest when music associated with these is played. These lessons make a significant contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Communication, language and literacy

106. Children make very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They benefit very well from the importance staff place on learning through verbal communication, and the emphasis given to helping children communicate by using symbol books. They recognise their own name when it is said. Higher attaining children respond to questions that include descriptive words, and describe recent events in the order in which they happened. They recognise their own symbol and begin to identify the initial letters of their own name. Writing skills are at the very early stages of development. However, children develop intentional mark-making skills. Higher attaining children select and recognise key words, including their own names and those of family members. They demonstrate more controlled movements with a variety of writing implements. They listen well to stories told by the staff and respond when adults talk about the characters or objects in the story. Children have access to books and enjoy shared reading at school and at home, choosing books from the library and indicating whether or not they have enjoyed them. However, they rely heavily on adult supervision and support during these activities. Children enjoy looking at picture books and are beginning to know that pictures and words convey meaning. They are beginning to associate sounds with patterns in nursery rhymes and songs; for example, they respond to and try to sing the 'goodbye' song.

Mathematical development

107. Children make very good progress in mathematics. They develop an awareness of number and reinforce their understanding through listening to or taking part in number songs and rhymes. When watching a television programme introducing the number 'one', children show good interest when confronted with 'one Miss Muffet, one tuffet, one bowl, one spider' and so on. They respond with understanding when, with adult support, they enact 'one ball, one foot, one kick'. When scribing the number 1 in sand, higher-attaining children hold out a finger to be used to make the mark. By the time they are six, children recite the numbers from one to five without prompts, enjoy counting by rote, and participate in familiar number rhymes such as 'five fat sausages'. They begin to identify familiar fruits by their shape. Higher attaining children copy and extend simple repeating patterns of numbers (for example, 1, 2, 1, 2.....) and recognise some coins by reference to their size. They identify colours and sort objects according to their colour, and begin to acquire mathematical vocabulary when they discriminate between 'big' and 'small' or 'full' and 'empty'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

108. Children make very good progress in developing and extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. They respond well when they are encouraged to explore and investigate objects and materials, using their senses as appropriate. They enjoy the experience of enacting cultural and social events and begin to show an understanding that we wear different clothing in particular circumstances or for particular jobs, such as nursing or delivering letters. Children are beginning to understand their own culture and the beliefs and those of other people, for example when celebrating Easter, Christmas, or Divali, and when they experience aspects of the major world religions through religious education lessons. They participate in assemblies and acts of worship with increasing awareness and understanding. They use ICT effectively to support their learning, for example using a concept keyboard or switch to select and match objects on the screen. They show interest in the effect when, with support, they use a remote control device to start, stop and direct a toy car. Higher attaining children use more complex switch mechanisms to manipulate objects on screen. By the time they are six, children observe seasonal changes, such as falling leaves in Autumn. They recognise the names of a range of objects, and find them inside and outside the classroom by looking or pointing at them or by moving to them. They explore a range of sensations through touch, taste, sight or hearing and classify these according to whether they like or dislike them. Higher attaining children explore the classroom and the outside area, using their senses appropriately. They develop a growing understanding of technology, exploring the effect of pressing buttons on a cassette recorder or operating the lift. They begin to ask questions based on their observations and to wonder about the world, enquiring, for example, what plants need in order to grow. When working with computers, they name the key visible components and are aware that it must be switched on to work.

Physical development

109. Children make very good progress in their physical development which, for most of them, is the area in which they experience the greatest difficulty. They use a wide range of large and small equipment with growing confidence and skill. Children develop manipulative skills and show increasing dexterity and control when using or handling tools, such as mark-making equipment and paintbrushes, and when controlling the computer through use of a concept keyboard, touch screen or switch. Task series activities contribute very well to the development of posture and improving specific skills such as reaching out. As they develop more confidence in sitting, the children choose to sit on a stool, with diminishing levels of support. They improve their ability to select, pick up and handle resources, as when they choose the appropriate card from a pile to record the day's weather, or move musical instruments around to get at the one they want. The children benefit very well from the specialised water confidence and swimming programme. They develop a range of skills, from entering the water safely with support to developing confidence and balance in vertical and horizontal positions and achieving breath control. Higher attaining children improve their pool skills and become increasingly independent in the water. Through consistent structured support, they develop good posture when sitting or lying, as well as making progress in terms of preparation for walking.

Creative development

110. Children make very good progress in terms of their creative development. They enjoy singing especially the 'Hello' song and the 'Goodbye' Song and other songs and rhymes accompanied by recorded music. They make effective use of untuned percussion instruments to produce sounds in response to the music. They experiment with colour and shape when painting pictures by using paint sponges or the computer. They show good creative skills when they make a paper-plate face and decorate it with mouths and eyes to represent moods or feelings. After printing a picture assembled on screen children embellish it by adding other materials to provide a background. They make good use of opportunities for blending colours and producing simple printing. Children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch, and feel. For example, they enjoy responding to the different sounds, lights and music when celebrating Divali and expressing their feelings when dressing up for a fancy-dress party. They explore the sensations and creative possibilities of sand and water, both in the school and when on a visit to the seaside at Cullercoats.

Teaching and Learning

111. The quality of teaching is very good overall; it is always at least good and in a substantial majority of the lessons seen it was very good. Most teaching in the class for children under six is undertaken by the class teacher, who is highly competent and very experienced in the education of young children and the special needs of the children at the school. In addition, there are good and very good contributions by support staff, including the provision of therapeutic support in the development of physical or spoken language. Lesson planning is of a high order, securely based in exemplary medium-term planning drawn from an excellent scheme of work, which addresses the Foundation Stage curriculum as well as the special needs of the children. The topic structure offers a range of experiences under headings such as 'all about me', 'Weather', 'Traditional songs and rhymes' and 'Living things'. It is carefully planned and monitored to ensure that all strands of the Early Learning Goals are appropriately addressed.

112. In lessons, very good use is made of the good and improving resources for learning, and great care is taken in matching these very well to individual children. Independence and choice are very well promoted and every opportunity is taken to engage pupils, so that even calling the register is used as a social activity in which children are invited to notice who is present. Activities are very well chosen and presented so as to hold children's interest very well. All staff show whole-hearted commitment to these activities and show great skill in ensuring that activities and preparation all come together, as, for example, with the highly successful simulated fancy dress party. Staff constantly monitor pupils for their responses and adapt their approach in response to what formal and informal assessment is showing them. They are particularly sensitive and responsive to pupils' vocalisation or body language, confirming and reinforcing any communication by children to give them encouragement for further development. When work is carried out by therapists in relation to speech and language or physical development, planning for these is very well integrated into the general curriculum planning so that activities promote development toward other Early Learning Goals very well. As a result of the high quality of teaching, learning is very good and children show an increasing willingness to take part to the best of their ability. Lessons have very good pace

and no time is wasted. When some children require more time to get ready, for example, staff are well deployed to ensure that as each child becomes ready he or she is immediately involved in the planned activity. All staff show very high levels of respect for children's dignity and privacy, and this contributes well to the development of self-awareness and self-respect.

113. Teaching is securely underpinned by the very detailed written records of children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals and their targets identified in their high quality individual education plans. The highly effective integration of planning with that for pupils in Key Stage 1 ensures that children are enabled to make the transition very well and are very well prepared for the next stage. Teachers, therapists and support staff work very well together as a team, are very well deployed and plan very effectively together. They consistently work very hard to build up the children's self-confidence and self-esteem. They ask challenging questions, explain clearly, and encourage the children to think when solving problems. Children are grouped appropriately, with a high level of individual attention. During the wide range of activities, most of which are adult-directed, the children are encouraged increasingly to use their own initiative when selecting materials or activities. Girls and boys are treated equally and all are strongly encouraged to take part in all activities. Children's learning is very well supported throughout the day, including at lunchtime when they are assisted in their feeding programmes by well-trained lunch-time support staff. All staff constantly seek to improve their skills and knowledge further and make effective use of in-service training to improve their subject knowledge and methods of teaching. Management of the Foundation Stage is highly effective and very well supported by the good links to the school's senior management team.

ENGLISH

114. The provision for English is very good overall. Pupils' communication is very strongly supported and speech and language therapists make a significant contribution to the teaching and the provision.

115. All pupils, whatever their disability, gender or background, achieve well in English. Achievements in communication are very good across the school. The few pupils who come from homes where English is spoken as an additional language make similar progress to their English-speaking classmates. Achievement is high because of the significant emphasis the teachers, therapists and support assistants place on the checking and improvement of pupils' individual development in English. Significant importance is given to the development of additional methods of communication and phonological awareness and grammar, and this helps pupils to build upon what they have previously learned. The planning in all subjects stresses the development of subject-specific vocabulary and the social use of language. Individual educational plans reflect this emphasis and have clear targets that are on the whole very well linked to daily lessons in all subjects. Planning for each class is based on a well thought out and adapted National Literacy Strategy that meets all needs. Rigorous and focussed monitoring and evaluation of teaching and planning has improved the provision considerably since the time of the last inspection, when it was found to be satisfactory overall. As a result, standards are improving and are likely to improve even further.

116. A small number of pupils achieve standards in line with, or above, those found in mainstream schools at the end of each stage in their education. This varies from year to year, and sometimes can be a significant number. A few pupils transfer to mainstream schools. Others go on to study and achieve Certificate of Achievement at the highest level by Year 11. Standards achieved in Year 11 are improving year-on-year. The school takes full account of

the needs of the pupils before entering them for GCSE English or otherwise. Often the pupils are not entered because of these considerations and the priorities the school has for meeting all their needs. However, they are prepared well for opportunities to take this examination at college after they leave the school. Other pupils achieve as well as they can in relation to their prior attainment and circumstances. The oldest pupils have very good achievements in ASDAN modules, which have a broader and higher level of interpretation than that seen in many other schools.

117. All pupils, whatever their disability, gender or background make good progress in English overall. The school has done much to improve the progress of pupils in communication and literacy. Pupils make very good progress in their communication and good progress in reading and writing. Progress in communication was variable at the time of the last inspection, but is now consistently very good. This is the result of seamless teamwork in the great majority of classes between key teachers, class teachers, support assistants and therapists. Pupils up to Year 2 and in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress overall in English. Pupils in other year groups make very good progress in communication, and good progress in reading and writing. The differences in progress between year groups are mostly linked to the quality of teaching of the different aspects of English. However, the progress of pupils with cerebral palsy is also affected by the necessary changes from one system of communicating to another, as they get older. All pupils do as well as they can, considering the nature of their difficulties, and some higher attaining pupils with cerebral palsy make exceptional progress in using sophisticated additional systems of communication.

118. Pupils with limited spoken language learn to use symbols effectively to communicate. They follow a staged approach from single symbols to linking symbols to make complex sentences. Progression is also seen in the way pupils transfer this knowledge to more sophisticated technological methods, as they get older. Colour coding of communication books enables pupils to scan symbols quickly in lessons so they can make a full contribution to discussions. Teachers are skilled in organising question and response so that the pace of lessons is not usually affected. High attaining pupils by Year 2 learn to communicate using a range of symbols related to specific vocabulary for class topics, using a *Delta Talker*, for example. They begin work on their own sound system and rapidly develop listening and attention skills. Lower attaining pupils make very good progress in understanding and using symbols in relation to their prior ability. Pupils by Year 6 extend the range of vocabulary they use both in English lessons and in other subjects. Progress is also seen in the complexity and length of their sentences, in the speed they communicate, and in their reasoning and thinking skills in relation to texts. By Year 11, high attaining pupils have developed a high level of self-awareness of their difficulties with communication and are very open to discussion about how it affects their lives. They develop a range of strategies for dealing with this, and the school works hard to develop communication systems that are appropriate for use in the community. All pupils show very good progress in developing confidence within social situations.

119. By Year 6, high attaining pupils make good progress in phonological awareness, are fluent decoders of shared and reading scheme texts and have good understanding of what they read. Writing becomes more structured and some pupils use vocabulary imaginatively. Lower attaining pupils show an increased understanding of simpler texts, read more words, and are beginning to sound out words when they generate simple sentences on word processors. By Year 9 higher attaining pupils understand a wider range of texts appropriate to their age, including plays and poetry, which they read with fluency and expression. They recognise graphic and textual features in non-fiction books and scan non-fiction texts for information. Their extended creative writing shows a stronger grammatical structure and use of simile and

onomatopoeia. They also write information texts, designing and presenting information for leaflets for a targeted audience, for example. The highest attaining pupils gain standards that are in line with those of their mainstream peers. Lower attaining pupils begin to use dictionaries and phone books to find words or names with their knowledge of initial letter sounds, and make good progress in understanding of key vocabulary beyond the literal sense. They share similar texts and improve their understanding of them well in relation to their prior attainment. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils' reading skills are well developed, and pupils show a mature understanding of articles from newspapers during media studies. They discuss, structure and develop ideas for writing media interviews, taking opposing moral and social views, and argue their cases coherently in the role of television interviewers, interviewees and newsreaders. The lowest attaining pupils use newspapers to develop a structured word-processed piece about the weather, which they deliver as part of the 'programme'. Work completed is of a high standard.

120. The provision of simple pencil-control exercises of increasing difficulty ensures that the pupils make satisfactory gains in mark making, and in forming letters or lines correctly as they move through the school. Teachers are aware of how to build on skills, and use differing degrees of support well to promote learning. The school is part of a sensory integration research project and this is having a considerable impact on the standards of handwriting in selected primary-aged groups. Pupils who are unable to use their hands for writing make very good progress in using AAC devices or computers for writing.

121. Teaching and learning in English is very good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, and eight out of ten lessons observed were good, with half of these being very good. Teaching is very good up to Year 2 (Key Stage 1), and good overall from Year 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2); it is good with some very good features from Year 7 up to Year 9 (Key Stage 3). Teaching observed was consistently of a very high quality for pupils in Year 11, and scrutiny of pupils' work showed very good teaching overall in both Year 10 and Year 11 (Key Stage 4) classes. Two lessons observed, one in Year 8 and one in Year 11, were excellent and made an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. There has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory and often good.

122. The teaching of communication is consistently very good across the school and is a tribute to the outstanding multi-professional approach in the school. All staff and therapists plan together and have very good knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn language. Role-play and drama is used very well in many classes to give opportunities for pupils to express themselves at their own level of ability.

123. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Teachers share books and other texts with enthusiasm and are good role models to pupils in terms of expressiveness and fluency. The best teachers model joined script well on white boards, and have high expectations of how work should be presented. A wide range of age-appropriate texts, which include fiction and non-fiction, is used throughout the school, both to read and to use as a starting point for writing. The strategies for learning new words are well taught on the whole. In most classes, the combination of checking phonological awareness by speech therapists and phonic skills by teachers is informing the planning of word-level work very well. The great majority of teachers are very competent in teaching phonic skills. Pupils who use additional methods of

communication such as symbols or a combination of symbols and ICT are very well taught. Pupils progress from reading and writing single symbols to communicating by using symbol communication books and then to technological aids at their own pace. Teaching on the whole has a very good balance between the teaching of communication and literacy.

124. The teachers challenge the highest and high attaining pupils. For example, one highest attaining pupil in Year 2, who on entry to school was a non-reader and unable to make marks, now attains standards that are above those of mainstream peers. He is a fluent reader and a developing writer. For example, he reads *Dick King Smith* books with fluency, enjoyment and understanding and is learning to compare these books with others he has read. He writes enthusiastically and the content is interesting, although it is not always sustained. High attaining pupils with cerebral palsy share books at a high level of understanding for their age. Other pupils begin reading books from a suitable reading scheme and other texts. They have favourite books and are beginning to develop phonic and spelling skills. They read a few words within simple texts and write simple statements related to the texts they read. Lower attaining pupils with speech and language difficulties and those with cerebral palsy read a range of symbols, are developing an awareness of print and enjoy sharing traditional fairy tales, such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, for example. They communicate about these texts in simple ways, using their communication aids. Ideas generated are scribed by the teacher and then copied by the pupils using word processing packages. Those who have pencil control write their own name independently. A high level of perseverance to attain knowledge and understanding is noted by all these pupils of this age, which reflects the high quality of the teaching. Learning is well supported by involvement of parents at home.

125. The subject is very well led and managed. Co-ordinators have ensured that pupils and students are making better progress in literacy since the last inspection, and that the curricular provision is much broader from an earlier age. The school checks and records pupils' attainment, using the nationally recognised *differentiated performance criteria* (p levels) as well as national tests and a wide range of specialist norm-related tests. These help the co-ordinator track individual pupil's progress in all aspects of English as pupils move through the school. However, the school could organise these results into a form that allows easier analysis of different groups to ensure they can measure the value added by the provision in the school. The subject is monitored and evaluated very well, but the monitoring of texts and of the audience and purpose of writing could be made simpler if there was a long-term plan for these aspects. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

MATHEMATICS

126. There has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection and the school has effectively addressed all the issues raised at that time. Good management of the subject and effective monitoring of all aspects of classroom practice have raised the overall standards of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils now achieve well in lessons across the school and on many occasions their achievements are very good. Consequently, pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2, and a significant number make very good progress, so that by Year 2 and Year 6 there are no significant differences in the achievements of pupils with cerebral palsy and those with speech and language difficulties. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through Key Stage 3, and some make very good progress, so that the levels of attainment of some Year 9 pupils are in line with national expectations and, occasionally, exceed them. These are generally the pupils with

speech and language disorders; they have the higher levels of achievement because they are able to work at a much faster rate than those with cerebral palsy. The pupils with cerebral palsy need to spend time learning to become proficient with the more advanced and complex communication aids they receive when they enter the secondary school, as well as the time needed to physically perform an activity. As a result of such good progress, pupils are able to follow accredited courses during Key Stage 4, so that by Year 11 they take examinations leading to General Certificate of Secondary Education and Certificate of Educational Achievement awards.

127. Effective whole school planning promotes a good and progressive approach to developing mathematical skills, as pupils follow a broad and balanced subject curriculum in all key stages. There is a good emphasis on using and applying mathematics and handling data, and references to real life situations are made whenever possible. This means that the curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs and makes a very good contribution to their development of life skills.

128. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 develop good knowledge of number and space, shape and measurement. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils order numbers, count to 20 and add together two single-digit numbers. They recognise the basic two-dimensional shapes and know some of their properties, such as the number of sides and corners, and are beginning to develop basic mathematical vocabulary like *full* and *empty*. Pupils demonstrate measuring skills with balance-type weighing scales. They are able to identify the heavier side when the scales are unbalanced and measure the length of objects, using non-standard measures. Pupils show their developing ideas of time by placing events on the class timetable into chronological order. Lessons in Key Stage 2 focus on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas, and as a result pupils can show these new skills at the age of eleven. They round numbers up and down to the nearest 100 or 100 and employ the four basic rules of number in solving problems. For example, when given the lengths of two worms and they calculate how much one worm needs to grow if it is to catch up with the other. Pupils have extended their knowledge of time. They are able to read the time from digital and analogue clocks, translate one reading to another, and use their understanding to solve simple travel problems that require them to extract information from timetables. They also collect data and record it in lists and graphs, such as class sizes and traffic surveys, and retrieve information from them.

129. A variety of well-planned activities and experiences ensures that older pupils extend their mathematical knowledge and understanding, and the use and application of mathematics is a strong feature of the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils with speech and language difficulties show these new skills in practical situations. They design bookmarks in styles that show different characteristics of reflective symmetry, and they order from catalogues by quoting reference numbers and calculating the savings they make. They estimate and measure length and mass, using appropriate units, and read different scales competently. Pupils with cerebral palsy also use the appropriate vocabulary and understand the standard measures of linear measurement, mass and capacity.

130. As Key Stage 4, pupils follow externally-accredited courses. They undertake projects that promote investigative and problem-solving skills well, and much of the work links extremely well with previous learning. Therefore, Year 10 pupils with cerebral palsy extend their knowledge and understanding of measurement as they investigate the use of different measuring devices. They use tools such as metre rules, tape measures and trundle wheels and identify the most efficient for such jobs as measuring the dimensions of a field, a person's

height and the height of a wheelchair. By the end of the key stage the highest attaining pupils name and know the properties of many two- and three-dimensional shapes and understand what angles are and how to calculate them. Pupils use their mathematical skills in activities such as calculating the formula to continue a sequence of numbers to any number of terms. They produce tally charts and frequency tables based on surveys such as the use of computers in the home, and draw percentage bar charts and pie charts to show this information in an appropriate format.

131. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good overall, with much of it of very high quality. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and very good teaching was seen in all key stages. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well in Key Stages 1 to 3 and its effectiveness is very evident in practice because staff have embraced wholeheartedly its format and content. Consequently, lessons are characterised by teachers' consistent use of a good range of activities which match pupils' needs and enable them to work with interest, understanding and motivation. Pupils are extremely well managed and relationships are excellent with praise and encouragement used very well by teachers and the very effective learning support assistants.

132. Particularly strong features of teaching are the setting of mathematical problems within the context of everyday activities and experiences, and the ways in which teachers reinforce mathematical ideas through planning activities that relate to other areas of the curriculum. This first feature was very evident when a group of Year 8 pupils with speech and language difficulties continued their work on a recent visit to the local bowling alley. After an extremely good oral warm-up to the lesson, pupils worked in groups calculating the cost of different meals, and combinations of meals, from the menus at the bowling alley. Pupils worked with interest and a very good attitude, as they had a very clear understanding of the activity and could relate it to their own experience. As a result, they worked independently, took great care with presentation, and produced work of high quality. In many lessons there were well planned activities which promoted strong cross-curricular links to consolidate pupils' increasing mathematical knowledge.. For example, a class of Year 11 pupils worked on developing their understanding of quantities in relation to everyday living, through the use of recipes. Perceptive and systematic planning enabled pupils to convert their practical experience of making different dishes in food technology into a mathematical exercise that required them to amend the quantities in the recipes to produce food for different numbers of people. This activity required pupils to manipulate quantities at levels appropriate to their understanding of number, with specific activities related to targets in their individual education plans. For some pupils that meant simply doubling and halving quantities, while for others it involved good knowledge and careful application of multiplication and division and good understanding of fractions. The learning of higher attaining pupils was promoted very well through extension activities that encouraged a number of other basic skills. Examples were skills in literacy and ICT, which they used as they amended and re-wrote recipes, using word processing. Many did this very successfully, including importing pictures, and produced accurate and attractive recipes.

133. Mathematics is well managed by enthusiastic subject co-ordinators, although the primary co-ordinator has been absent on long-term sick leave. A comprehensive subject file is well organised and there is effective formal monitoring of the subject throughout the school. This includes the monitoring of planning and focused elements of classroom practice, such as the quality of the oral warm-up session at the beginning of lessons. As a result, there is consistency of approach to teaching numeracy across the school in Key Stages 1 to 3, though the subject development plan is not sufficiently detailed in showing precisely the next stages in

improving the current high standard of provision. The formal assessment and recording of pupils' achievements is a strong feature of the subject, and this is well supported by ongoing assessment in lessons and by marking. The result is that pupils' achievement in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding is well documented and informs the basis of short-term planning for individual pupils' needs. Other subjects of the curriculum make a good contribution to developing pupils' numeracy skills. Science lessons reinforce pupils' skills in measuring distance, time and temperature and the use of the appropriate equipment. Literacy sessions use opportunities to make good links with numeracy through the choice of texts, such as books that consolidate pupils' understanding of number, and reinforcement of mathematical terms such as 'between' and 'next to' when looking up words in non-fiction texts.

SCIENCE

134. There has been good improvement in the provision for science since the last inspection. This is due partly to a clearly written whole school policy, which gives good guidance for teaching the subject, an appropriate scheme of work, and high quality teaching across the school. Good planning is in place, providing a useful framework for teaching. This is good practice and it is essential, as the school is split into two sites, with over 20 teachers teaching science.

135. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are good. In lessons seen, pupils' progress was always at least good and often very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when just more than half of progress was satisfactory. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 1 is very good, but progress over time is good. This is because the very good teaching has not had enough time to make an impact on progress over time. Progress at Key Stage 2 is consistently good in lessons and over time. Progress at Key Stage 3 was very good in lessons seen, but when account is taken of an analysis of pupils' work over time it is judged to be good. Progress at Key Stage 4 is consistently good both in lessons and over time, when account is taken of an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' records.

136. By the end of Key Stage 1 (by Year 2) pupils build on their scientific knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. Pupils show a good understanding of 'light'. They understand that 'dark' is an absence of 'light'. They know that light comes from different sources. Pupils identify a candle as a source of light and carry out an experiment to show their understanding. They observe carefully as the candle burns, describing what is happening to the flame. They use cubes to measure the height of the candle and take away cubes as the candle burns down. They predict what will happen to the candle, such as *'it will melt until it burns down to the Bluetack'*. This work enhances their numeracy skills as they count and measure.

137. By the end of Key Stage 2 (from Years 3 to 6), pupils build on their scientific knowledge by comparing everyday materials on the basis of their properties, such as the hardness, strength, flexibility and magnetic behaviour of materials and their related to their uses.

138. They decide what to do, what evidence to collect and which materials to use. They make predictions, carry out an experiment, and see if their predictions are correct. They explore the reasons if they are not. They exhibit good scientific investigation skills. Pupils with speech and language difficulties develop an awareness of materials and their properties. They

experiment to find out which materials are the most water resistant. They design a 'fair test' to ensure all materials are tested in the same way. They understand how materials become waterproof and describe what makes a material waterproof. They recognise which are waterproof materials, and which are porous.

139. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 3 (Year 7 to 9), discuss animals, plants and their habitat. They know that animals' habitat is determined by where they live. For instance, animals that live in the polar region have specific characteristics. Pupils have visited the Hancock museum Newcastle, and Newburn Park, to study animals and plants and use the extra knowledge in their classroom studies. They sort and classify materials. They name plants that grow in the region, and the land you would find in the polar region.

140. Lower attaining pupils carry out experiments focussing on clothes, and their properties. They make observations and generalise the idea of '*wet and dry*'. They make the connection as to the choice of appropriate materials that would keep them dry in wet weather.

141. Higher attaining pupils carry out experiments to separate mixtures in solids. They carefully use magnifying glasses to observe the mixtures, and use a sieve and colander to separate the mixture. They correctly predict that the larger pieces would stay on the sieve, while the smaller pieces would drop through. After the experiment, pupils used a computer to record and display their results. Great fun was had carrying out the practical work, and pupils showed good recall of the lesson when asked to discuss their work at the end of the session.

142. By the end of Key Stage 4 (when pupils are in Years 10 and 11), pupils show a good understanding of 'contraception' in their science study. They understand contraception is 'to prevent having a baby'. They also comprehend that wearing a condom prevents the passing on of sexually transmitted diseases. They know that the male produces 'sperm' and females produce 'eggs'.

143. Year 10 and 11 pupils follow the AQA Certificate of Achievement course. As part of the course, Year 10 pupils experiment to see if shiny surfaces reflect infrared radiation better than dull surfaces. They use their scientific investigation skills well to set up a '*fair test*' experiment to measure the heat from the two different surfaces. During this test they use their mathematical skills well to time and measure changes in the temperature and draw correct conclusions that their prediction is in fact correct. Year 11 discuss the characteristics of *the environment*. They describe different attributes of the environment, such as the whole world, trees, plants and people. They discuss where we live and the effects humans have on the environment, some good and some bad. They understand that *organisms* means animals, plants and people. There was good debate about the waste produced by people and the pollution it causes, and pupils show a good understanding of the problem of waste production and disposal.

'How can we reduce the effect of pollution', one pupil asked.

'By recycling waste', was the reply from another pupil.

'We can recycle glass, paper, cardboard and plastic', was the retort.

'Yes' came the response from a pupil, who used his *communication aid* to respond.

'But, when plastic burns it produces poison!'

144. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is often very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Of the 14 lessons observed, the teaching in eight lessons was good, five very good and one excellent. A strength of the

teaching is the skilful questioning of pupils, allowing pupils time to answer, and checking carefully for understanding. This was applied particularly well in a lesson where pupils use ICT to communicate with their teacher and their peers. The teacher was particularly skilful, waiting until each one produced his or her answer and 'spoke' to the group. More able pupils were questioned with great skill to ensure they extended their answers from one-word answers to longer phrases or sentences. Lessons are well planned and organised, with activities well chosen to match the needs and abilities of pupils and ensure all are fully included in lessons. As a result, pupils participate fully and respond positively, and behaviour is very good. Great care is taken with non-ambulant pupils to ensure they are seated correctly, both in posture and positioning. This sometimes means adjusting the height of the tables to ensure they can access the work. Pupils appreciate this, and respond well to the extra care. Teachers use correct scientific language. This works well and pupils respond by answering using correct language. Support assistants and therapists are included in lesson planning, and know in advance which pupils to give extra support to. Pupils are regularly assessed throughout the lessons, with support staff taking an important role in the process. Notes made during lessons contribute to pupils individual records, and inform future planning.

145. During lessons, pupils are encouraged to appreciate the wonder of science, which they find very exciting. This brings a positive spiritual dimension to the subject. Pupils learn to share, co-operate, help each other and take turns. There were many examples of more able pupils freely offering help to less able pupils in a very sensitive way. Pupils are quick to celebrate their own successes and those of others. Science makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

146. High quality displays of pupils' science work are to be found in both the primary and secondary sites, in corridors and classrooms. Pupils work is very attractively displayed, indicating the value staff place on pupils work' and showing the areas of science they have covered.

147. The science curriculum is well planned and co-ordinated to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and individual pupils' needs, taking into account the additional special needs of the pupils. There are two science co-ordinators, one for the primary department and one for the secondary department. The latter takes overall responsibility for the subject. The primary co-ordinator has recently joined the school and at present is '*shadowing*' her senior colleague. This is good practice and will benefit the school over time. At present, the secondary department is in '*temporary*' accommodation and awaiting a move to permanent purpose built accommodation in 2002. Teachers use the limited accommodation and learning resources effectively but it does limit the amount of practical work pupils can undertake. Homework is used effectively, and home/school diaries are used well to communicate with parents, particularly where some pupils have great difficulty with their communication skills. The school improvement plan and the science action plan both appropriately identify accommodation and learning resources as in need of further development.

ART AND DESIGN

148. Provision for the teaching of art and design is very good and remains, as at the last inspection, a strength of the school. Pupils' achievements are very good, and their attainments, although mostly below the level of pupils of a similar age in mainstream schools, occasionally match national expectations or are close to them. The school provides a wide range of two-dimensional experiences for pupils such as painting, drawing, weaving, collage and relief sculpture, as well as some more advanced three-dimensional work, for example the huge hanging Chinese dragon produced to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

149. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make very good progress as a result of very good teaching. The youngest pupils learn to manipulate materials and understand that they can influence the world around themselves by creating objects that enhance their environment, such as "thumb pots". They gain a good understanding of 'colour', 'light' and 'darkness', manipulate paint, pencils and crayons, and can cut and glue with reasonable accuracy. In Key Stage 2, pupils understand how to use colour to produce mood in painting. For example, in Years 3 and 4 they produce pictures of "wild things". They explore and gain experience in working with a variety of processes and materials. Examples are painting, colour washing, silhouette, crayon and pastel, wax rubbing, as well as the use of fabrics and paper in collage, origami, and the use of computers to generate artistic ideas.

150. In Key Stage 3 pupils produce more imaginative work and incorporate and blend artistic styles and ideas, for example by producing portraits in the styles of famous artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Picasso. Pupils within this key stage understand the idea behind pattern and design and can recognise differing styles of art, for example Islamic art, African art, Japanese art and variations in pattern, as well as common artistic factors within patterns. They understand the idea of printing and can use a variety of materials to produce printed artefacts such as folders for their own work. Pupils in Key Stage 4 develop the idea of space in pictures and can introduce representations of light and shade into their work.

151. The teaching of art is very good overall. This quality of the teaching enables pupils to produce very good quality work and to enjoy their artistic efforts. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject and carefully select the correct approach for each individual pupil to suit individual needs. Lessons are well structured and the result is that pupils learn techniques, in particular, very well. Pupils concentrate well in their work and enjoy the experiences. Teachers have enhanced their knowledge since the last inspection and the rise in the quality of teaching is reflected in this.

152. Art is well incorporated into the whole school curriculum, with positive links with other subjects and the additional therapies the school provides. For example, there are links with English in the use of language and stories, with mathematics in the establishment of pattern, with religious education in the art of religious groups, and with Conductive Education in the use of colour. Art is well celebrated throughout the school, with well-produced displays and galleries of pupil's work. Prominent among these displays is the very fine display of oriental art culminating in the flying dragon in the main stairwell of the school. The school has been most successful in having displays of pupils' work acknowledged in the city of Newcastle. Good use is made of visiting artists and of students, enabling larger pieces of work to be produced such as the large wood sculpture around the outside of the building.

153. Facilities for art are satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4, and good at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school does have a kiln at the Westmoor site. Some work is done of a three-dimensional nature in media other than clay. Although clay work is to be taken to be fired, other materials, such as air-drying 'Modroc', are often to be used, as these are easier to work with.

154. The subject is well led by the co-ordinators and the ongoing assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, but there remains a need for a clearer overall structure for monitoring and recording the skills of individual pupils. The school understands the need to provide for enhanced accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4. Art is, however, a strength of the school, and a credit to it.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

155. Improvement in design and technology since the last inspection has been good. The issues from the previous inspection have been properly addressed. The subject has two co-ordinators who have developed good schemes of work, assessment procedures and are establishing the subject effectively. The co-ordinators work together to raise staff awareness of the breadth and depth of the subject, as well as develop the expertise required in textiles and in work with resistant materials. The curriculum is no longer narrow and specialist rooms are available on both sites. The specialist accommodation for design and technology in the senior school is satisfactory. Teaching is always good and pupils are making good progress; they achieve well in the subject.

156. By the time they are Year 2, pupils work well in food technology and understand safety in the kitchen. By Year 6 they can measure and weigh, and they understand the purposes of switches on hobs and cookers. They are introduced to textiles and can make very colourful displays to decorate the school. These displays are based on the four seasons. Many pupils take part in plays and they understand how costumes are made. These pupils are beginning to appreciate an awareness of different materials and use these to produce pictures and models. By Year 6, pupils are working on designs. They make mazes, using resistant materials, and establish basic skills in cutting and painting. In food technology lessons the children experience food of other nations. They investigate boxes, in design lessons, and look closely at shape, colour and construction. Some are able to make pop-up cards. All pupils are developing independence. Some need the help of very supportive and helpful staff. The most able can describe materials and their suitability for certain jobs. All pupils experience cutting and gluing and painting, and they are able to look at models and plans for ideas to help their projects.

157. By the end of Key Stage 3 (in Year 9), the pupils understand the idea of healthy food. They design salads and are able to prepare the ingredients. They know how to cut safely and evaluate their work in food technology, and they appreciate the requirement for a balanced meal. Pupils then go on to produce the meal, with varying help from support staff. Pupils maintain their basic skills; they are safe in the kitchen. Many are able to write recipes. In design and technology pupils evaluate their work effectively and there are many opportunities for pupils to be engaged in design aspects of the subject.

158. Many are involved in developing ideas for producing sandwiches. Others design and manufacture pencil holders and key tags. They can use a wide range of tools, know the names, and work safely. Staff help is crucial in the workshops.

159. By Year 11, at the end of Key Stage 4, pupils work toward achieving awards. They use their knowledge and skills to help them earn certificates in food handling and hygiene. They weigh and measure accurately. Many have experience of producing meals such as breakfast, using a range of cooking techniques. In design and technology prototypes are used, and pupils understand the principles of design and experiment. They can use vacuum formers to produce models. They are introduced to a wide range of workshop activities and they combine their skills in producing patterns. The group are able to use the computer to illustrate their achievements.

160. Work on textiles continues throughout the school. The corridors are very attractively decorated with collages and examples of pupils' achievement in the whole range of design and technology.

161. The quality of teaching is good. In food technology it is sometimes very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is due largely to the good knowledge and understanding of the teachers. Pupils' learning is also good and sometimes very good. Teachers and support staff combine well and ensure that every pupil has the same opportunities. This means that pupils are exposed to a range of challenging and interesting activities in practical and theoretical sessions. Pupils improve their basic skills in every area; teachers repeat and refine the work so that the children absorb the topics. Some further improvements in the training of support staff in the use of resistant materials are identified in the development of the subject. This would have a positive effect on learning, as pupils would not need to wait as long as they do for help. Where teaching is very good the pupils are involved in a thorough evaluation of their work. They make suggestions and respond well to very effective questioning. Teachers encourage the pupils with praise, and this spurs them on to try hard, even with work which is physically quite demanding for them. Pupils are given opportunities to revisit the previous learning, and understand the object of the lesson taking place. Teachers understand their subject and their pupils well. This improves learning as the activities planned for the lessons match the individual needs of the pupils, who develop knowledge of their own. They know what tools are supposed to do; for instance '*this saw can do anything - others cannot - because it is a coping saw!*' one pupil stated.

162. The subject is improving but is still at an early stage of development. The management is well organised, each co-ordinator has identified areas for development and schemes of work have now been established. There is a clear vision for the future. The subject still needs resources but these are developing. They are well used in the secondary department. Although there are some limitations with regard to the secondary accommodation it is satisfactory overall and the use of height adjustable equipment supports pupils' individual, physical needs well. Support staff are very important in the safe delivery of every aspect of the subject. Assessment is being developed; some pupils are working toward accreditation.

163. The maintenance budgets are well managed. The schools' procedures for setting priorities and bidding for resources are efficient. The development planning includes links with outside agencies and visiting designers in design technology, and an examination of the timetable in the secondary department. The subject is in good hands; teaching and learning are good and pupils' achievements continue to improve. Much has been achieved.

GEOGRAPHY

164. Pupils' achievement in geography is good. By the end of Key Stage 1 (in Year 2), all pupils have studied the local environment. The more able pupils can draw simple maps, most can draw simple comparisons between different places, and most can either remember or are beginning to remember routes. By the end of Key stage 2 (in Year 6) pupils have improved their map skills and are able to note and identify the location of amenities in a town. They are gaining a greater knowledge of the world through access to maps and globes and most are able to identify land masses and oceans. By the end of Key Stage 3 (in Year 9) most pupils are aware of the location of North East England in relation to the rest of the United Kingdom. They know the names of key towns and cities. Pupils can also compare and contrast the lifestyles of people in Kenya and in the United Kingdom. By the end of Key Stage 4 (in Year 11) pupils who have had the opportunity to study Northern Partnership Record of Achievement (NPRA) units in geography can describe the nature of natural hazards, such as volcanoes and earthquakes, and their physical impact on the environment and implications in human terms.

165. The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching at Key Stage 4. Pupils learn well. Learning objectives for the lesson are shared with them and teachers set them specific targets such with time limits for the completion of work in the lessons.

166. Teachers make good use of questioning and value the pupils' answers. This encourages pupils to take part in lessons. Teachers make use of language to extend and improve pupils' knowledge and use of geographical terms. Good use is made of the resources available, such as a video showing the eruption of a volcano in Iceland. This held pupils' attention and aided the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the effects that such an event can have upon the environment and people's lives.

167. Teachers also make good use of visits to the local environment and the resources on loan from the local Children and Young Peoples Library. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in geography are good and they respond well to the good use teachers make of praise which encourages them to take part and extend their efforts to achieve.

168. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Two teachers have been recently appointed to this role, one for the primary department and one for the secondary department. They have produced a subject development that has identified appropriate areas for improvement, especially the need to develop resources at Key Stages 3 and 4. They have control of a maintenance budget for the subject, and this is to be supplemented to aid this development. The quality of teaching of the subject has been monitored by senior staff but not by the co-ordinators. Plans are in place for the co-ordinators to receive training from the lead teachers to allow this to happen. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop a whole school record keeping system for geography which will allow them to improve the monitoring of individual and group progress.

169. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There have been gains both in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievements. Improvements have been made to resources in Key Stages 1 and 2, where 'topic boxes' have been set up in a central resource cupboard. Those in Key Stages 3 and 4 now need to be extended. The school is currently reviewing whether geography should be an optional course at Key Stage 4. This would allow more time for some pupils who wish it, and whose attainments were relatively high in the subject, to follow a course leading to an entry level GCSE qualification in one subject rather than achieve some NPRA unit accreditation in both geography and history.

HISTORY

170. Only one lesson could be observed in history during the inspection. Evidence taken from pupils' work, teachers' records and displays shows that pupils' achievements are good. As only one lesson could be observed it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. Across the school, the subject shares time with geography, so at any one time it is usually either geography or history which is taught. Geography was the subject mainly being taught during the inspection.

171. Across the key stages, pupils make good progress in their understanding of chronology. This is aided by the use of class 'year books' which record events in the life of the class during the school year and can be reviewed during the pupils' time in the school. Pupils also make gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical events, the people involved in those events, and changes that have taken place over time. This work is supported by visits to sites of historical interest in the area. In their discussion and work, pupils show that they can draw comparisons between life now and at different times in the past. By the end of Key Stage 1 (in Year 2) pupils can sequence events. By the end of Key Stage 2 (by Year 6) pupils can compare life today with that in Ancient Greece, the Saxon period, during the reign of Queen Victoria and during World War II, in terms of such things and clothing, household effects and building materials. By the end of Key Stage 3 (in Year 9) these skills and knowledge have been extended to include the events in Europe and the life of North American Indians.

172. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The two co-ordinators are new to the post and one is temporary. They have produced a subject development plan that identifies appropriate priorities. These include the upgrading of resources including greater access to computer software. One of the co-ordinators, the headteacher, has taken part in the monitoring of the teaching of the subject. The other is due to undergo training with a lead teacher so that monitoring can be extended. The co-ordinators are aware that a whole school record system for history needs to be developed to aid the monitoring of individual and group progress.

173. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Resources have improved in Key Stages 1 and 2, where 'project boxes' have been developed and placed in a central store. This now needs to be extended to Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are showing gains in relation to their knowledge and understanding of history and their skills in dealing with historical information. At Key Stage 4 pupils can gain Northern Partnership Record of Achievement (NPRA) units in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

174. Since the last inspection the school has made considerable effort to improve its overall provision for the subject. It has appointed two enthusiastic co-ordinators within the last year, one of whom is a very experienced subject specialist teacher. The work of therapists and teaching assistants in supporting pupils' access and communication using ICT is a significant strength of the school. Schemes of work are now developing well and are beginning to be implemented more consistently than in the past. Staff are developing their ICT skills by undertaking recognised accredited training courses. There has also been a tremendous financial commitment, not only towards raising the quality and range of hardware and software, but also in providing technology aids to support teaching and offer pupils greater access to the subject.

175. Although there is an improving picture in ICT and a strong commitment by the school to ensure pupils' attainment is raised, many of these developments are very new and have only been implemented over recent months. Therefore, they have had little time to raise standards in the school across all aspects of the National Curriculum Programme of Study. Pupils across all key stages have had only limited systematic teaching to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject, and the progress made has only been in a narrow range of learning opportunities. Pupils make good progress in word processing and desktop publishing, but in other aspects of the subject, their progress is limited and, therefore, their achievements are limited overall. Although resources have considerably improved, and staff training has resulted in teachers beginning to gain more confidence in the use of ICT in their teaching, progress since the last inspection is limited.

176. In Key Stage 1 there are planned opportunities for all pupils to experience and use talking word processors. Younger pupils use graphic and simulation programmes to create pictures and play games to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The most able pupils can identify and name key computer components like a mouse and keyboard. They are learning about e-mail and the Internet and make good use of this facility at home. In Key Stage 2 pupils refine and develop their word processing and creative drawing skills. For example, in Year 3 pupils use simple paint packages well to create attractive pictures, such as *A Pretty Fish*, in response to a shared text used in literacy teaching. In Years 4, 5 and 6 they save scanned images of text and pictures and use an interactive whiteboard to explore key features of poetry like words that rhyme. Pupils of all ability levels create simple geometric pictures using a 'fill' technique. They make good use of this as a background on which they will place digital images of objects captured on the school's camera. Older pupils are gaining confidence in manipulating text and images. For example in Year 5, pupils design a poster for *Children in Need*. This shows good skills in using a variety of fonts and simple images, to advertise the making and selling of 'delicious cakes' for a worthy cause. Older pupils know that email is a way of communicating with other people by letter and understand what a web site on Internet is. However, their knowledge of other key vocabulary is limited. Pupils are unsure about terms like 'database' and 'spreadsheet' mean, for example.

177. In Key Stage 3 pupils continue to follow a planned scheme of work that now has a broad range of learning experiences. This includes using search engines on the Internet as a tool for independent research, and developing increased 'desktop publishing' skills. In Year 8 pupils demonstrate good word processing skills in being able to use a variety of fonts in imaginative ways. For example, when adding to a list of favourite foods they are able to enter text accurately and can embolden text to maximise its effect on the viewer. They change font size, colour, and style with confidence. Pupils save and retrieve information from a floppy disk and are developing better skills in using graphics packages in a more sophisticated way. For example, they import picture clips in project work linked to designing labels for sandwich packaging in design and technology. Older pupils are beginning to understand what a template is used for in word processing tasks. These involve arranging text in columns and importing suitable images to match a given task, like designing a newssheet for a history topic on the Romans. Although pupils are able to identify main components of a computer system, including the CD Rom drive, there are still aspects of key technical vocabulary that require further development. For example pupils understand how to use the Internet to search for specific information but are unsure about the range and type of search engines. Schemes of work in Key Stage 3 ensure there is a range of planned learning opportunities to develop pupils' skills across all strands. These include control and monitoring, multi-media presentations, databases and spreadsheets, and computers at work and everyday life.

178. In Key Stage 4 pupils have the opportunity to follow a good range of accredited courses that include the Bronze, Silver, Gold ASDAN Award and a Certificate of Achievement. Each pupil's achievement is recognised by the relevant award. In Year 10 some pupils with physical difficulties use a single head switch with specialised software to write a poem, using a word prediction programme that means they need less support to ensure spelling is accurate. Higher attaining pupils following a Certificate Achievement course demonstrate good word processing skills. They input selected text accurately, save work with a file name, and present information appropriately by altering margins and aligning text using the correct symbols. They use a search engine to find specific information on the Internet and enter information on a spreadsheet, assisted by verbal and visual prompts from the teacher. Pupils are able to log on and off the Internet with confidence. They are developing their knowledge of key terms like 'web address' and 'search engine' but are insecure in defining what these terms mean. Lower attaining pupils consolidate their learning of the different parts of a computer, and they develop their keyboard skills in word processing activities which involve using capital letters, deleting mistakes, and printing out work. They go on to more complex tasks like deleting parts of a picture they want to change, choosing and playing a computer game, and deciding their own project, such as designing a poster or making a diary of birthday dates. Pupils' opportunities also include investigating how ICT is used for publishing by using hardware like scanners and cameras.

179. Too few lessons were seen to be able to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, but in the four specific ICT lessons seen the teaching ranged from good to excellent. In the Key Stage 1 lesson where an occupational therapist taught the pupils, the teaching was excellent. The work superbly matched the pupils' needs and was carried out in a highly interesting and motivating way. Pupils' response to learning is never less than good and often very good across all key stages. Where teaching is most effective subject vocabulary is used well, with very good use of questioning and verbal prompts to support individual pupils' progress. Teacher's planning is clear and thorough, and demonstrates a sound understanding of the subject and a good teaching focus to the lesson. The therapists' understanding and knowledge of access issues for pupils with physical disability is excellent. Lessons are structured and organised well, instructions are clear, and praise is used well to sustain interest and motivation. On-going assessment is effective in all lessons. In one Year 8 lesson pupils were given the opportunity to assess each other's work against the shared learning objective, which showed that a good range of assessment strategies was being used to evaluate progress during lessons. Good use is made of a range of new technology to support learning. For example, scanned images projected on an interactive white board were very effectively used in a literacy lesson to replicate a 'big book' to develop pupils' ICT and literacy skills. In an ICT lesson there was very good use of the interactive white board to demonstrate 'painting' technique to develop pupils' skills in using 'tool' icons. Learning in a science lesson was significantly enhanced when pupils interacted with a high quality multimedia presentation on habitats. Teaching is less effective when lesson objectives are not always clearly stated and do not cover all the key aspects of learning. This results in missed assessment opportunities in plenary sessions. Target vocabulary is not always stressed with sufficient regularity to ensure that all pupils understood fully the meaning of key ICT vocabulary.

180. Since the last inspection there are aspects of the co-ordination of the subject which have improved well. Both recently appointed subject co-ordinators are working very hard to ensure staff have the facilities and skills to deliver the full range of learning experiences stated in the current schemes of work. The lead co-ordinator is producing additional guidance to support teachers who are less confident in the subject and is reviewing the accredited curriculum for older pupils. This is to ensure that planned units of work are linked to the

identified needs of the pupils and offer sufficient challenge for pupils of all levels of ability. There is enthusiasm amongst the staff and a very good capacity to succeed. The headteacher, with the co-ordinators and other staff, has been instrumental in securing large amounts of additional funds to increase the range and quality of resources. Overall, resources across the school are very good. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in acquiring up-to-date hardware and software to enable the planned schemes of work to be effectively delivered across all departments. There are now two very well equipped computer suites with interactive white boards, which serve teachers well in both primary and secondary departments. A recent audit has identified areas for further development, which the school has addressed. For example, additional touch screens have been ordered and specialised 'wheelchair friendly' furniture has been purchased. Both co-ordinators are aware of the need for continued staff training to ensure that all staff are secure in teaching all strands of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator's action plan and the school development plan recognise this as a priority area for future development.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

181. At the time of the previous inspection, French was being established in the school and some reasonable progress has been made since then. The school has tried hard to develop the subject given the considerable challenges of teaching a modern foreign language to pupils with severe expressive and receptive language difficulties. However, pupils could achieve more in the subject if additional time was given to consolidate the good learning which occurs in lessons. Within the time allocated for learning the subject, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and sometimes good, but they could do better. However, the subject itself and the good quality of teaching make a significant contribution to other aspects of pupils' learning, such as listening, attending and thinking about how they should phrase things. This considerably supports their core special educational needs. Since the time allocated to the subject is limited it is difficult for some pupils to build on their previous learning.

182. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand and use a variety of French words and phrases concerned with greetings, food and drink, numbers and dates. They have some knowledge of French food and culture and take part in French food tasting sessions. Higher attaining pupils talk about themselves and their families in simple terms, know the French names of major landmarks in towns, and give and ask for directions. They learn about the major cities and commercial and industrial centres of France as well as sporting and leisure activities. Many pupils develop good French pronunciation as a result of careful listening and imitating teachers.

183. The quality of teaching of French is good overall. Specialist subject knowledge is generally good and methods and approaches are appropriate. The pace of lessons is good and the teacher finds a variety of ways of presenting vocabulary so that pupils remain interested and have good opportunities for learning. There is a good variety of activities, and classroom games are particularly well used to support learning. Support staff are well deployed and take an active part in the lesson, supporting individuals and augmenting the teacher's explanations. In the most successful lessons, pupils take it in turns to ask and answer questions and have opportunities to listen, understand and speak French. They recall the vocabulary taught in previous weeks and begin to use familiar expressions in different contexts. In other lessons, however, opportunities to reinforce the vocabulary of classroom activities are missed, as French is insufficiently used by the teacher for management and administration of the lesson. Pupils enjoy French and contribute enthusiastically in class,

showing great pleasure when they recall more than is expected. Pupils support each other's efforts and are sympathetic when another pupil makes pronunciation errors or mistakes in vocabulary. They show great enthusiasm for additional cultural activities and recall visits to France with clarity and pleasure.

184. At present, French is not taught to pupils in Key Stage 4, although there has been an optional award-bearing course at Key Stage 4 in the past. The position of the subject within the school is therefore still insecure, and this does not enable pupils to make the gains over time that the good learning in lessons could be expected to promote. A number of pupils in Key Stage 3, particularly those with receptive language difficulties, are appropriately disapplied. The school uses a commercial scheme to underpin planning and this is effectively used to provide a consistent and coherent curriculum. The scheme provides an appropriate assessment structure and this is well used to establish and record progress and in planning future work.

185. The subject is well and enthusiastically managed, and teaching and pupils' learning are effectively monitored. The subject development plan has the right priorities for development, including raising awareness of the subject in the school and these objectives are being satisfactorily addressed. Although French does not have a dedicated classroom, accommodation is generally satisfactory and there are good displays of French-related work on the walls in classrooms and corridors. However, resources, in spite of being supplemented by those collected by the co-ordinator, are unsatisfactory, reflecting the low budget for the subject, and they are insufficient to ensure progress across all aspects of the subject. There is very little use of ICT, or resources it. Pupils' experience of French culture and opportunities to re-enforce vocabulary are significantly advanced by the Year 9 visit to France. This not only contributes well to their overall cultural development but adds significantly to their self-esteem as they successfully employ elements of the language.

MUSIC

186. There has been a very good improvement in the provision for music since the previous inspection. The teaching is now very strong and pupils' learning has significantly improved as a result. The issues of inconsistency have been addressed and the specialist co-ordinator has improved the continuity in delivery by teaching the whole school. Resources have been significantly improved. There is a wider range of tuned and untuned instruments, and the music books have been chosen with care, to meet the needs of pupils. A good policy and effective schemes of work are all in place.

187. The pupils' achievements and their progress over time are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when achievement ranged from unsatisfactory to good. By the time they reach Year 2 (at the end of Key Stage 1), pupils explore the broadest aspects of music. They listen well, concentrate when playing their instruments, and tell the difference between scales going up or coming down. They have great fun in playing musical games, which reinforce the purpose of the lesson. For example, the teacher hides and plays notes; the pupils need to listen carefully. All pupils are able to follow the story that is the theme for the term. By the time they are in Year 6 (at the end of Key Stage 2), the pupils are able to repeat a simple rhythm by clapping. They maintain a steady beat when playing along with a song. The

pupils work on accompaniments to the story of 'The Elves and the shoemaker'; they play a range of percussion instruments in many ways, *loud* or *soft*, *fast* and *slow*. Stories and songs are used to very good effect to improve their skills in sound production. Every pupil has the opportunity to sing and they do this remarkably well. They really enjoy the work and try their very best.

188. By the Year 9 (at the end of Key Stage 3), pupils continue to develop their singing skills. Many choose instruments to deliver the rhythm they have selected. They are expected to evaluate how well they are doing against the lesson targets. In order to evaluate their performance effectively, pupils are required to develop their thinking and questioning skills and are very well supported in doing this. One high attaining pupil can write his own songs and accompany himself on guitar. By Year 11 (at the end of Key Stage 4) pupils are very enthusiastic about developing chants and playing in a band. They know that a chant involves a number of voices together. The older, mixed groups of pupils achieve equally. They can work on their own or in a small band. In the band they play keyboards, drums, bass and electric guitar. They have a lead singer, who is very confident.

189. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers, support staff and therapists are very aware of the way they can promote musical learning. Where there is very good teaching, teachers make the lesson plans very clear so that pupils know what is expected. They plan well, and have very good resources and accommodation. All pupils in the school have equal access to follow the music curriculum, despite their disabilities. Expectations and standards are high. The teaching challenges pupils, especially when the teachers and other staff use very good questioning techniques. Pupils enjoy music ; they relax and learn, and they have the opportunity to perform. Even the very youngest have the chance to experiment with sounds and scales. Staff are very enthusiastic. This rubs off on the pupils who come to class ready to work and enjoy the subject. The work is very well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. This means that they learn at their pace.

190. Staff praise encourages pupils to try harder. The specialist co-ordinator ensures that the children receive a wide and interesting experience of the subject. Very good teaching is rewarded with very good behaviour and attitudes to school. Pupils learn in a very good atmosphere.

191. Activities are imaginative and interesting, pupils consolidate the basic skills they have developed, and they repeat past successes and learn from good examples from staff and the other children. When pupils learn to watch very carefully and concentrate very well, they improve their understanding of rhythm, and appreciate qualities of sounds. Many learn new stories such as 'Rumpelstiltskin' and enrich the story by adding music of a high quality.

192. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject budget is well organised and targeted at improvement. The co-ordinator teaches every class. She provides many opportunities to widen pupils' musical experiences. There are a number of clubs that pupils can attend, such as guitar and singing. Pupils perform regularly; their work is recorded. Visiting musicians are welcome additions to the delivery of the subject. The teamwork of all professionals is outstanding. Assessment in music is good. Support staff do yet not take part in recording progress as their skills are not sufficiently developed. However, the teacher does complete the pupils' records after lessons. Accreditation is not yet well developed. The resources are very good and very well used, although ICT is not as widely used as it could be. The accommodation is good, but the senior room is small and this restricts some groups. The music development plan is very well constructed and presented and has very relevant

priorities. There is a very clear vision for the future development of the subject. The provision for music is very good. Teaching and learning are very good; the atmosphere for progress is outstanding. Pupils' achievements are very good; music is a significant strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

193. At the last inspection PSHE was not reported as a separate subject and it is not possible to make a judgement about improvement in the provision overall. Comments about the support for pupils' personal development, and about the teaching and progress of pupils in this subject, were identified as part of other subjects and aspects. Weekly PSHE lessons are now timetabled for every class across the whole school in half-termly blocks of work. From Year 7 onwards there are short PSHE lessons with most of the work covered by the life skills and ASDAN programmes.

194. In addition to the timetabled lessons, PSHE themes and activities pervade the work and life of the school. Opportunities for improving pupils' personal, social and health education also occur at lunchtimes, breaks, in the corridors, in the changing areas and in other lessons. The school uses these additional opportunities to extend pupils' skills very well.

195. When account is taken of all the opportunities pupils have and their outcomes in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding the majority of pupils achieve very well in PSHE. Overall, pupils make at least good progress in the specific PSHE lessons and often it is very good. It is particularly strong in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 1 pupils take turns and begin to take responsibility for putting things away, tidying up and learning to organise themselves. Moral education is very much a part of the PSHE programme. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know right from wrong, and what is fair and unfair, and follow rules for classroom and school. They have begun to understand some of their emotions, what are safe and unsafe substances, and some of the changes which are occurring in their bodies. They can, with help, describe a personal strength and have begun to appreciate those of others. They show a real concern for each other and are sensitive to each others' feelings.

196. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn about hygiene and the changes the body goes through at puberty. As a result of the very positive social interaction in lessons, pupils with speech and language difficulties can recognise some of the feelings of other people and have developed a better understanding of how to respond to other people. Most pupils are more confident at stating, signalling or signing what it is they need. In Key Stage 4 the attainments of a small number of Year 11 pupils are similar to that found nationally. Most other pupils have a good understanding of prejudice such as sexism and racism. The emphasis is on becoming independent citizens and as far as possible pupils make their own decisions, having taken notice of the views of others. In both these key stages pupils achieve credits towards their bronze or silver ASDAN certificates.

197. Throughout all age groups, lessons have a co-operative atmosphere where the opinions of all are welcomed and valued. As they get older, pupils' knowledge and understanding increases and their skills become more developed. They learn as much as they can about taking care of themselves, communicating with others, and how to seek help. For pupils with cerebral palsy the use of AAC devices significantly enhances the contributions they are able to make to lessons and their progress in PSHE. They are very active contributors.

198. From an early age pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. The school has recently applied for the Healthy Schools award following lessons on healthy eating. This also involved the school meals staff.

199. This subject makes a very good contribution to the personal, social, moral and cultural development of pupils. This contribution is strengthened by all staff using many opportunities in daily life in school to help pupils to practise their PSHE skills and use their knowledge. The taught, and informal, PSHE work helps pupils very well to develop autonomy and responsibility, build relationships and become good citizens. This separate teaching of the subject, and the extended use of PSHE principles, makes a very significant contribution to the community feeling that exists, and prepares pupils for taking their place in society.

200. The quality of teaching is very good overall and is strongest in Key Stage 3 and 4, where there is very good and some excellent teaching. The teaching of sex education is excellent. In the best lessons the area being studied is made particularly relevant to the pupils. Activities are planned and presented in stimulating and interesting ways. The preparation of very good learning resources helps pupils to participate and to understand the important messages in the lesson. Some staff demonstrate excellent skills in stimulating and focusing discussion between pupils. For example, in a sex education lesson situation cards were used very well to stimulate discussion on resisting the pressure by friends, and being assertive, in the moral aspects of sexual behaviour. As a result of highly skilled teaching, pupils persisted in the discussions, had mature arguments and counter-arguments, and learned superbly about important life issues. The practical activities help pupils develop as much independence as possible. For example, Year 7 pupils had planned how to make a sandwich, made the sandwich independently, and assessed their work while being observed by a member of staff. The pace of lessons is adjusted very skilfully to suit the work and activities provided, though in some life skills lessons at Key Stage 3 there is sometimes a lack of challenge. Time is given for pupils to think and plan how they will do a task. Practical real life tasks are designed to help pupils manage their own personal care, relationships and social time. In the best lessons pupils are told clearly what they will learn in the lesson, and the review at the end of the lesson helps them to check their learning and work out what they need to do to improve.

201. Many members of staff including teachers, therapists and support assistants participate in the PSHE and life skills programmes across the school. Visiting speakers are used very well. Examples are a dental nurse, who teaches the pupils dental hygiene and the need to visit the dentist, and a health visitor who teaches them about sexual behaviour.

202. Teachers, therapists and support assistants provide excellent models of listening, respecting and valuing others. As a result, pupils' behaviour and enthusiasm to learn are very good. Teachers use circle time well to ensure that the views of everyone can be considered. Pupils listen well to others and show they understand the views of others in the way they respond. In the examples seen in Key Stage 2, homework gave additional practice to what was learned in class. Pupils' responses are regularly assessed and recorded and there are good records on individual pupils. Pupils have very clear and specific targets for their personal development and are taught and supported very well in order to achieve these.

203. Co-ordination of the subject is broadly satisfactory. There has been recent planning of the content of the scheme of work for Key Stages 1 and 2. This, and the timetabling of the topic areas, is the foundation for checking that the work builds on and then extends pupils' previous learning.

204. There is currently a teacher responsible for leading the work across the school. However, it will be useful for the school to consider the content of the curriculum to ensure that work is not repeated unnecessarily or worked missed. Large numbers of staff teach this subject across all age groups and parts of it are taught in other subjects such as food technology and science. The co-ordinator's role, therefore, needs careful consideration in the total development of the subject to ensure that all aspects of the work are overviewed and monitored accordingly. There is some overlap between PSHE and the specific life skills in Key Stages 3 and 4, as there was at the last inspection. In some cases it is quite separate and needs better integration. The management team are aware of this and have already planned to look at the subject during this school year. The school needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support aspects of their learning in the subject.

POST 16

205. The Post 16 department is a relatively new feature of the school's provision. It was established in September 2000 with seven students. At the end of July 2001, five students left and two remained to begin their second year at Post 16. Nine pupils from the main school joined the group and one pupil from a neighbouring local education authority also joined, making a total of 12 students. In the short time it has been established, the Post 16 department has developed significant strengths, and overall the provision is good. It is discrete provision with its own accommodation and a very relevant curriculum aimed at independent learning and living. It has established its own separate identity in the school. For instance, pupils in the main school know that there is something different about the students in the Post 16 block. They are treated more as students and young adults than as pupils in the school. There is a different working atmosphere and relationships are very good. Students care about, help, and respect and trust each other. This very strong sense of trust and respect extends to staff and students.

206. Student's needs are more complex in the Post 16 department and the provision caters for students who are not yet ready to take up places at colleges of further education. There is a great emphasis on the development of key skills and life skills. The courses are deliberately designed to enhance students' self-esteem, self-confidence, and ability to mix in groups and work with others. They encourage independent learning skills, communication, problem solving, application of number and increase of literacy skills. Due to the newness of the programme and the complex needs of the students, the department has not yet managed to arrange independent work experience for students' college links are being arranged, starting in Spring 2002 with an arts course at a local further education college.

207. Accreditation is through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Students progress through various units at their own pace. Each student must complete the *Starting Out* module before beginning *Towards Independence* modules. All students continue to have individual education plans (IEPs). Targets are set, monitored and evaluated with students weekly. New IEPs are written termly, involving students, parents and staff. There is good communication between the Post 16 department and students' homes. Parents are involved in students' annual reviews, home school diaries and communication, telephone calls, and annual reviews and reports.

208. The department is well staffed. There is one teacher who teaches the students almost full time; she still continues to carry out her careers teaching programme across the school and during this time a temporary teacher covers lessons in the department. There is good therapy

provision for students. A speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist both offer support for three days per week, and a physiotherapist for two days. There are five special support assistants; all have received training in lifting and handling students, and two have current first aid certificates. All students' medication is kept in a locked cabinet in the school surgery, and when administered, generally at lunch-time, it is logged and recorded. Much of the planning is achieved through a multi-professional approach, involving all staff. This is good practice and students benefit through increased achievement and progress.

209. The accommodation is temporary, but adequate. There is a small social area which students use at break times and lunchtimes. They are generally to be found playing their tapes, discs and music or chatting and reading their magazines. There is a small, but adequate library, which also links as a careers library for students. Students use the school library at lunchtime if they wish to. The learning resources are satisfactory. There are very good ICT resources, and augmented and alternative communication devices are very good. These are used very effectively. Many of the students use the Internet. Some have *talkers* of various descriptions and these can be linked to computers within the room. Students use these very effectively to communicate with staff and their friends.

210. In literacy, the policy is to teach the learning objectives within the ASDAN framework of modules. This works well. Students achieve well in listening and communication skills. The most able communicators are confident and comfortable with visitors and ask pertinent questions, such as '*what are you doing here*', and '*what else do you do?*' Students listen well to each other, take turns talking and listening, and have good awareness of others. This was highlighted in a lesson where students took turns to interview each other in role-play. They introduced themselves and spoke well about their hobbies and interests. Students using their *talkers* took longer to communicate, but the quality of their discussion and questions was good. On their shopping expeditions they read social signs and road signs. In the supermarket they read the labels on produce and know exactly what they need to do to buy products.

211. In numeracy, students make good progress. They show a good understanding of the use of money, measurement and time. They use these skills in a practical way in their food technology, which they carry out in the residential facility at *Leybourne House*, near to the school. They buy the ingredients at the shops, exchanging money and receiving change, and prepare them at the house. When discussing 'shopping' with an inspector, one of the students explained that he had a red spot on the arm of his wheelchair. This was to distinguish *right* from *left* when he travelled to the shops. This helped him to orientate himself and gain a better understanding of spatial awareness. After their shopping expeditions, students evaluate their performance, and say how they could improve. This is good practice and enhances the progress students make. They use word processing to record their comments and work. All their records and achievements build into an impressive Record of Achievement.

212. Students make good progress in their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sex education is well developed and pupils make good progress in their understanding. PSHE is well supported through the curriculum and their residential experiences. All pupils take part in residential experiences. This includes 15 nights in *Leybourne House*, the school's own residential provision, and also five nights residential in Beamsley, an outward-bound centre in Yorkshire.

213. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally very good. Lessons are effectively planned. All staff are included in the planning. The quality of team work is very good. The quality of the work by therapists and support assistants is of a high

order, and the high degree of sensitivity to the needs of students ensures they have positive learning experiences. As a result of these very high aspects of quality teaching, relationships in class are very good, students respond very positively and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Students enter into learning with very good attitudes, tolerance and enthusiasm. There is a purposeful working atmosphere, praise and encouragement are used particularly well, and all staff use humour very effectively to encourage students to persevere and complete their work. Skilled questioning ensures students understand what is required of them. Resources are well organised in advance, easily accessible and used well. ICT resources are very good, and are used very effectively. They allow students to access the curriculum, and to communicate with staff and with each other, both socially and academically.

214. One governor has a responsibility as a link person with the Post 16 department. The Post 16 co-ordinator and staff work closely with this governor, and keep her up to date with all developments, such as developments within the department, progress of students, accommodation and resources issues. At the end of the first year, the governor produced an evaluation report on the work of the department, and discussed the Post 16 action plan with staff. This advice is much appreciated by staff. This is good practice. It has a positive impact on the morale of staff, building their self-esteem and value within the school and makes an impact upon the progress students make.

215. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good and has a positive effect on the achievement of students. Support from the community is steadily building and becoming established, such as the arts links with the college arranged for Spring term. Shopping in the community is establishing links with local shopkeepers and staff, who welcome the students into their establishments. Students' personal progress is tracked in their cumulative record of achievement. Continuity from Key Stage 4 to Post 16 is encouraged, and developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and personal development are appropriately stressed in Post 16 provision. This is good provision for students and it is developing well. Staff and students are looking forward to the transfer to their permanent site and the school is very well placed to develop the Post 16 provision even further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

216. Since the last inspection in 1997 the combined work of teachers, therapists and support staff has resulted in good improvements in the teaching of physical education, pupils' achievements, and the facilities available. The staff team are fully committed to their work.

217. The school's provision is now very good and makes a very strong contribution to the aims of the school. Achievement, within and across all year groups, from pupils' starting points on entering the school, is very good overall. Attainment is below national expectations for pupils with speech and language disorders, often because of their associated motor co-ordination difficulties, and very low for those with cerebral palsy because of their severe physical disability. There is a small number of pupils who do reach the national expectations in some aspects of dance, gymnastics and swimming, however.

218. The excellent co-operation between therapists, teachers and support staff means that PE programmes take account of pupils' needs and help to meet them very well. Close working partnerships between teachers and physiotherapists mean that pupils make very good progress. Physical education and therapy records indicate that individually they make the

progress expected from the targets set. Pupils with speech and language difficulties also make very good progress.

219. Pupils in Reception to Year 2 learn to move in imaginative ways and can perform a short dance sequence for the Diwali Festival of Light. They create movements of differing speeds and repeat patterns well. They are beginning to be able to say what they liked best after watching another pupil's dance action. They enjoy activities in water and are beginning to float and to move in the water.

220. By Year 6 pupils create dance sequences on their own and in pairs using different speeds and levels of movement. They are gaining increasing control over their body movements. In gymnastics the majority use space well to travel, to pause, and to perform balances.

221. In a Key Stage 2 rhythmic gymnastics lesson, pupils in the Integrated education department for those with cerebral palsy produced very good balances and sequences to music with a partner. The pupils were very creative and used their bodies in increasingly controlled ways. In the 'task sessions' for pupils with cerebral palsy, pupils show a good understanding of the parts of the body. Through the stretching and movement programme, individuals in these task sessions develop more control of their body. Pupils in speech and language departments understand balancing and can balance on a range of body parts and make up movement sequences. In games activities, their accuracy in throwing and catching small and large balls is increasing and they are beginning to play simple team games. Pupils in both departments understand the effects of exercise on the body and know to prepare the body for exercise by warming up before and cooling down after the activities. In gym and dance lessons most can make useful suggestions to others to help them improve their performance. They continue to extend their swimming skills and many can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Specific swimming instruction, using the *Halliwick* method of learning about buoyancy, has ensured that all pupils are safe in water and learn an action that will propel them through the water.

222. During Years 7 to 9 pupils with speech and language difficulties make further progress in using their skills to play small competitive team games such as bench ball. They throw the ball more accurately and learn positional play. In the sensory integration lessons for pupils with speech and language difficulties, the pupils display increasing control of their movements. This work has helped them in other areas of their learning. For example, following sessions on the sensory integration programme, a pupil's handwriting skills improved so much that he could write legibly and fluently and more quickly.

223. Physical education and physiotherapy records indicate that pupils with cerebral palsy make significant small steps of progress and participate fully in the many challenges of this subject. These pupils can play table-top games and bowls and extend their water-based skills. During Years 10 and 11 pupils make further progress in their games and swimming skills in visits to a local sports centre and swimming pool, as well as using the school's gym and field. A group of pupils have developed rugby ball handling skills and positional play in 'conditional' rugby games (games that do not involve body contact). The skills of wheelchair using pupils in tactical play in games such as Boccia and Bowls are very well developed. Those pupils with a real flair or interest in any sport are encouraged and supported to pursue their activity in clubs, and some go on to represent the area. Opportunities are provided to experience and learn wide ranging outdoor pursuits. These have recently included sailing, canoeing, caving and rock climbing during residential visits to Yorkshire and France.

224. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers and physiotherapists have very good specialist subject knowledge and use this in their planning and teaching. There is very strong collaboration between teachers, therapists and support staff and these result in continuity of learning for pupils. All staff involved are extremely knowledgeable and use their experience to challenge and inspire pupils. Staff make sure pupils know what it is they are going to learn in the lesson, and relate it carefully to what has been covered in previous lessons and to pupils' current skills. This results in pupils developing confidence in their own learning and acquiring skills. Occasionally, however, as in a Key Stage 2 lesson, lesson objectives are not always shared clearly enough with pupils, who then become confused as to what they are to do and why.

225. Staff use a model of teaching that enables pupils to plan, prepare, perform and then review their work. This is used skilfully across the school, A particular example was in a Sensory Integration lesson when pupils were asked to talk themselves through the activity and then explain to the member of staff how they would do the task. They then completed the activity and reviewed their performance with the observer. This resulted in pupils practising a sequential approach that will be valuable throughout their lives. As with other subjects, this links well into the school's approach to the development of self-management, independence and the thinking skills programme. It supports pupil's careful reflection on everything they do and develops their ability to learn from their experiences.

226. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and, because of excellent staff-pupil relationships, pupils trust that the challenge is achievable and work very hard towards it. Pupils work enthusiastically and work very well with each other. Many opportunities are created to practise oracy, numeracy and occasionally literacy in PE lessons, for example counting aloud the number of passes in a ball game in Year 9. Pace in lessons is well matched to the activity sometimes fast to warm up or improve fitness, and sometimes slow for stretching and sustained dance movements. However, a slow start to a 'task series' session in lower Key Stage 3 meant that pupils became distracted at the beginning of the lesson. The use of staff is very well planned in advance. This includes getting pupils to the lesson, changing, and the setting up of equipment in as short a time as possible, and providing the correct level of support during the lesson.

227. Staff use praise very well to reward pupils efforts' and as a result pupils try to do even better. In most lessons behaviour is very good. The occasional incidents of immature behaviour are dealt with effectively. Through dance, physical education supports pupils' understanding of other cultures. Throughout the subject, keeping to the rules of games assists pupils' moral development. In addition, the frequent use of group work and working in teams gives opportunities for pupils to learn social skills.

228. The subject is used to provide real opportunities for the pupils to learn self management and increasingly become as independent as possible.

229. Good procedures are in place to assess pupils' performance. The progress of individual pupils and the effectiveness of the lesson are assessed after each lesson. This detailed individual assessment is used to monitor progress and set new targets for learning. Targets are shared with pupils and are known by the majority of pupils. This helps them to check their own progress.

230. Leadership of the subject is strong, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4, where there is with very good collaboration between the co-ordinator and senior physiotherapists. The Key Stage 1 and 2 co-ordinator is new to the school and is well supported by colleagues in the development of his role.

231. The improvements to the hydrotherapy pool have provided a better resource, which is used well. At the temporary Westmoor site the gym has provided more space for secondary age pupils, and the new Killingworth site should provide good facilities for them. At the primary site, the gym is too small for some activities, although teachers and therapists use what space there is very well. The acoustics, in particular, when heating fans are switched on, make it difficult for pupils with hearing and auditory discrimination problems to hear what is being said. The school makes good use of local sports and recreation facilities.

232. The policy and scheme of work give good structure to the lesson planning. The PE curriculum is well planned with reference to the National Curriculum, and to the school's approach to teaching. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to the needs of all pupils and enables their full participation, whatever their disability. Great effort is made to teach a broad range of activities to all pupils. There are strong links with Foundation Stage staff to ensure a smooth transfer to Key Stage 1. The curriculum is enriched by the weekly after-school sports club and there are developing contacts with other schools in the area. However, the home to school transport provided by a number of neighbouring education authorities cannot be re-organised to enable some pupils to attend.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

233. The provision for religious education has greatly improved since the last inspection. Good development has resulted in religious education now being timetabled throughout the school. The school now conducts daily acts of worship which contribute to pupils' knowledge of religions. The school has a clear policy and a scheme of work, adapted from that used in a local secondary school and ratified by North Tyneside SACRE.

234. Pupils' achievements are good and they make good progress throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 develop religious ideas through individual themes such as *journeys* and *celebrations*. During the week of the inspection pupils in Key Stage 1 pupils made progress in understanding the features of the festival of Diwali and linking these to other religious rituals concerned with light, such as Catholic votive candles and the use of candles in Sikhism. Clear links are made with other subjects such as science, physical education and English, and these support pupils' religious understanding well. In Key Stage 2 pupils study Christian journeys such as the journey to Bethlehem, developing ideas about the key characters and the meaning of the events leading up to Jesus' birth.

235. By Key Stage 3 pupils study religious traditions and celebrations in greater depth, for example enquiring into the meaning of Christmas to Christians. Pupils understand the idea of the Annunciation and can compare Mary and Joseph's preparation for the birth of Christ with modern days. They appreciate links between birth, nuclear families, and extended families such as the family of the Church. Pupils appreciate the differences in religious building, for example the architecture of Mosques. At Key Stage 4, students discuss and debate ethical issues surrounding religious belief and moral behaviour. For example, in Year 11 pupils debated a recent court case where a group of Christian schools argued that the use of physical punishment was a Christian belief and practice.

236. The quality of teaching is good overall and occasionally very good or excellent. It is strongest for the pupils in Key Stage 1, where it is excellent, and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stages 3 and 4 it is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and co-operate well to produce series of lessons that enhance pupils' understanding. Teachers have clear aims and present complex ideas in ways that involve pupils well and support their understanding, for example by dressing pupils in appropriate costume when talking about Sikh prayer. Teachers make good use of questions and answers to relate the work to individual pupils or students, for example "is this how you pray in your Temple"? Teachers tell stories well and promote pupils' interest by good use of communication aids such as "Bliss Books" and by well-directed support from non-teaching staff.

237. The school has a limited number of resources for religious education, but it recognises this and on the last day of the inspection it took delivery of further religious artefacts. The school uses the local facilities well, with visits to religious buildings, and has strong contacts with the local Church close by (St. Bartholomew's). Assessment is clearly linked to planning and provides clear records of what pupils have visited, but it needs to be strengthened to identify what pupils know and understand. The subject is well led by the co-ordinators, who ensure strong links with the development of spirituality among the pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.