

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS PARK

Dawlish

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113642

Headteacher: Mr Robert W Pugh

Reporting inspector: Mr Robert Arnold
22729

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 March 2000

Inspection number: 193106

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	John Nash Drive Dawlish Devon
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Margaret Harris
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Bob Arnold	Registered Inspector	Art Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve?
Charlotte Roberson	Lay Inspector		Equal Opportunities. How well does the school care? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ivor Everden	Team Inspector	English Physical education Personal, social and health education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
George Davies	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How well is the school led and managed. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Brian Brayford	Team Inspector	Science Religious education	Accommodation, staffing and resources. Special educational needs.
Kathleen Cannon	Team Inspector	Information and communications technology Design and technology Vocational education	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development. Assessment.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oaklands Park School caters for pupils between the ages of five and eighteen. There are 46 pupils; 36 boys and 10 girls with a wide range of special educational needs. All of the pupils have severe learning difficulties. Forty per cent of the pupils are in the autistic spectrum. A small minority have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently there are 25 resident pupils; 21 boys and 4 girls. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Oaklands has a high proportion of pupils (roughly half) who have attended other special schools, units and mainstream supported centres. The school is situated at Dawlish, in the county of Devon and is housed in a mix of purpose-built teaching accommodation and an old country house and outbuildings, which is used mainly by the residential pupils. There is a new, purpose-built unit (Rowan Lodge) for primary aged pupils who are autistic. There are separate and specialist facilities for swimming and food studies. Eight of the day pupils are eligible for free school meals. All boarders receive free meals when in residence. The characteristics of pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages.

The school's aims are:

- To address the needs of pupils as individuals, whilst encouraging them to feel confident in groups.
- To provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum encompassing school day and leisure activities.
- To secure an environment in which pupils enjoy equality of opportunities to resources and learning.

The schools brochure statement says:

- Oaklands Park School exists to encourage each of its pupils to make the most of their potential.
- We believe that our pupils are entitled to an excellent education and it is our aim to organise all of our resources to ensure that they receive one.
- We offer daytime or twenty four hour education.
- We aim to work with children on individual programmes and in group and class settings.
- We want children to enjoy their education and the opportunities for recreation.
- In achieving the above, we need to work in partnership with parents.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oaklands Park is a good school that provides well for all its pupils. Teaching and leadership and management are good. This school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standard of teaching is good which contributes to all pupils making good progress.
- Promotes good attitudes in all pupils.
- All pupils benefit by very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and personal development.
- Relationships between pupils; pupils and staff and between staff are a strength.
- The school promotes careers and vocational education very well.
- Oaklands provides very good provision for moral, social and cultural development.
- The school provides very good residential provision and care.
- It provides good quality of information and links with parents.
- All staff and governors have a shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed.
- It sets effective educational priorities and supports these through very good financial planning.

What could be improved

- The teaching of information and communication technology and a modern foreign language.
- Medium and long term planning to ensure teachers are able to target learning effectively for all pupils.
- The teaching of science as a discrete subject.
- Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance.
- Providing all pupils with full access to all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Oaklands Park was last inspected in February 1997. The previous inspection was critical of:

- the financial control and planning to support development;
- the quality of teaching, including monitoring, evaluating and co-ordination of subjects;
- individual education plans and the recording of pupil's progress;
- behaviour management;
- the teaching of pupils with autism and complex needs;
- the governing body in its role of ensuring that all statutory requirements are met; and
- the twenty four hour curriculum provision.

Oaklands Park has made very good overall progress since that report. Teaching is now good with no lessons observed that are unsatisfactory. The area of teaching that has recorded the most significant improvement is the management of pupils, which is now very good in Key Stages 2, 4 and post 16 and good at the other key stages. Leadership and management, combined with financial planning and control, are now good. All curriculum subjects have co-ordinators whose roles are clear but there remains a need for them to provide long and medium term planning which will enable all pupils' experiences and progress to be planned and recorded. Individual education plans contain good, specific targets, which show good progress overtime. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour is now good. Residential provision is now very good with the curriculum linked to school expectations and much improved communication between care staff and teachers. Care plans contain some targets, which span 24-hour provision. The governing body has ensured all statutory requirements are met with the exception of a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3.

Additional areas of improvement include attendance which is now very good. The addition of Rowan Lodge has added considerably to the provision and expertise for the teaching of pupils who have autism.

Good progress has been made in English, mathematics, physical education and religious education. All other subjects have shown satisfactory progress with the exception of information and communication technology which was unsatisfactory in 1997 and remains so in this inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 7	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	
reading	B	B	B	B	
writing	B	B	B	B	
mathematics	B	B	B	B	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

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

The school sets realistic and achievable targets for all pupils. The pupils' achievements are good in relation to their previously acquired skills and they make good progress across all key stages. The good and often very good teaching maintains pupils' progress. By the time they leave school, pupils have gained sufficient skills to enable them to go on to college. They show confidence and make good progress in communication, speaking and listening skills. The progress in personal and social education is good. Residential pupils have the added benefit of programmes designed to enable the acquisition of social and personal skills spanning and linking 24-hour provision.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally have good attitudes. Many are enthusiastic and interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall. Many of the pupils exhibit very challenging behaviour, but this is a manifestation of their handicap rather than deliberate attempts to be disruptive
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are willing to take responsibility and show initiative. Pupils readily participate in decision making. They are generally considerate towards one another and grow in confidence as they move through the school. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. Nearly half of all lessons are good with three in every ten being very good. There was a small amount of teaching that was excellent.

Teaching of personal and social skills is good and, for residential pupils, is linked to a good 24-hour curriculum. The skills of communication, literacy and numeracy are being taught effectively throughout the school. The school meets the needs of all of its pupils. At Key Stage 1, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the pupils special needs. Planning and the use of learning support staff are very good. At Key Stage 2, teachers plan well for all attainments, using a wide range of methods. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good at Key Stages 2 and 4 and post 16. Teaching for autistic pupils in Rowan Lodge is consistently very good. Pupils with profound and multiple needs receive consistently very good teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant. It lacks balance due to a modern foreign language not being offered to Key Stage 3 pupils and the curriculum for information and communication technology being narrow in content.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for pupils moral, social and cultural development is also very good
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good and effective measures to ensure that all pupils are cared for. Residential pupils receive a high standard of care. Procedures for monitoring good behaviour, educational progress and personal development are very good.

The school has a very good working partnership with the parents and there is very good co-operation and support between home and school as a result.

The curriculum is broad and relevant but lacks balance. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is unsatisfactory. The school does not offer a modern foreign language. Schemes of work are generally underdeveloped with some failing to include planning for the use of information and communication technology.

The school has effective arrangements for ensuring the care and supervision of pupils. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and pupils personal development are very good. The procedures for monitoring and promoting of attendance are unsatisfactory and are not applied consistently and do not currently meet statutory requirements. However, this is not having an effect on actual attendance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher together with the senior management team are very effective. They have enabled the school to make very good progress since the last inspection. Most co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities efficiently but a lack of time restricts their effectiveness in monitoring the medium and long term planning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body has a clear understanding of its role and carries out responsibilities effectively. Governors take an increasingly active part in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school regularly evaluates its own performance and includes the governing body in the process. This ensures that there is a clear understanding and insight into the relative strengths and weaknesses that exist.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used efficiently, apart from information and communication technology where they are underused.

There is a suitable number of teachers and support staff. All teachers have specific knowledge that enables them to teach successfully pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but very good in Rowan Lodge. The provision of resources for learning is variable across subjects but is satisfactory overall. The resources for aspects of science, religious education and design and technology are inadequate

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school. • Parents feel able to approach the school with any problems. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is of good quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing significant. • • • •

The inspection team agreed with the positive comments expressed by parents and found evidence to support their views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The achievement of the majority of pupils is good and they make good progress in their learning throughout the school in most subjects. Since the last inspection, the pupils' progress has risen significantly from a position where progress was seen to be 'generally satisfactory'. The attainments of pupils are within the range expected for those with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional problems such as Autism or challenging behaviour.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

2. The pupils' attitudes towards their work and the school generally are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are interested in their lessons and proud of their achievements. Given the complex nature of their individual needs, their behaviour is good. They continue to relate well to staff and show consideration for each other. They make very good gains in their personal development.
3. The pupils enter the school with a smile and 'good morning' to the head teacher who greets each one by name as they arrive at the door. They expect to work and the majority respond positively to the well-planned lessons and high quality of teaching. Some pupils are aware of their individual learning targets and they try hard to complete lesson tasks. Day pupils bring their home-school diaries and all pupils actively participate in a daily review of their previous evening's activities. They take interest in their academic work and are proud to display the results, such as printing out a copy of computer artwork for the inspection team. They enjoy being at school and make a positive contribution to the daily life of the school. For example, when the residential pupils wanted a patio they raised the money and built it themselves. They are justifiably proud of this achievement and are pleased to show photographs of themselves at work.
4. Given the very wide and complex range of individual needs, the pupils' standards of behaviour are good. They are courteous, friendly and helpful towards each other, staff and visitors, and frequently offer to act as guides to different parts of the school. Pupils ignore incidents of challenging behaviour and continue with their work. They demonstrate a clear knowledge of right and wrong and recognise the teacher's signed and vocal commands of 'no' or 'stop', responding appropriately. Older pupils show care and concern for younger or less mobile pupils, helping them if they are upset or distressed, particularly during lunch and break times.
5. The pupils form good relationships with the staff, who show a very high degree of care and understanding in dealing with the pupils' complex needs. At all times and in all situations, there is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between staff and pupils. This strongly supports the pupils' very good gains in their personal development.
6. Within the 24-hour curriculum, the pupils of all ages are given opportunities to develop their inter-personal and social skills. Some are able to organise themselves, for example, dressing for horse riding, where they wait in turn until their horse is ready. During the good morning session, they listen to each other and some ask questions or make relevant comments. They enjoy taking on responsibilities for example, organising the class timetable or assisting with lesson preparations. On the residential side they share in clearing away after meals, washing tables and sweeping the floor. Older pupils accept small commissions such as collecting eggs or milk from the kitchen. The personal and social skills of school leavers are further developed through a well-organised life skills programme, which is enhanced through careers and work experience placements. A variety of off-site visits during and after the school day, further support the developing personal and social skills of both day and residential pupils who enjoy the same access to all activities.

7. The attendance rate as recorded for the most recent full school year was very high at over 97 per cent. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Since the beginning of this school year it is not unusual to find whole classes where there is no absence at all for a whole term. Pupils are very rarely absent from school and there are no unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

8. Teaching is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. Nearly half of all lessons were good with three in every ten being very good. There was a small amount of teaching that was excellent.
9. Overall, teaching is very good in Key Stage 2 and good in all other key stages. In the previous inspection report concern was expressed regarding the management of pupils behaviour. This aspect of teaching is now consistently very good across the school and represents outstanding progress.
10. In Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory or better in all subjects but is good overall. Teachers show a good level of knowledge and understanding in the subjects and that has a direct and positive impact on the pupils' learning. They are competent in teaching phonics and other basic skills and this ensures that pupils make a good start in literacy, speaking and listening skills. The quality of planning is good and objectives are set clearly for the pupils' academic and social development that are visible to all staff. Teachers have suitably high expectations for the pupils and use effective methods to enable learning and progress to be made systematically. Teachers and learning support staff manage the pupils consistently and make a strong team. This is a particular strength at the beginning of Key Stage 1. There are examples of very good teaching in Key Stage 1 where as a result, pupils are highly productive and work at a good pace. Teachers assess the pupils both formally and informally through skilful use of questions and observations. Members of the team in Key Stage 1, for example, make brief notes on individual pupil's responses that contribute effectively to assessments. The good quality teaching in Key Stage 1 has positive effects on the pupils' learning as they become interested in their world and respond well to new knowledge.
11. In Key Stage 2, teaching is very good overall. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of all subjects. They plan lessons well linking individual needs to specific targets in pupil's individual education plans. This enables pupils to make good progress over time. Teachers are usually quite clear about what they want the pupils to learn. Lessons are carefully structured, so that the pace of pupils learning is controlled, and their interest sustained. For example, art lessons that contain a period for talking and reflection are followed by an activity session designed to stimulate fresh thinking. In all lessons teachers work very effectively with learning support staff. This was seen to good effect during a physical education lesson where all staff enabled all pupils to experience the full range of activities involved with throwing and catching small balls and beanbags. The pupils' acquisition of new knowledge is good overall. They are interested in their work and concentrate well on tasks.
12. In Key Stage 3, teaching is satisfactory or better in all subjects but is good overall. However, there is a higher proportion of satisfactory teaching in this key stage when compared to all other key stages. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and their level of understanding of special educational needs issues is good and has positive benefits for the pupils' rate of progress and learning. In design and technology for example, very effective teaching was characterised by thorough subject knowledge and planning to include the wide range of pupils' special needs. The management of pupils' behaviour was subtle in modifying the negative attitudes of a few. All pupils were challenged and inspired to do their best and responded by producing high quality work in relation to their own levels of achievement. There were examples of excellent teaching in science, design and technology and physical education at this key stage, where pupils with a wide range of needs were challenged and inspired to work hard, find ways for further improvement and achieve good results in relation to their previous work. In one excellent physical education lesson pupils with profound and multiple difficulties were very excited about going swimming. The teacher and learning support staff took everyone through well-practised routines, which calmed all pupils sufficiently for the

lesson to progress and result in very good learning. In another excellent lesson in science pupils were comparing wet and dry. The teacher organised resources so that each pupil wore one glove. They placed both hands into water and therefore experienced the feeling of wet and dry. They then compared materials for their waterproof qualities with pupils being encouraged to predict outcomes. There was a high emphasis on alternative communication systems which enabled participation by all and resulted in excellent learning.

13. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory or better in all subjects but is good overall. The effective teaching is carefully planned; learning objectives are clearly set out, and a range of good resources is used to motivate the young persons. Behaviour management is good and teachers show a sensitive regard for pupils' individual needs. This was observed in an excellent lesson where shopping lists were being made to enable pupils to go shopping to buy produce for making lunch the next day. This task incorporated good use of information and communication technology making the task 'life like' resulting in sustained interest as they find new ways around problems. Most pupils are being prepared for external examinations. This represents real achievement, dedication and enthusiasm on the part of the teachers and pupils who are highly motivated to achieve their own personal best.
14. There has been very good progress in improving the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection where some of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. The proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching has been eliminated and the amount of good or better teaching has risen significantly

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

15. The school aims 'to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum encompassing school-day and leisure activities'. In the 1997 Report, there were criticisms of the balance provided, the whole school approach to planning and concern that there were only draft policies for most subjects. Subject co-ordinators were uncertain of their roles and pupils' work was not sufficiently well monitored. For the past eighteen months, the school has had a deputy head with a primary responsibility for curriculum and much of this criticism can now be put aside. There is substantial evidence of the process of development and the curriculum is, with only a few exceptions, appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
16. The curriculum still lacks balance. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are not taught a modern language in accordance with statutory requirements; the use of information and communication technology to support subject teaching remains undeveloped across the school and the resources for design technology do not include facilities for work with resistant materials or electronic control systems. Shortcomings in these three areas are unsatisfactory.
17. There is still much work to be done to ensure that schemes of work are fully in place. Some, for example, include no references to information and communications technology. There has been good development in the sensory, Picture Exchange Communication (PECs) and total communication curricula. However, co-ordinators do not sufficiently monitor and develop the teaching of their subjects and insufficient attention is paid to assessing the effectiveness of new methods as they are introduced to improve the quality of learning.
18. The school has adopted a thematic approach to much of the curriculum. This has strong advocates and certainly serves to bring teachers together in productive planning. There must also be some reservations expressed about this because some National Curriculum subjects do not fit neatly into the themes chosen and there is no compelling argument put forward to suggest that this approach is more effective than discrete subject teaching would be. The school is currently evaluating its usefulness. Friday afternoons are given over to a different whole school theme. At present, it is gardening. This is intended to extend choice in learning to the pupils, to pursue a worthwhile whole-school project and to teach important lessons about the environment. Evidence suggests that this approach has some merit.
19. Teachers take a sensible flexible approach to the organisation within class groups, the use of

time and the work expected of pupils, always being ready to adapt to the many different needs of pupils. In general, this works well but there are occasions when more care is required to maintain proper balance.

20. Within the curriculum, the school has placed significant weighting on literacy and numeracy skills, as well as seeking to provide autistic pupils with a means of initiating communication. A notable introduction, for example, has been the picture exchange communication system (PEC's) that enable non verbal pupils to build a small but effective collection of line drawn pictures that can be used alongside symbols to make sentences. These enable them, despite their language deprivation, to make simple requests or to express their feelings. There is a good programme of curriculum extension activities. Residential pupils are well served by a developing twenty-four hour curriculum but after-school extra-curricular opportunities are curtailed for non-residents by their lengthy travelling times.
21. There is a good personal, social and health education programme that includes topics on sex and the abuse of drugs. The lessons are sensitively delivered by all school staff and health professionals in an integrated programme that is acutely aware of the vulnerability of these pupils. Training has been provided for teachers, classroom assistants, mealtime assistants and care staff. There is an emphasis on family, relationships at home and in school and on knowledge of the whole person rather than on purely biological functions.
22. There is also an important 'sensory curriculum' for those pupils with complex, multiple learning difficulties. While there is a particular emphasis on core subjects in the early development of this area, foundation subjects are also encouraged to include 'sensory elements'. The aims of this curriculum are good, encouraging pupils to acquire skills of 'attending, listening, fixing, tracking, handling and manipulating' as essential steps towards learning. A small 'dark room' has recently been set up to enhance this programme. Progress is being made in exploring how this work can be used to enhance the lives of the pupils involved. Very good provision is also in place for careers and vocational education.
23. Good curriculum links are maintained with a number of schools and local colleges but the wide range of pupils' needs has led to difficulties in increasing the participation of the local community. Some visitors have, nevertheless, been able to make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' experiences. Pupils, when they have been off-site, have frequently benefited from the sympathetic responses of shopkeepers and other local people.
24. The school is successful in providing for the special educational needs of its pupils. The needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are positively addressed in regard to positioning in chairs, in standing frames and in respect of their physical and medical requirements. Access to certain parts of the building is, however, restricted for pupils with mobility problems. This limits their opportunities for learning. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice in regard to annual review procedures. Priorities are set, objectives agreed and fully reviewed.
25. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory.
26. The school has recently reviewed its policy for equal opportunities. This has a good focus on everyone who is involved in Oaklands Park School. All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently, however, because of very steep steps at one end of the main school there are two pupils who has difficulty gaining access to the food technology area so this lesson which is often practical in nature has to take place in a classroom. Every pupil can at present gain access to the swimming pool but without a hoist this could be difficult as pupils grow.
27. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Departmental and school assemblies fulfil the requirement for collective worship; are well planned on a daily basis and over time and make a positive contribution to the pupils' religious education. The "quiet, listening assembly" provides opportunities for reflection while another assembly focuses upon other religions and cultures. All assemblies contain elements that support the pupil's moral development and the concept of right and wrong. They often have the

pupils responding with awe and wonder, such as when listening to a story based on an African tale about how important it is to have friends and to be a friend. Excitement for their world was also clearly demonstrated when pupils at Key Stage 3 looked at the beauty of the costumes provided for their history lesson about clothes of other times, and at Key Stage 1, when pupils explored how pushing and pulling caused a mechanical effect when using selected toys in science

28. The school's simple behavioural code, with its stress on being "kind", is known by all pupils and is constantly reinforced in all facets of school life. The weekly assembly to celebrate achievement provides an opportunity to celebrate good moral behaviour. Personal, social and health education and religious education provide lessons which provide more sharply focussed opportunities for the pupils to discuss moral issues in general and in particular the concept of right and wrong and behaving in a responsible manner.
29. The school's provision for developing the pupils' social skills is very good. The many visits that are directly linked to the curriculum or to provide leisure opportunities for pupils in residence enhance the pupils' social development in different settings and are particularly valued as they provide opportunities for the pupils to develop their self-discipline. Additionally, planned opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to work together or independently and opportunities are created for pupils to behave in a responsible manner. Pupils often help to tidy up after lessons, take registers back to the school office and older pupils are time-tabled to provide specific help with setting up for and clearing up after lunch. The social development programme built into the life of pupils in residence is a strong feature of this provision.
30. The provision for cultural development is very good and pervades much of what goes on in the school. The Africa theme provided pupils with opportunities to look at, feel and make their own copies of African artefacts; their work in history enables them to study past cultures, particularly dress, and their listening assembly provides them with the opportunity to hear a wide range of musical experiences. Visits to museums, historical houses, a theatre and a library further contributes to their cultural development with the latter experience additionally supporting the development of the school's literacy hour strategy. Visits directly linked to curricular activities such as when they look at different features of the landscape - the sea, land, rivers - and the outdoor pursuits "expedition" undertaken by older pupils all contribute to the pupils' development of awareness of the natural world.
31. Since the previous inspection there has been significant improvement in the school's provision for the pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Residential provision

32. Residential provision is very good. The caring and committed staff develop very good relationships with the pupils and provide appropriate support to help them address their behaviour and social difficulties. The system of house parents and link teachers is effective in ensuring continuity of care and support for pupils and their parents. Daily routines for the care of pupils are clearly explained in the staff handbook and documentation concerning care procedures. The meals provided at the school are good and sufficient and special dietary requirements are catered for when required.
33. The extensive range of daily out-of-school activities is a strength of the school and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Care staff and teachers are all involved in organising and supervising the extra curricular programmes which include a variety of individual and team sports and other activities such as walks, music, computer games and visits. Some activities are appropriately linked to the behaviour system and pupils have to earn the right to participate; this encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Individual care plans are good and contain specific targets, which show good progress over time. Some of these targets are linked across the whole school, especially for personal and social development. The schools 'theme for learning' for the current term is clothes. Displays of pupils' work clearly linked to this theme enhance the quality of residential provision. The whole school had looked at Africa and this too receives a high profile in each of the residential units with some very good displays including genuine African artefacts.

34. Day-to-day communications between the residential staff and teachers are good. Teachers regularly visit the residential groups and care staff were observed passing on important information during the school's good morning sessions at the beginning of each day. Detailed daily records are maintained which are available to teachers and care staff. Care staff attend annual review meetings and make valuable and informed contributions. Target setting for residential pupils occur during these annual reviews and is officially revisited after six months. Targets appearing in pupils' individual education plans are good.
35. The head of care is providing very good, positive leadership and has a clear vision regarding areas for further development. There are regular meetings when the head of care meets with other members of the senior management team to discuss strategic planning across the whole school. There is a plan that covers developments associated with the residential provision. This contains realistic targets and includes an external review demonstrating the awareness of seeking to provide improving, best value care for all pupils.
36. There is a very good induction scheme for care staff linked closely to the school handbook and documentation. All care staff have the opportunity of undertaking a NVQ Level 3 in ChildCare. New job descriptions are good and link employment requirements to training for the NVQ qualification.
37. The accommodation is organised into four care groups, each with its own living area, bedrooms, toilets and washing facilities. Rooms are attractive, clean and well maintained. They are well decorated and furnished and many have been skilfully organised by the staff. Pupils are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with pictures and posters. Sleeping-in staff have appropriate, separate facilities.
38. The resources available in the residential areas are generally satisfactory and include some books and games as well as televisions and videos.
39. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection especially in the quality of leadership, links with school and the setting and recording of targets in individual care plans.

Rowan Lodge

40. Rowan Lodge was opened two years ago and is a purpose-built block containing both teaching and residential accommodation catering for eight pupils with autism. All of the pupils are at Key Stage 2. The unit provides an intensive programme for periods of up to three years, designed to address the specific needs of the pupils and equip them with a range of strategies to help them cope at home and in future educational placements. Level of staffing in the unit is satisfactory with a range of teachers, learning support staff and a team of residential care staff.
41. The standards achieved by the pupils in the unit are good. The pupils respond well to their teachers and carers. Clearly defined, structured teaching programmes exist both in class and in the residential provision. The use of these programmes enables the children to work confidently both individually and in small groups. Good use is made of augmentative communication strategies, including signing and the Pictorial Exchange Communication System (PECS).
42. The quality of teaching in the unit is very good. Work is carefully planned and delivered in a lively, interesting fashion, which stimulates all pupils to maintain motivation. All the pupils have individual education plans, reviewed on a regular basis, which set clear targets for learning. This adds considerably to the progress pupils make and the focus of all staff to individual needs. The teachers are well supported by a dedicated group of support and care staff. All staff work collaboratively to ensure continuity and consistency of practice. This further enhances learning by ensuring all staff work towards a common target for each pupil.
43. The classroom and residential accommodation is good overall and offers an environment suitable for supporting the learning of social skills and personal development. However, the lack of shower facilities in the residential area has a minor effect on limiting pupils' choice. The

resources available within the unit are good and these are used effectively to support teaching. For example, animal puppets were used to good effect in a lesson on literacy.

44. The unit staff have developed good links with support services, outside agencies and parents. The educational psychologist, for example, works closely with staff in developing programmes for learning, assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. All these links are used positively to enhance the quality of care and education on offer to the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. There have been many good improvements in the way the school cares for its' pupils since the previous inspection. The school promotes the welfare of all pupils very well and the efforts made by the committed team of staff within the whole school throughout the entire day have a significant impact on pupils overall development.
46. Staff know individuals well and pupils trust them. Relationships are a strength of the school. Each child in residential care has a key worker who will generally work with that particular child for two years. Respect as well as fair and equal treatment is evident in all aspects of caring. All adults respond to pupils positively and show considerable patience and understanding within classrooms, on the playground, during meals and after formal lessons have finished.
47. The school has an effective child protection policy. This complies with locally agreed procedures. The headteacher and the head of care have had some relevant training but this needs to be updated.
48. The school is developing more effective ways to monitor and promote behaviour with the support of outside agencies including the educational psychologist. Good developments have included the inclusion of all staff on training for dealing with challenging behaviour but there is still a need for more updated training in, for example, the appropriate use of restraint. Appropriate behaviour is constantly being encouraged and there is no evidence of bullying or racial harassment. Realistic targets for every pupil are shared with parents and all carers and progress is monitored closely. The daily progress of some pupils, for example for some younger boarders in Rowan Lodge, is shared with parents on the telephone. In other classes home school diaries are used effectively to share and record behaviour both at school and at home. Some of these show that teachers have very detailed knowledge of pupils.
49. Procedures for monitoring and recording attendance are unsatisfactory and lack rigour. There is no attendance policy and all staff do not consistently record attendance accurately or twice daily. Current practice within the school does not always identify why a child may be absent and while taxis and minibuses generally arrive on time there are occasions when they are late and this is not recorded. However, absences are quickly checked by staff if a message has not been received.
50. The school works very closely with a number of agencies on a weekly basis to support pupils many and varied needs. Many of these links are very effective for example the school health service, but currently speech therapy and physiotherapy provision is minimal and occupational therapy is inadequate.
51. There are well established but flexible integration arrangements with two primary schools, one special school and a further education college. Whenever possible pupils of different ages integrate either alone or in pairs accompanied by a learning support assistant or in some cases a teacher. Lessons and activities are well chosen to enable each child to achieve success. These encourage social development as well as some extra educational experiences. The system runs smoothly and is developing well and staff at mainstream schools are positive about inclusion. Older pupils were seen returning to school after a day at college and spoke happily about their experiences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents say they are pleased with provision and with many aspects of the school. They are

supportive of the school and of everyone's efforts to help their children progress. They feel comfortable about approaching the staff and are pleased in general with improvements since the previous inspection in how achievements are reported to them. Some parents are also concerned with the limited amount of speech therapy in the school and the inspection team supports this view.

53. The involvement of the Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA) has increased since the previous inspection. The senior care worker at the residence who is also a governor is closely involved with parents on this committee and together they are successful in raising substantial sums of money every year. Events such as the annual summer fete are well supported by parents and members of the community. A voluntary helper is also involved with this work. The PSFA sends a welcoming letter to all parents and they are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school.
54. Communication with parents is developing into a strength of the school. The telephone is well used. Newsletters are sent out which indicate that all information going to parents is well put together, helpful and informative. The majority of pupils and all the youngest children have a home school diary. Some children who have respite care away from the site also have another diary where teachers and carers can share information if necessary on a daily basis. Parents know that they can call in to the school at any time. Parents who ask are given leaflets on specific medical conditions and time is generously offered by the head of care to discuss any concerns they have. Home visits are made to many not only by teachers, but also by other support agencies, for example, the speech therapist.
55. Parents have been asked to sign a home school agreement and the majority have done so. It is too soon to judge whether this will have any impact on learning either at school or at home.
56. Individual education plans (IEPs) are shared with parents and all targets reviewed regularly. Parents are fully involved in all target setting. These targets are also reviewed at annual review meetings, which are well attended by many carers and professionals, including parents. Care targets are also linked closely to the statement for each child. Parents are supportive of the way progress for each individual is also reported to them in written reports which they also regularly receive twice a year. These reports are of sound quality and indicate in most cases what a child can do, how well they can do it and what they need to do to improve.
57. Overall the school is very successful in achieving effective and open communication with parents, many of whom live some distance from the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management of the school provided by the headteacher and the senior management team is good. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and in conjunction with all staff - school based and residential staff - have a shared commitment to improvement. Strategies are in place to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the direct involvement of the headteacher, the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. Additionally, some governors are linked to specific teachers. The significant improvement in teaching and the pupils' learning, and the establishment of more structured links between the residential provision and the school that has taken place since the last inspection bears witness to the effectiveness of these strategies.
59. Appraisal procedures are in place in the school; a supervision system has been established for care staff and a very good induction system, effectively underpinned by a detailed school handbook, supports new teaching, class room support and care staff. There is no strategy in place for performance management but the need to establish such a strategy has been recognised by the governors. The head-teacher's imminent attendance at a relevant training course and the governors' rigorous research into their duties with regards to this area of responsibility is part of this process.
60. The school development plan is a comprehensive strategic document. Suitable priorities and desired outcomes are identified. It is carefully costed where relevant and sensible time scales

for the achievement of targets are set. All staff, particularly staff with delegated responsibilities, contribute to the formulation of the plan with the head-teacher and the governors regarding it as a dynamic document which reflects the school's aims and values in general and in particular its intentions and strategies for continued improvement. An analysis of the plan confirms this. It contributed significantly to the school's introduction of the national literacy and national numeracy strategies and continues to provide a picture of the school's intentions and priorities for development and improvement in the many areas that make up the school and its residential provision.

61. The governing body fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. With the exception of the provision of a modern foreign language, the development of whole school strategies for information and communication technology and the establishment of appropriate procedures for monitoring attendance it carries out its statutory responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. Governors play a very active role in the shaping of the school and are very aware of their duties and responsibilities. They are fully involved with the creation and monitoring of the school development plan, are increasing their involvement with curriculum development and the monitoring of teaching and are developing a framework for working which will further enhance their effectiveness. The school's induction system is being used as a basis for developing a similar system for new governors.
62. The governing body and the head-teacher ensure that finances are carefully matched to the priorities identified in the school development plan. Spending is effectively tracked with both the head-teacher and governing body having regular access to up-to-date and accurate financial information. Specific grants and donations to the school are appropriately used and there is a developing culture at senior management level and in the governing body for applying the principles of best value, in particular for contracted services.
63. Significant improvements have been made in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The improvement in financial control has resulted in the school turning a significant over-spend in the budget into a responsible carry over; the school development plan is prioritised and costed and the monitoring of the curriculum and teaching is developing well. Subject co-ordinators have been appointed, good quality individual education plans are in place and responded to and the 24-hour curriculum is now an established feature of the school. There continues to be a need for governors to fully meet with their statutory requirements as regards a modern foreign language; the development of a whole school strategy for information and communication technology and the establishment of a system for performance management.
64. The school is adequately staffed with suitably qualified teachers, many of whom have gained additional qualifications appropriate to their development and the needs of the school. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of their subject and the relevant National Curriculum Programmes of Study. All staff have detailed job descriptions which are reviewed on a regular basis. Teachers are deployed effectively throughout the school and there has been an attempt to match subject qualifications to teaching responsibilities for most subjects.
65. There are currently 17 members of support staff employed within the school and they support teaching and learning with individuals and small groups of pupils. Their input is good, they are well deployed throughout the school and their work is valued by the teachers. There are sufficient well-qualified childcare staff to provide support in the residential provision. These staff are well organised and deployed appropriately.
66. The policy on appraisal indicates that appraisal is seen as an integral part of the staff professional programme. All staff are appraised annually by members of the senior management team. The procedures for inducting new members of staff into the school are good and these procedures are supported by detailed documentation.
67. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. Over the last academic year, staff have attended a range of courses, some of which dealt with issues in special educational needs as well as courses in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

68. The school is very well supported by two administrative staff and the school caretaker maintains the interior of the school in a clean, tidy condition. These staff play a full and active part in the life of the school.
69. Overall, the accommodation for teaching is satisfactory in most areas and is very good in the department for children with autism. The classrooms are generally in a good state of repair and the quality of their interior decoration provides a good setting for the display of pupils' work. There is no specialist accommodation for the teaching of science, art and for working in resistant materials in design and technology. This limits the opportunities for learning in these areas of the curriculum. The school has its own swimming pool, which is in regular use. The changing rooms are in a poor state of repair and do not offer a suitable hygienic area for pupils and staff to change for swimming. The school hall is used for assemblies and also for physical education. It is well equipped for both purposes and is large enough to accommodate the present pupil population. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a ball pool; a small sensory room and a soft play area. However, parts of the school are inaccessible to pupils in wheelchairs.
70. The school is situated in spacious grounds. There are ample grassed and hard surface areas for organised games and outdoor play. There is an extensive range of well-maintained play equipment which provides good opportunities for pupils to play and develop their social skills. Generally the campus is attractive and well cared for, but there are unsightly accumulations of rubbish in a few areas.
71. The provision of resources for learning is variable across subject areas. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection. The school now has an adequate number of up to date computers, but the range of software available for use is too limited to support fully teaching and learning over all areas of the National Curriculum. A school library has been established and, although small, it contains a range of good books. Resources for the teaching of science, religious education and elements of the craft, design and technology programme are inadequate and limit the opportunities for learning in these important areas of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. Raise standards of attainment and improve pupils' progress in information and communication technology by:
- ensuring that the full requirements of the National Curriculum are met and the curriculum for information and communication technology is broad, relevant and balanced:
 - developing the use of information and communication technology in all subjects and for all pupils:
 - increasing the range of software available:
 - improving teachers' confidence in using new technologies: and
 - developing effective assessment procedures to identify pupils' current and future learning targets.
73. Develop long and medium-term whole-school planning for all curriculum areas in order to ensure:
- continuity of experiences and learning for all pupils:
 - progressive acquisition of skills, understanding and knowledge by all pupils appropriate to their individual needs and ages; and
 - consistency of approach.
74. Ensure that statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met in a modern foreign language.

Minor Issues

75. Develop science as a discreet subject rather than a part of Knowledge and Understanding of the World.
76. Ensure there is access to the food technology room for all pupils.
77. Improve procedures for monitoring attendance.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	30	44	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	46
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	2.64

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	45
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.4
Average class size	6.5

Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	390

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	827,904
Total expenditure	838,743
Expenditure per pupil	17,846
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,745
Balance carried forward to next year	14,906

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	42	54	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	50	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	32	8	0	46
The teaching is good.	54	39	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	50	0	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	16	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	46	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	42	39	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	63	39	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	46	0	0	16
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	46	4	0	8

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

ENGLISH

78. There has been very good improvement in English teaching and learning since the last inspection. The subject is now well co-ordinated by a senior teacher who was appointed about eighteen months ago. A satisfactory scheme of work is already in place, new techniques have been introduced and there is evident improvement in the teaching of communication skills, especially to autistic pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
79. In this school, at all key stages, the main emphasis lies with the development of language. Within the limits of their capabilities a large majority achieve some literacy competence. The barriers of their speech deprivation remain a crucial factor in the amount of progress that can be made. Behaviour and attitudes in class are good but, for many, the severity of their disabilities significantly affects their ability to use the language in speech or writing.
80. Teaching is always satisfactory, frequently good and sometimes very good. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' needs and teach basic skills in an interesting manner. Planning takes account of the individual education plans and, for the most part, pupils respond well to their teacher's high expectations. Work rates in the classroom have to be flexible but teachers and support staff effectively combine to make progress towards the goals they have set for each pupil. Ongoing assessments are recorded at all key stages at very regular intervals. There is, wherever possible, an attempt to involve parents in assisting their children's progress. These are all good features.
81. Learning in English, bearing in mind the disabilities of all pupils is good. In encouraging speaking and listening, teachers exercise great patience and many pupils are making good progress. Autistic pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are benefiting from the use of picture exchange. Other pupils at this stage are encouraged to talk about their experiences and listen to those related by other pupils. Slowly, simple conversation is emerging. At Key Stages 3 and 4, speech work remains rudimentary but many pupils are confident enough to discuss the task in hand with their teacher or to converse intelligibly with visitors. The use of signing assists many pupils to 'talk to' each other. Some pupils at Key Stage 2 are beginning to read single words and most understand the relationships between written text, the meaning and the enjoyment of a story. Listening to stories is a popular class activity. Even at Key Stage 4, however, only one pupil was observed who could independently read a simple text. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils can work together in pairs or small groups under supervision to achieve simple tasks. Writing presents even greater problems. At Key Stages 3 and 4, some pupils are making very slow progress at copying text; none were observed who could write independently. The policy of using symbols as an aid to independent copying allows some older pupils to compose very short pieces for themselves. It also permits other pupils to read what has been written. The present use of this system, however, has some shortcomings. Some Key Stage 4 pupils have clearly reached a stage where they should be discouraged from using symbols because they will not have them available when they leave school.
82. Although the pace of lessons is satisfactory and pupils show interest over time in the tasks undertaken, (always ignoring frequent interruptions brought about by the disabilities of other pupils in the class), there is less variety of activities than might be expected. There is also too little use of information and communication technology as a stimulus to learning.
83. Teachers regularly assess progress made and record their findings against targets set in individual education plans. Good features of the work at all levels are the full integration of all support staff into classroom activity, their understanding of the pupils' capability, the sharing of tasks to be completed and the high quality of teamwork involved, especially when under pressure.

MATHEMATICS

84. Overall achievements in mathematics are good across all key stages.
85. During Key Stage 1, pupils make progress as they acquire the simple language of number through comparing the contrasting attributes of shapes and objects. They sort long, short, big and small items and toys and transfer their understanding to small and big numbers as they count using counters – the higher attaining pupils counting to five without support. Their work on thick and thin helps them to recognise, and in some cases, name simple two-dimensional shapes such as squares, circles and triangles, and three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and balls. By the end of the key stage, carefully targeted questioning, prompting and well organised individual support, enable pupils to use a number line with increasing confidence, higher attainers to use the language of number with more accuracy and the majority of pupils to be more consistent in matching shapes. Additionally they use their simple mathematical skills in real life situations as they count items of clothing and the artefacts that they use such as cups and plates when having snacks.
86. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their understanding and use of a number line with the lower attainers counting from one to five while the majority improve in their ability to count from one to 10. Their work on coloured patterns helps them to make predictions about what numbers come next and higher attainers are progressing in their abilities to identify and name missing numbers in a sequence. The consolidation of work on two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes enables pupils to match such shapes to pictorial representations and they show real satisfaction as they recognise and match shapes irrespective of size or orientation. By the end of the key stage the careful balance between consolidation and new learning and the effective provision of individual and small group support is having a positive effect on pupils learning. Higher attaining pupils recognise and count numbers up to 10 and recognise a pattern, while other pupils show more accuracy when counting up to five and adding one or two to small numbers. The majority of pupils now recognise and match geometric shapes and often name them correctly. The early language of number has been consolidated and added to through the use of comparatives such as smaller, bigger, larger and the same.
87. During Key Stage 3, pupils continue to make progress as they increasingly use their number skills in practical situations such as when counting cups and pieces of toast when preparing for end of lesson snacks. Their understanding and use of the language of number is firmer and they continue to add new terms such as 'more', 'less', 'not enough'. They now consciously choose two-dimensional shapes before fitting them into an insert board as opposed to making a random choice and show marked pleasure when their prediction proves to be correct. They are beginning to have knowledge of what they have learnt. Lower attaining pupils extend their use of the number line as they count more accurately from one to 10 and additionally match objects and body parts to numbers ranging from one to five. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils count on adding two and understand a simple column graph based on a survey of shoe sizes throughout the school. Most pupils sort using more than one attribute – colour and shape – and are more accurate when recognising and naming coins and notes.
88. During Key Stage 4 and post 16 years, pupils and students build on previous learning as they continue to consolidate their basic number skills of counting, matching, sorting and shape recognition through specific skill activities. Increasingly they use their skills in real life situations such as when using a computer-generated supermarket to create a costed shopping list and when using real catalogues to find and cost items that are to be bought. They provide change in coins from £1 and in notes from £5 using real coins and copies of real notes. The enjoyment demonstrated by one group when "playing" an adapted version of a game involving sale and purchase of property clearly demonstrated that the pupils and students could work co-operatively for an extended period of time. Individual work using the catalogue exercise and work on the supermarket programme equally shows that pupils and students are able to sustain concentration when working on their own.
89. Pupils and students enjoy mathematics. As they progress through the school they increasingly show that they are able to work on their own or collaboratively, and consistently show care for

the materials that they use and respect for their peers and staff. Overall behaviour during mathematics lessons is good. As a consequence of the planned and organised lessons pupils and students respond very well to the structure of the numeracy hour and in particular to the pace and variety of activities which teachers provide during whole and small group activities. Additionally, the consistently good progress and achievement displayed is very much the product of the good differentiation employed by the teachers and the planned support provided by the learning support assistants. Questions and prompts are very carefully targeted in order to meet with individual needs and the materials used show care in their selection and precision in the way that they are used to support individual learning. The very good use of time across all key stages is a strong feature of the teaching of mathematics.

90. The policy for mathematics reflects the aims of the school and National Curriculum guidelines, with the long and medium term plans that underpin this policy also showing due regard for the guidelines supporting the national numeracy strategy. Recording, assessment and reporting procedures do not yet fully support curriculum planning and provide detailed information about individual progress. However, a good start has been made to linking medium term plans to a system that will eventually provide information about what has been done, how well pupils have achieved and provide informative reports for parents. A good start has been made on the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and medium term plans are reviewed. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory overall; are of good quality and suitable for the needs of the pupils and students.
91. The previous inspection identified provision in mathematics as being satisfactory and sometimes good. Provision is now consistently good and in particular show improvement in whole school planning, lesson planning, teaching and the level of the pupils' achievements.

SCIENCE

92. Science is taught as part of a topic approach adopted by the school. As a consequence of this the amount of time allocated to learning science is limited. The amount of science in some topics is barely sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and to promote depth as well as breadth in pupils' scientific knowledge. Over those parts of the subject that are taught, pupils make good progress in all key stages.
93. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress when they study "ourselves" and clothes within whole-class topics. The highest attaining pupils are able to match labels to parts of the body. Pupils can match different fabrics and they are learning to understand the concept of sorting. They apply this knowledge with confidence when they sort different materials by colour and texture.
94. Over the duration of Key Stage 2, pupils progress from a very limited knowledge of matters to do with science to knowing basic information over a range of elements of the Programme of Study. The more able pupils know the importance of a healthy diet and what is necessary to make things grow. They can investigate the purpose and type of fabrics and the properties of their own clothes. They can explore colour in clothes, naming primary and secondary colours.
95. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made progress in the investigating element of the Programme of Study. The more able see science as a subject for finding out through thinking, testing, observing and reporting. During the key stage, they make good progress increasing their knowledge. They know how to select materials appropriate to purpose, for example, a waterproof fabric for a raincoat, cotton for a T-shirt, wool for a jumper, and how to devise a simple test for their theories. Pupils knowledge of their bodies increases. They know of substances, which can do harm to their bodies, including the effect of smoking on their lungs.
96. Pupils at Key Stage 4 can confidently use the investigative approach, hypothesising, testing, making a judgement and reporting. They can investigate care of materials and clothing, they can, for example, interpret the care symbols on clothing. They can also select clothes for different climates, occasions, activities and purposes. Their knowledge of their bodies has progressed considerably; for example, they know the roles of the major body organs.
97. Pupils' attitudes to science are good over all key stages. They work well as individuals or in

small groups when they are collecting information or when working on their findings. They concentrate and behave well.

98. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stages 2 and 3, good at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject and know their pupils well and this enables specific targets for improvement to be set. Lesson planning is good with the different ability levels and needs of the pupils well provided for. Good use is made of learning support assistants to support children's learning by ensuring that pupils' tasks are clearly written this results in little time being wasted during lessons. Information and communication technology is under used to promote learning in science.
99. The subject is well co-ordinated. Work in the subject is routinely monitored and evaluated. This includes visiting lessons to see colleagues teach. The long, mid and short-term planning documents provide effective support for teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and they provide records of the attainment of pupils and help in the teaching of future lessons.
100. The range and extent of resources available to support the teaching of science are unsatisfactory. The lack of a specialist area for teaching science limits what can be taught in all key stages.
101. The quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in science has improved since the last inspection.

ART

102. Only three lessons were observed in art in Key Stages 2 and 3 and therefore judgements are based mostly on the scrutiny of work seen around the school and in talking to staff and viewing teachers planning. In Key Stage 1 pupils' achievements are good. Pupils are learning about different textures as they assemble their pictures from a range of different materials. The teacher sets clear learning targets for each pupil and uses different styles to ensure that each pupil comes on task and makes progress. Learning support staff are well used and there are examples of very good teamwork that results in pupils gaining a range of new skills. Pupils who have little vocabulary are praised and encouraged to use new words and social skills. Behaviour is well managed.
103. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' achievements and the quality of learning in the one art lessons were very good. The pupils were asked to use shapes to create a design in the style of a famous artist. This was the theme in a painting lesson and the planned activities included colouring figures up to the line to develop hand and eye co-ordination and painting from their imagination. Some pupils compare the different ideas shown and choose which one to use. The majority of pupils are challenged well by the work set. Teachers plan well for pupils with autism to access the tasks and make very good progress. Work is frequently, successfully supported by alternative communication activities.
104. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory and occasionally good. They use the theme of clothes to produce T-shirts and Batik designs. Pupils work productively with care interpreting what they see and drawing their own images. They successfully develop their work using catalogues to provide ideas to increase their experience of design. Teaching is good and the styles used show an understanding of each pupil's needs. The use of language matched carefully to the pupils' understanding and careful questioning clarifies what pupils know and how they want their work to progress. Pupils are proud of their achievements. Planning is thorough and leads to good skill development in individual classes across a theme.
105. Standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 4 art are good in investigating and making across a very narrow range of media. Pupils are learning to record observations of still life using pencils to record light through to dark shading. With good teaching and support, pupils show real application and work with care to develop their drawing skills. Planning is good and addresses the needs of all abilities in the group.

106. Attitudes in Key Stages 2 and 3 are good. Pupils are keen to participate in all practical sessions. Some show great pride in their work. They are co-operative when working in small groups and try very hard to undertake the task set. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 one pupil praised the achievement of another.
107. The keen and knowledgeable co-ordinator has identified the need to develop a whole school scheme of work. The current scheme of work cannot be used to track progress or experiences of pupils and does not enable teachers to produce progressive age appropriate medium term planning. Cross-curricular themes are often used to consolidate skills. There are good examples of collage, paintings and masks associated with the 'Africa' theme and all pupils were involved in producing a millennium tile. Although good examples of art are in evidence throughout the school and residential areas this is across a fairly narrow range of skills and experiences displayed through a limited variety of media. There is little evidence that information and communication technology is being used to extend the range of experiences available to all pupils.
108. Since the last inspection, the standards reported have been maintained, but the range of materials used and experiences received by the pupils has reduced. Pupils' attitudes have improved, but schemes of work, assessment and recording pupils' attainments or experiences are still areas for development. Resources are satisfactory but storage of paper is poor. The subject's contribution to pupils' cultural education is good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. The school's provision for design and technology meets the National Curriculum statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall. The subject, embedded into a thematic curriculum, has improved since the previous inspection where, because so little design and technology was taught, no judgements were made. However, the range of the curriculum is limited and there is an over emphasis on food technology. The standard of teaching is good overall, which is reflected, in the good gains made by the pupils in all key stages. However, the accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory, which reduces the pupils learning opportunities and impedes their progress.
110. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. It is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, and is excellent in 14 per cent. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, and they promote learning through effective planning and preparation which captures the pupils' curiosity and interest. Lessons are well structured and linked to the pupils' individual education plan targets. In relation to their abilities the pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The multi-sensory approach to teaching assists the pupils in distinguishing between different fabrics, such as soft or hard, fluffy or smooth, or rough and shiny materials, and at Key Stages 1 and 2, the pupils of all ability levels engage in using fabrics to create large scale woven displays. They recognise and name items of clothing, matching these correctly to seasonal weather. Post 16 pupils and those at Key Stages 3 and 4 are encouraged to disassemble fabrics which increases their understanding of how materials are constructed. Then they reassemble woollen materials, for example, using simple looms. The more able pupils use simple tools to construct window boxes, or design and make African masks, gaining design ideas from their Internet research into African art. In food technology, the good and sometimes very good teaching, together with very good attention to safety and hygiene, encourages the pupils' awareness of diet and food preparation. The teachers promote the pupils' independent skills, offering choices and setting high but realistic challenges matched to individual levels of motor control. For example, less able pupils stir and mix ingredients for pancakes, while more able pupils make their own pizzas and fairy cakes. This strongly supports their personal development. There are good cross-curricular links with mathematics when the pupils measure ingredients, and their vocabulary improves with the correct use of culinary terminology. Literacy skills are consolidated when the pupils trace or copy words and sentences recording their lesson achievements. The very effective in-class support and teamwork from support assistants enhances the pupils learning, and greatly assists with classroom and pupil management. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and there is often an element of fun in lessons, which encourages a pleasant working atmosphere and promotes learning. All staff demonstrate very good pupil management skills,

using signing effectively to encourage good behaviour.

111. Policy documentation is good overall and design and technology is embedded in a whole school thematic programme of study. Long-term schemes of work are thorough but lack breadth, and there are limited opportunities for example for studying resistant materials or mouldings. Short-term schemes are efficient, and include helpful suggestions for non-specialist staff. The pupils' gains are monitored on a daily basis through their individual education and care plans. However, in terms of academic achievement, there are few written or photographic records and this is an area for development.
112. Overall resources are unsatisfactory. There is no designated area for design and technology, which limits its effectiveness and impacts on the pupils learning. The food technology room is well resourced, but is inaccessible to those pupils with limited mobility skills. Modern technology is insufficiently used and there is only limited software to support the subject. Nevertheless, the improved whole-school provision of the subject and the high quality of teaching, ensure that the pupils make good progress within the limitations of the available resources.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

113. During the period of the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons of geography and one lesson of history. Judgements about progress and achievement are therefore supplemented by the evidence provided through the scrutiny of the pupils' work, talking with staff and looking at relevant displays in classrooms and around the school.
114. The humanities and science are organised and taught under the overall heading of Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The policy for the humanities - geography and history - is satisfactory; it takes due note of National Curriculum guidelines, and is underpinned by a well thought out long term plan that reflects the school's intention to teach these subjects through a thematic approach. However, although many of the long-term plan's supporting units are in place, and as such make up a scheme of work, they have not yet been organised into a coherent medium term plan. The co-ordinator is very aware of the need to do this and is waiting for the role that science plays under the heading of Knowledge and Understanding of the World to be clarified. Resources for the humanities are satisfactory, as is the time allocated for teaching.
115. The lessons observed showed evidence of good planning, including the teachers' careful deployment of learning support staff. Learning support staff contribute significantly to the teachers' strategy for differentiation through support, task and outcome and as such helped to ensure that all pupils had optimum opportunity to succeed. Pupils and students respond very positively to the content of the subjects and to the help that they receive. They demonstrate enjoyment as well as effort when working alone or with others. The paired work on classifying pamphlets by older pupils provided a good example of collaboration while the very intense tearing of foil in order to make a wind bracelet by pupils at Key Stage 1 showed that younger pupils could work independently.
116. Since the last inspection satisfactory improvements have taken place in whole school planning and some improvements have been made in the area of medium-term planning. There continues to be a need to complete the work started on creating a coherent medium term planning structure, with this work being paralleled with a review of the current system for recording, assessing and reporting pupils' progress and achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is unsatisfactory. There are no schemes of work and the subject is not embedded either into the thematic curriculum or within subject areas. Where modern technology is used, the pupils and students make satisfactory gains in their knowledge. However, there are no adapted keyboards or laptop computers for the pupils with poor manual skills or restricted mobility, which impedes

their progress.

118. The previous inspection report found limited aspects of information and communication technology to be developing, but there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the pupils' progress. While there is an improvement in the provision for information and communication technology hardware since the last inspection, its use is insufficiently developed, particularly for those pupils with additional special needs.
119. Where the teachers' lesson planning includes the use of modern technology to support learning, it is effective, and the pupils respond positively to the teachers' expectations. In mathematics for example, at Key Stage 1, the pupils use a commercial package and a touch screen to extend their knowledge of basic number work. Good pupil management ensures equality of access, and the teachers encourage the pupils to use and expand their manual skills which promotes their computer confidence and enhances their personal development by developing their hand and eye co-ordination. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are able to use a mouse independently to select their answers. Higher achieving pupils at Key Stage 3 use painting packages competently to create their own illustrations which they print out for wall displays. At Key Stage 4 and at post 16, in personal and social education, the use of modern technology forms part of the lesson. The teachers' excellent planning encourages the pupils to use a commercially produced supermarket shopping programme, and they identify everyday items or plan simple meals, using a mouse and keyboard to select the required purchases. There is limited evidence in the pupils' work demonstrating their use of word processors to develop themes in religious education, which supports their literacy skills, while the more able pupils use the Internet for personal research to support their work in art or design and technology. However, the range of computer software and peripheral hardware is limited and interactive packages are not used regularly to support other subject areas. Few lesson plans include modern technology as a tool for extending the pupils' learning opportunities.
120. Although departmental documentation is satisfactory in outlining how modern technology can support lessons, there are no schemes of work to assist the teachers in planning or including information and communications technology in either their thematic or discrete lessons. Individual class teachers keep records linked to the pupils overall education and care plans, but this assessment is not used to inform either lesson planning or curriculum development and the pupils' gains are not formally recorded. The subject is not monitored, although an audit of staff training needs has been conducted. All classrooms have at least one computer and printer and some have flatbed scanners. Old and outdated equipment is gradually being replaced but the range of software and peripheral hardware is limited, and, other than a touch screen, there are no technology resources for special needs. There is no evidence that the schools digital and video cameras are used to support learning or record achievement.
121. Despite the improvements made in the department since the last inspection, information and communication technology does not yet fully meet statutory requirements. There is still much to be addressed in order to ensure that the subject effectively supports the learning of all pupils throughout the whole school.

MUSIC

122. Only a small number of lessons were observed in Key Stages 2 and 3. Judgements are based on these observations, talking to staff and scrutiny of photographs and school documentation. Pupils in all key stages make satisfactory and sometimes good, progress in music. Their achievements are similarly good. Their singing in assemblies is often impressive considering the difficulties many pupils have in learning basic communication skills
123. At Key Stage 1, pupils experience a range of musical forms such as song and rhythm. By the use of body percussion in the form of clapping and stamping they can begin to understand rhythm and improve their motor skills. Pupils' appreciation of music is developed through experience of a range of instruments, songs and music. Links with movement have been established through physical education where pupils perform to music. They are beginning to develop skills in listening.

124. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on these skills and create music from instruments of the same type, such as percussion. Social and personal skills are beginning to develop as pupils create music in groups. Pupils can create music using a range of instruments. They are aware that music can be created by shaking, moving, hitting and blowing. Imaginative use is made of instruments and pupils are learning how to play a variety of percussion instruments.
125. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have experienced a wide range of percussion instruments and many have accepted the discipline of singing in a group. Pupils' performing skills include an awareness of music from other cultures and the importance of music for special occasions, such as school assemblies and religious festivals, like Christmas. Some can listen carefully to different types of music and express a preference. Some less able pupils are able to copy a simple beat on a percussion instrument after much encouragement.
126. At Key Stage 4 older, more able pupils are listening to their own music and can say what they like or dislike. They have experienced a range of musical instruments, styles and rhythms.
127. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They participate with enthusiasm and energy. There is a growing enjoyment of music and an appreciation of what music means. Pupils also enjoy working together to produce and appreciate music. The subject makes a significant contribution to their social development. They use instruments and other resources with care.
128. From the limited number of lessons observed and from inspection of teachers' planning, the teaching of music is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Knowledge and understanding of the subject are good, which enables teachers to have suitably high expectations of the pupils, both in their work and behaviour. Music planning is developing to enable all pupils to have experience of listening, appraising, composing and performing. The resources for music have been chosen carefully to give every pupil the opportunity to play untuned percussion with minimum assistance. Teachers effectively balance the opportunities to explore making sounds with the appreciation of musical ideas. Although time for music is limited during the teaching week, opportunities are provided on other occasions such as during assemblies and physical education.
129. Since the last inspection the school has continued to improve resources for the subject, providing a range of untuned percussion instruments. Other instruments have been targeted as being required to enhance provision further. Pupils' progress has improved which is linked directly to the improved teaching. The pupils' attitudes towards music have improved and they enjoy the teaching and instruments.
130. The co-ordinator has high expectations for the subject and has already had an impact on raising standards. There is a whole-school music policy but the whole-school scheme of work is underdeveloped and cannot be used to show progress in skills or experiences over time. It does not yet provide teachers with a structure to plan effectively.
131. Music contributes well to the spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' lives. The communal singing in assemblies and songs learnt in lessons are spiritually warming and pupils learn about the music, the songs and composers. Pupils have benefited from a range of visitors, most recently a group who brought a range of African percussion instruments to the school during 'Africa Week'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is a good scheme of work and physical education is recognised as an important subject within the curriculum. Standards achieved are good bearing in mind the physical and intellectual limitations of the pupils. Pupils are usually excited by the subject and most respond positively. Standards of safety are a prime matter of concern in every lesson and teachers and support staff alike insist on well-established routines to reduce risks to a minimum.
133. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have access to a safe partly covered garden area where they are able to

play with a range of suitable toys. They are well supervised. The measure of free expression allowed paves the way for more formal physical education at Key Stage 2. The autistic class at Key Stage 2 showed their ability to undertake various tasks involving balance - walking along benches, moving across mats, standing on various pieces of equipment and balancing one-legged. Similarly, a Key Stage 3 class used a wide range of gymnastic equipment, learning to traverse a variety of routes that they chose for themselves. They were also encouraged to try out different means of progress - forward rolls, backward rolls, 'bunny hops' and so on - always challenged to be just a little more daring while the teacher and support staff concentrated on a safe passage for all. For some, fear was a major factor to be dealt with. Some others needed to be reminded of the limitations of their capabilities. Both were good lessons, well taught where pupils combined positive learning with enjoyment.

134. Swimming is a strength of the school. It uses its own "duckling awards" and "progression awards" to encourage the early stages of learning and moves on to the ASA awards. The school makes good use of the services of a qualified swimming coach to raise standards. Currently, nine pupils are taking "duckling awards"; seven are at ASA level. One is taking the bronze, another the silver award and a third is at "Beaver" level. A very difficult class at Key Stage 3 was seen in a swimming lesson taken by their class teacher. Teaching was excellent. The most significant strengths lay in the knowledge and understanding of the pupils, the insistence on strict routines for changing, swimming and returning to class and the sympathy for and control of pupils while in the water. Their needs were very different but the encouragement and challenge offered them was very effective. The lesson must also be seen against the poor conditions for changing and showering in the dry area (noted elsewhere in this report).
135. There was also a good football match for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. A qualified teacher attached to the school but not part of its staff complement took this. Notable features were the 'warming up' period of exercise that enabled the whole class to become involved followed by 'coaching' that taught pupils some of the elements of the game, including attacking and defending as well as the importance of keeping positions on the field. The 'match' that followed combined an attempt by the referee to simulate a serious match linked in to a teaching role that enabled the very wide range of competencies to blend into an enjoyable game. This was very good teaching that provided pupils with a very worthwhile experience of playing together.
136. The need for changing before and after physical education lessons provides a good opportunity for important personal skills to be learned or re-enforced. Teachers and support staff use these opportunities well, especially with younger age groups.
137. Overall, teaching is at least good, often very good and sometimes excellent in this subject while pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a favourable learning environment. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and teachers are committed to providing enjoyable but safe lessons that go much further than simple physical development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Throughout the key stages, the progress pupils make in religious education is good.
139. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the need to be honest, to care and to show respect for others. They have a good awareness of the difference between good and bad and right and wrong. They understand about people who care for them and they can identify them from pictures and from the special clothes they wear. Role-play is used to good effect to support learning.
140. At Key Stage 3, pupils know, and some more able pupils have developed an understanding of, a selection of stories from the Bible. They can relate these stories to everyday situations, for example, the story of the Good Samaritan where they can identify the person who cared. They also become more aware that there are religions other than Christianity, for example, pupils learn about Islam. They learn about the meaning of foods and drinks in ceremonies and the significance of fasting both in the Christian and the Muslim faiths.

141. Over the period of Key Stage 4, the pupils progress further in their understanding of different religions. They meet with representatives from different faiths and visit churches and other places of worship in their local area. Their knowledge has progressed so that they are aware of the main symbols of other world religions, for example, in Hinduism and Judaism.
142. Attitudes to learning are good in all key stages observed. The nature of the subject is reflected in the good relationship which pupils have with their teachers and support assistants. Pupils are generally attentive and eager to learn. Behaviour is good and pupils respond eagerly to questions. Pupils look forward to their lessons and the more able will speak animatedly on the topic of the lessons. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 will sometimes become restless towards the end of the day.
143. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stages 2 and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Over all key stages, teachers and support assistants have good relationships with their pupils. The limited amount of lesson time devoted to the subject is used effectively. Lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils. They are usually of a suitable pace and delivered in a lively thought-provoking manner. School assemblies and visits to local churches and places of worship help to extend the school's curriculum in the subject.
144. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. There is a policy and scheme of work, both of which reflect appropriate coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. The scheme of work is limited in value as it lacks sufficient detail of how a topic might be taught and how pupils' progress may be assessed and monitored over time.
145. Since the last inspection, the place of religious education in the curriculum of the school has been improved considerably.