

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL

Bourne

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120763

Headteacher: Mr Philip Pike

Reporting inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild
15918

Dates of inspection: 1st – 5th July 2002

Inspection number: 193459

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	2 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Road Bourne Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE10 9JE
Telephone number:	01778 425203
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Chair of governors:	Councillor I M Croft
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15918	Margaret Goodchild Julia	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage	
13101	Mike Kell	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Equal opportunities	
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	
19386	G Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willoughby School provides special education for 71 boys and girls with severe learning difficulties. The age range of pupils is two to 19. Sixty-four of the pupils have statements of special educational needs, whilst the remaining pupils are undergoing statutory assessment. The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Eighteen have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and additional difficulties are present in 16 other cases. These include emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and language difficulties, physical impairment and autistic spectrum disorders. On entry, because of their special needs, pupils attain well below the average for their age. All the pupils are white and most are of UK heritage. Pupils are drawn from South Kesteven in Lincolnshire and some live at a long distance from the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective and some aspects of its work are excellent. Good teaching, a very good curriculum and thorough assessment enable pupils to make good progress academically and very good progress in their personal development. Pupils with multi-sensory impairment and physical and mobility difficulties make very good progress as a result of high quality individualised provision. Pupils are very well cared for and their behaviour is managed exceptionally well. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is very well managed. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and their personal development is very good, because teaching is good and assessment information is used very well.
- Provision for pupils in the class for multi-sensory impairment and in that for pupils with physical and mobility problems is very good and enables these pupils to make very good progress.
- The school cares very well for its pupils and is very active in promoting their independence; pupils' behaviour is managed exceptionally well.
- The curriculum is very good with a number of excellent features.
- Partnership with parents is excellent: the school does a great deal to inform and support parents, and to involve them in their children's education.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and ensures that all staff work as a team to raise standards and improve the quality of education.

What could be improved

- A high proportion of the teaching is at least good, but teaching could be further improved by spreading excellent practice already evident within the school.
- Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory and have an impact on provision.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was inspected in April 1997. Issues surrounding staffing and the organisation of teaching groups have been resolved. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed, and planning and monitoring within subjects is now much enhanced. A range of school developments in assessment, subject co-ordination and in-service training means that teachers pay much greater attention to pupils' individual needs. All pupils now have individual education plans and staff have been trained in the manual lifting of pupils. Furthermore, there have been significant improvements in the curriculum, the quality of teaching, partnership with parents, the promotion of pupils' independence and the management of their behaviour and, most particularly, in the

leadership and management of the school. The school is in an excellent position to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 2	by Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key
English	B	B	B	B	very good A
mathematics	B	B	B	B	good B
science	B	B	B	B	satisfactory C
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	unsatisfactory D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	poor E

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

Pupils achieve well and make very good progress in their personal targets, because teaching is good and assessment information is used very effectively. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils in the class for multi-sensory impairment and those who have physical and mobility difficulties make very good progress. Others with additional special educational needs achieve well. Progress in the Foundation Stage¹ is very good, and a significant number of children who are placed in the school for assessment are successfully integrated into mainstream school. Progress in English, mathematics and science is good, as is progress in all other subjects except geography, history, and religious education, where it is very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They listen carefully to instructions, try hard with their work and are pleased with their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Many pupils have significant behavioural difficulties, but they learn to behave well in lessons, around the school and when participating in activities outside school because of the school's excellent behaviour management strategies.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. The quality of relationships means that pupils are well motivated and respond enthusiastically.
Attendance	Most pupils have a very good attendance record and there is no unauthorised absence.

¹ The Foundation Stage relates to children who are under the age of five or who are educated in nursery and reception classes

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils	Foundation Stage	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6	Years 7 to 11	Post-16
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. It is very good in geography, history, personal, social and health education and religious education, and good in the remaining subjects. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, and teachers place considerable emphasis on developing pupils' social skills and their capacity to be independent. The needs of individual pupils are met well overall and very well in the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment and that for pupils with physical and mobility difficulties. As a result, pupils' interest, effort and enthusiasm for learning contribute a great deal to their achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good: aspects of planning are excellent; extra-curricular opportunities are excellent; links with other educational establishments are highly productive; there are excellent developing business links.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils in the class for multi-sensory impairment and that for pupils with physical and mobility problems is very good. Provision for other pupils with additional special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It does all it can to develop their confidence and independence.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school where pupils are happy and well looked after.

Partnership with parents is excellent: the school does a great deal to inform and support parents, and to involve them. Parents are extremely pleased with the provision the school makes for their children.

The quality of educational and personal support is very good because staff have excellent relationships with pupils and a very good understanding of their individual needs. There are excellent procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and assessment information is used very effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is very well supported by the assistant headteacher. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles well and there is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities; many governors have a close relationship with the school and undertake a significant amount of monitoring.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for evaluating the school's performance are comprehensive and wide ranging.
The strategic use of resources	The school is trying hard to achieve best value and makes very good use of the resources at its disposal.

All the staff are given excellent opportunities to extend their skills through professional development. Learning resources are good overall but the accommodation places some important restrictions on the learning opportunities that can be made available to pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • They find the school very approachable and say that it works closely with them. • Teaching is good and expectations are high. • The school is well led and managed. 	The high level of parental satisfaction meant that no significant criticisms were received.

Inspection findings support parents' very positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well overall and make very good progress in their personal targets. Boys and girls achieve equally well. This is a distinct improvement on standards in the last inspection, where achievement was judged to be satisfactory overall and unsatisfactory for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

2. The improvement in standards is a direct result of all the work that has been done to improve the quality of all aspects of provision. Through intensive staff development and in-depth monitoring, the quality of teaching has been significantly improved. Learning support staff have been given excellent opportunities to develop their skills, and all non-teaching staff have been trained to contribute as much as possible to pupils' overall development. The curriculum has been improved so that pupils are now given very good opportunities, matched to their needs, within and beyond the school. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievement are now very good and the school makes very effective use of this information in all aspects of planning. Pupils' behaviour is now managed much more effectively than it was at the time of the last inspection, so that pupils contribute positively to their own achievement. They are now organised into class groups that enable their needs to be addressed more efficiently, and from Year 7 onwards, there is a substantial amount of subject specialist teaching.

3. There has been a very good improvement in the provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties. There are well qualified, knowledgeable and experienced staff working with these pupils and the curriculum is well structured to meet their individual needs. Very good use is made of the picture exchange and communication system (PECS) to support pupils with communication difficulties and this supports their good progress. Pupils in the class for multi-sensory impairment and those who have physical and mobility difficulties now make very good progress. Others with additional special educational needs achieve well. The achievement of pupils with multi-sensory impairment has improved dramatically as a result of intensive staff development, which has led to real expertise in this aspect of the school's work. The creation of a teaching environment that matches the needs of these pupils has also contributed a great deal to their progress.

4. The school has rightly identified the need to develop provision for older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties that reflects the high quality already established in the lower part of the school. The establishment of teaching areas that are fully suited to the needs of these older pupils is hampered at present by lack space. Similarly, the progress of individual pupils in some classes is less good than it might be as a result of restrictions in accommodation. This impacts particularly on the class for pupils in Years 3 to 6, where two groups of pupils with very differing needs are taught in a room that is too small. As a result, learning support staff regularly work with those with the most complex difficulties in the foyer area; an arrangement that is far from ideal since this area is used regularly for the teaching of information and communication technology and houses the library. The higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11 are taught in a mobile classroom that allows for no separate provision for Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Whilst teachers provide work that is matched to age and ability wherever possible, the situation is militating against establishing a curriculum that is closely aligned to the needs of the pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school is aware of the need to introduce more accredited courses for these older pupils but is not able to separate the two age groups because it lacks the accommodation to do so.

5. Achievement in lessons is good overall, with very good progress in about four out of ten lessons. Progress in the Foundation Stage is very good, because teaching is good and children have access to a very good range of activities. As a result, a significant number of children who are placed in the reception class for assessment purposes are successfully integrated into mainstream school. Evidence from lessons, pupils' work and their records shows that progress in English, mathematics and science is good. Progress is good in all other subjects except in geography, history, personal, social and health education, and religious education, where it is very good. Pupils make very good progress in the acquisition of social skills and independence skills, and they generally make very good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Students at post-16 make good progress; this is an improvement on the last inspection. Their attendance each week at two local colleges broadens their horizons and supports the development of independence skills in preparation for life after school very well. Their progress within school is hampered somewhat by limitations in accommodation: a situation of which the school is fully aware. There is no accommodation to support the development of independent living skills and this limits the school's capacity to support these students in making the transition from school.

6. Over the past three years, teacher assessments show that at the end of Years 2, 6, 9 and 11, pupils are generally working towards Level 1 in the National Curriculum in most subjects. In a few cases, one or two children achieve Level 1. This is as might be expected for a school catering for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. All classes have mixed age groups; the attainment of some of the younger pupils is higher than that found amongst classes of older pupils but this is because of the nature of their difficulties. Students at post-16 follow the Equals 'Moving On' curriculum, and achieve accreditation for their work at an appropriate level. The school has introduced a form of certification in Years 10 and 11 in history and geography, and recognises the need to extend accreditation in these years as well as for some students at post-16.

7. The school sets itself overall improvement targets in relation to standards as well as setting targets for the progress of individual pupils. Current targets make use of data acquired from 'P-scale' assessments². They anticipate improvement in scale levels in English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11. The improvement expected is based on historic data and targets are attainable. A further target states that every student in school aged 19 in 2003, will leave with two forms of external accreditation. The school is making good progress towards these targets and using them very effectively to track pupils' progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and, given the nature of their difficulties, they behave very well. During the inspection, pupils said that they love Willoughby School and miss it during the holidays. Pupils are happy and cheerful when they arrive in the morning and warmly greet staff as they come into school. Parents are very pleased that their children like coming to school; a fact that is recorded in many pupils' end of year reports and annual reviews.

9. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons and to other activities are very good. They arrive at school calm, settled and ready to learn. They listen carefully to instructions, try hard with their work and take a pride in their achievement. The quality of relationships that pupils have with each other and the very positive interaction that they have with staff means that pupils are well motivated and respond enthusiastically. For example, in physical education pupils are

² P scales enable schools to assess pupils' attainment and progress in very small steps; this system is used to assess pupils who are working towards Level 1 in the National Curriculum

energetic and willing to have a go. Outside school, for example, when taking part in horticultural activities at Moulton College, students at post-16 act responsibly, are keen to get involved and respond very well to external teachers. Pupils enjoy the range of lunchtime activities that are on offer, such as the country-dancing club, where they try hard to learn new dances and enjoy working with partners. Pupils in the class for multi-sensory impairment engage well with staff and show enjoyment and very good response to the sensory experiences on offer. Occasionally, some pupils are less well motivated in other classes when the lesson pace is slow or they are not interested by the activities provided, but this is rare and, overall, pupils' very positive attitudes to school life have a significant impact on their achievement.

10. Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, around the school and when participating in activities outside school. Many pupils have significant behavioural difficulties, but they learn to behave well because of the school's excellent behaviour management strategies and the positive examples that staff set for them. Pupils work well together, handle resources carefully, and follow instructions. They know how to sit quietly and listen when required. At lunchtime, pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are sociable and polite and make visitors welcome by inviting them to join them at their table for lunch. Pupils move sensibly around the school and know how they are expected to behave. When necessary, they respond quickly to small reminders from staff about their behaviour. Behaviour records show that pupils have made very good progress in their behaviour over the past two years. There have been no exclusions from the school in the past year.

11. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. They have excellent relationships with their teachers and other adults working in the school and get on well with each other. They learn to understand and accept that others have different needs to their own and willingly help them; for example, by pushing wheelchairs or taking younger pupils back to the classroom after lunch. Pupils are learning to take control of their own behaviour and to understand that their actions might have an impact on how others feel. They are developing the ability to act independently, such as when taking registers to the office, collecting clipboards before going out on a visit, and walking into school independently in the morning after getting out of their transport. At lunchtime, many pupils are able to collect their meals independently from the servery. Some pupils are beginning to show good levels of initiative and independence in lessons; for example, writing ideas on the board for making a puppet in a design technology lesson. Pupils are positive when sharing their work with others in the plenary session and are happy to celebrate each other's successes. Older pupils and students are learning how to share their views with others in information exchange meetings and to give their opinions about how the school is run and what might be improved. They are developing the confidence to request favourite activities on a forthcoming residential visit and to express their preferences based on previous experiences.

12. Most pupils have very good attendance at school and there is no unauthorised absence. Although the rate of attendance of some pupils is affected by absences for illness, they come to school when they can because they enjoy it very much. Pupils' punctuality is dependent upon transport, but it is mostly good and there are few delays in the morning. This means that pupils settle quickly at the beginning of the day in readiness for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Good quality teaching and learning supports pupils' achievement and contributes a great deal to their personal development. Teaching is good overall and very good in four out of ten lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection.

14. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall and unsatisfactory for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The barriers to good teaching that were present at the time of the last inspection, such as long-term staff absence, over large classes, lack of expertise in working with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and insufficient subject knowledge, are no longer present. These shortcomings have been systematically tackled. Staff use of information and communication technology and their expertise in this has increased markedly, and the management of pupils' behaviour by teachers across the school is now very effective so that pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment.

15. Considerable effort has been put into bringing about these improvements. An excellent staff development programme and thorough monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning have done much to improve the quality of teaching. The school has gained Investors in People status and a great deal of training in relation to effective teaching has been provided. The senior managers have attended national conferences in order to inform themselves about national teaching standards, and systems for monitoring teachers' work are comprehensive. Improvement in pupils' performance, as a result of teaching, has been monitored by looking at the quality of individual education plans and the success of pupils in attaining their individual targets. Good practice is shared amongst the staff, but the school has identified the need to extend further the dissemination of good practice, since there is still some variation in the quality of teaching across the school. Further work in this area is key to moving the school on from its present position.

16. The best teaching in the school is to be found in the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment and in that for pupils with physical and mobility difficulties. There is also some excellent teaching in the class for pupils in Years 1 to 3. The school's provision for pupils with multi-sensory impairment has improved dramatically and all teaching in the multi-sensory impairment class is now at least very good and often excellent. This has been achieved through staff being given excellent opportunities for professional development, so that they are now highly skilled and able to set high standards in all aspects of their work. In a lesson in design and technology, planning was excellent and all staff worked intensively to gain maximum response from the pupils. They paid exceptionally close attention to the needs of individual pupils to encourage and stimulate them. The teacher and learning support assistants worked as a seamless unit. The excellent guidelines the teacher has laid down ensured that all staff followed the same procedures and exhibited the same high expectations. Staff related to pupils with exceptional sensitivity and combined this with continual challenge. Their respect for pupils' experiences was exemplary, and the only additional feature that could further enhance these pupils' progress would be the acquisition of more advanced technological aids to assist their communication. The school is highly aware of this and seeking a possible source for additional equipment.

17. Similarly, teaching has improved a great deal in the class for pupils with physical and mobility difficulties; it is now very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons in this class are very well structured, and learning is experiential with a strong emphasis on the sense of touch. Again, teamwork between the teacher and support staff is extremely strong. Planning is excellent, with very precise attention to individual needs, and there is excellent attention to developing pupils' independence to the maximum.

18. Where teaching is very good, planning is thorough, learning objectives are precise and there are clear links between lesson plans and the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils are appropriately challenged and their learning is reinforced through careful repetition and a strong focus on the needs of individuals. Relationships are very good and teamwork between the teacher and learning support assistants is very effective. Work is purposeful and well structured, and questioning pushes pupils to think deeply about what they

are doing. Pupils are given time to respond and teachers show a thorough knowledge of individual needs. Stimulating resources are used, for instance, to back up work on the big book in literacy in the class for pupils in Years 1 to 3, and learning support assistants are very well briefed.

19. In lessons where teaching is merely satisfactory, and in some where it is otherwise good, the match of activities to individual learning needs and to prior attainment is less apparent than in the better lessons. Learning objectives in teachers' planning are general or relate to activities rather than precise steps in learning; consequently, activities are not chosen to meet these objectives exactly. Relationships are positive and learning support assistants work well to support pupils but their work is not directed precisely and there is some variation in expectations between individual members of staff. In lessons that are satisfactory, the pace drops, largely as a result of insufficient subject content to provide continuous challenge and motivation throughout the lesson. Finally, pupils' work is marked regularly but it is not always annotated to assist in tracking their progress across the curriculum.

20. Pupils' learning is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers expect pupils to participate, concentrate and behave appropriately. As a result, pupils' interest, effort and attention contribute significantly to their learning. Pupils generally work hard and show enthusiasm for activities. At times, they are clearly excited and find learning fun. The high quality of relationships between staff and pupils also support pupils' learning and achievement.

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

21. The school's curriculum is very broad and well balanced. This is a considerable improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection, when the curriculum was considered to be underdeveloped and not well balanced for the majority of pupils. All of the appropriate and required subjects are now taught, and more besides. The main emphasis is on the communication needs of the pupils, whatever their level of skills when they enter the school. Other subjects that are given particular emphasis are mathematics and personal, social and health education. The science syllabus is very well based on practical and investigative methods, including very good environmental science. Information and communication technology supports learning effectively in other subjects. The scheme for religious education is exceptionally good.

22. The long-term planning for pupils of different ability levels is very good, with much greater attention to individual needs than at the time of the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils learn about all the subjects of the National Curriculum, whilst the lower attaining pupils have an 'Essential' curriculum that is related to the National Curriculum and covers their needs in very basic areas of development. Curriculum planning is excellent in the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment and planning is very good in the class for pupils with physical and mobility difficulties. This ensures that attention is given to focusing activities to meet pupils' individual needs. The preparation of all staff to ensure that there is a consistency of approach is a further strength, and very good use is made of resources to produce a varying and appropriate range of sensory stimuli. Pupils' statements of special educational needs lead very well into the individual targets for pupils, and these in turn are very much the driving force in much of the curriculum for the lower attaining and least mobile pupils.

23. There is a need for the curriculum to be more distinct for pupils in Years 10 and 11 than it is at the moment. There are few pupils in this age group, and they have their lessons mainly with pupils in Years 7 to 9. Senior staff are aware of this need, and are planning to

create a separate class for pupils in Years 10 and 11 but are hampered in doing so by lack of accommodation. There is also scope for them to have more lessons that lead to external accreditation, their coursework being set and checked by national organisations outside the school, and leading to national certificates. A start has been made with history and geography, which now follow a Certificate of Learning course in Years 10 and 11.

24. In general, the courses for students at post-16 are good and distinctive, and there is an appropriate emphasis on developing independence and communication skills. All the students attend a horticultural college for half a day each week. They also attend a further education college for a range of lessons, including cookery, basic skills, art and drama. This extends their social as well as academic opportunities very well. Some externally accredited courses have begun recently. These include the Equals 'Moving On' modules, including 'knowledge and understanding', 'life skills' and 'vocational'. The school has clear plans to develop more such accredited courses and is currently exploring possibilities. This is an important development to provide further structure and challenge to the curriculum at post-16.

25. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. Literacy skills are encouraged effectively throughout the school, in all subjects and in many lessons. Particular attention is given to developing pupils' speaking, listening and communication skills. Teachers and support staff are very good at using the appropriate words, speaking very clearly, extending pupils' understanding of the correct vocabulary, and asking good questions to get pupils to understand and respond well. Staff use signing when appropriate with the lower attaining pupils, and they also use symbol cards to indicate, for instance, that pupils are going into the space room to use the electronic equipment. Teachers encourage the lower attaining pupils to use single-touch switches as part of their communication, perhaps pressing the switches to give a greeting in the morning, or to pass on a recorded message from home. The National Literacy strategy is generally well established, and it is proving to be valuable in raising pupils' standards up to the end of Year 11.

26. The National Numeracy Strategy has become well embedded in the school. Pupils are also encouraged to use and practise their mathematics skills in other lessons. In geography, for instance, pupils were making graphs of the weather conditions during the inspection. In a physical education lesson with lower attaining pupils, they were counting how many skittles they knocked over. In personal, social and health education, there is a lot of attention to raising pupils' awareness of money and shopping. Opportunities to give pupils practice in counting are created in many lessons across the curriculum, and they are often built into the planning for each lesson.

27. The school has an excellent range of activities that take place outside of normal school hours. In 2000, it gained a Certificate of Distinction as part of the Education Extra National Awards for its after-school activities, and a Kelloggs Breakfast Club award. Senior staff collect pupils from home early in the mornings, and take them home at night in order for them to attend activities before and after school. These activities include information and communication technology, football, circuit training, gymnastics, therapy and relaxation, hydrotherapy, cooking and art. The range on offer varies from time to time, especially with the seasons. Almost all of the older pupils (from Year 7 onwards) attend at least some of these activities. The curriculum for higher attaining pupils from Year 7 onwards is enriched further by a series of lunchtime activities. These are lessons that are part of the normal school day, but are taken on a rota system, with pupils moving between them from time to time, usually each term. They include art, drama, science, first aid, computing, gardening, country dancing, French, speech and language therapy and literacy. There is also a very well attended residential activities holiday that takes place each summer at the coast and adds a great deal to pupils' social confidence.

28. Pupils' personal, social and health education is very well provided for. This begins with the younger pupils with personal hygiene, going to the toilet, or cleaning teeth after meals. Opportunities are taken in everyday routines, such as encouraging pupils to do their own dressing and undressing for physical education or swimming, or washing their hands before lunch. Teachers also have separate lessons for discussions of matters such as behaviour and rules, family life, and being friends. For the lower attaining pupils, many of the skills such as dressing and going to the toilet, are never learned independently because of their difficulties, but other pupils make good progress towards greater independence. From Year 7 onwards, the emphasis is increasingly towards independence, both in the personal matters that the younger pupils have been learning, and also in wider matters. These include looking after money, going shopping, sex education, being aware of the dangers of drugs, road safety, and so on. Pupils throughout the school have many opportunities to develop their independence, such as calling the register formally, as well as taking it to the office; taking dinner registers and lunch boxes to where they belong; getting chairs out and putting them away; drawing the blinds and watering the classroom plants; tidying the books on the shelves; starting the computers in the information and communication technology suite each morning. Staff have had good training in personal, social and health education, and there are positive links with other schools. The school nurse takes a weekly 'clinic' for teenage problems, as well as formal sex education lessons as part of the curriculum. Students at post-16 learn about being a good citizen, and staff plan to extend these lessons to younger pupils. Citizenship is very well linked with the other personal development aspects at post-16, such as learning about current affairs, discussing the content of newspapers and reading magazines.

29. The school makes good provision for careers education. This is provided by staff in school, and by Connexions³ for pupils from Year 9 onwards. The 'world of work' lessons are practical and well matched to pupils' interests and ability levels, including looking at what might be involved in becoming a gardener or ice cream seller, for example. The school previously had some pupils going out on work experience placements locally, but these have been suspended because they were not considered to be suitable. Very recently, staff have begun to restart work experience placements, beginning with a 'Business Open Day' shortly before the inspection. Within the school, some pupils have opportunities to carry out occasional work projects such as setting up the memorial garden, decorating a room, and helping to maintain the wildlife area in the paddock at the back of the school.

30. The school makes excellent use of the local area and community to enrich the curriculum for all pupils. Pupils have gone on visits to innumerable places such as a Hindu temple; a paper mill; a Vietnamese Music festival; a dance festival; several churches; a castle; a pantomime and the cinema. Many visitors have also come into the school, adding a broad range of enrichment to the curriculum, including dance and theatre groups; musicians (such as from Indonesia and Africa recently); an artist; a folk musician; a Salvation Army officer; a fire engine with crew; a magician; and a clown. These additional activities do a great deal to broaden and enliven the learning for all pupils, from the higher attainers who can take an active part in the different activities, to the lower attaining pupils who experience these events more passively.

³ Connexions is a national organisation that provides careers education and a range of guidance to pupils.

31. There are excellent links with other educational institutions. The school is part of a technology bid in partnership with another school; a different school has given music and drama performances at Willoughby; and other schools send their pupils here for their work experience placements. A number of pupils have lessons at nearby mainstream schools to enrich their learning. These include lessons in French, art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology. Students at post-16 also have sessions at two nearby colleges. Much of the value of these links lies in the personal and social opportunities that occur at break times and lunch, when the students mix freely with the full-time students in the canteen and recreational areas. Staff provide training and advice to mainstream teachers, and Willoughby is increasingly becoming a resource for other schools. The local education authority uses the headteacher as a consultant to support schools experiencing difficulties.

32. There are excellent developing links with local businesses as part of the school's efforts to raise further its profile in the community. The school is working in collaboration with business partners to streamline performance management and to extend work experience opportunities. Senior managers have undertaken one or two-day industrial placements as part of their professional development and it is intended that other managers should be given similar opportunities. A number of large companies provide material support that has a direct impact on pupils' educational experiences.

33. The school makes very good provision for promoting all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents good overall improvement since the last inspection and very good improvement in the promotion of multicultural awareness. The main area for future development lies in implementing simple monitoring procedures that will enable the school to evaluate the success of what it provides.

34. Regular acts of collective worship are a significant factor in promoting pupils' spiritual development. These short periods of reflection are treated respectfully by pupils and some join in with the prayer. Spirituality is encouraged equally well through subjects of the curriculum, and religious education is particularly effective in this respect. However, pupils develop spiritually because of more subtle factors too. All pupils are treated with dignity and respect and staff working with pupils with the most profound difficulties and multi-sensory impairment go to extreme lengths to develop in them a sense of self-worth and identity. This culture of respect is a significant influence in developing in pupils a positive self-image and very good consideration for the feelings and emotions of others. The school is aware of the importance of making experiences inwardly meaningful for pupils and seeks to touch them at a soul level in whatever ways it can.

35. Pupils behave very well and have a very good understanding of how their actions affect others. This reflects the school's very good provision for promoting pupils' moral development. This provision is underpinned by excellent relationships within the school and, therefore, pupils see very high quality interactions throughout the day. Staff provide extremely good role models and address breaches of acceptable behaviour calmly, assertively, patiently, and through reasoned explanation. As a result, pupils receive a consistent message about what constitutes acceptable behaviour and which actions are regarded as inappropriate. Praise and encouragement reinforce these messages and pupils' successes are celebrated very well either by a quiet word or more publicly in the weekly Commendation Assembly. Pupils' participation in many sporting competitions against other schools also develops in them the concepts of playing to the rules and how to win and lose.

36. The school engineers many situations that enable it to promote pupils' social development. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in lessons, and lunchtime clubs - such as country dancing - show pupils working together as partners. Other

school routines also encourage pupils to exercise responsibility. For example, a class of pupils in Years 3 to 6 discussed the privilege of being allowed to call the register and when one pupil was allowed to do this it was done extremely well, with all pupils responding by saying, 'Good afternoon'. Expectations of pupils developing responsibility begin early in the school so that those in Years 1 and 2 are introduced to simple routines such as taking the register to the office. The school seizes opportunities equally well to give pupils experiences in different social situations available in the local community. Visits to the local leisure centre, fire station, garden centre, and to the supermarket to buy items for food technology all broaden pupils' experiences of different social contexts. In addition, pupils have the invaluable benefit of a residential experience at an environmental centre and at an outdoor education centre. Their social development is further promoted through regular integration into mainstream primary and secondary schools, and into further education colleges at post-16.

37. Pupils' cultural, and multicultural, awareness is developed very effectively. School trips and visitors into school make an important contribution to exposing pupils to aspects of their own culture and that of others. Educational trips to places such as Rockingham Castle and galleries and museums 'bring alive' much of the subject content being taught in the classroom, such as the visit to the artefact-handling workshop in Peterborough. Insights into other societies are promoted through trips that have a multicultural dimension so that pupils have visited a mosque, a Hindu temple and an African art exhibition. Many musicians and other artists have visited the school and they, too, have made significant contributions to pupils' developing cultural, and multicultural, awareness. Kings School brass orchestra, Baroque musicians, and an American folk singer have all been into school and extended pupils' knowledge and appreciation of their own cultural heritage and some features of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. This is a very caring school where pupils are happy and well looked after. The quality of educational and personal support and guidance offered to pupils is very good because staff have excellent relationships with them and very good understanding of their individual needs. There is high quality support for their personal development, which helps pupils to gain in confidence, learn self-control and independence and to achieve well.

39. Parents are very pleased with the pastoral care provided for their children. They describe the school as a place where everyone is encouraged to respect, and show consideration, for others. They praise the staff for the way in which they model these attitudes in their own behaviour and say that the methods used to help pupils' behave well are very effective.

40. Throughout the school, all staff show very good care and concern for pupils. They have a very good understanding of pupils' backgrounds and any difficulties that they may have and have excellent relationships with their parents and carers. The school follows child protection procedures correctly, although currently, only the headteacher has completed full child protection training. Further training is planned for the assistant headteacher so that he may act appropriately in the headteacher's absence. Staff are clear about the correct procedures for reporting any concerns about pupils' welfare. The school has very good awareness of health and safety requirements and, with the support of the governing body, completes risk assessments for areas of potential concern; for example, visits outside school. There has been improved practice and training for staff in the use of moving and safe handling of pupils since the last inspection. Pupils are no longer carried into school and, when necessary, are moved appropriately by hoist in the classroom. Staff are sensitive and caring when pupils are unwell. They give respectful and discrete care when any pupils have seizures. The site supervisor, midday and office staff have a very good understanding of

pupils' needs and welfare and contribute very well to the very good level of care. Catering staff are fully involved in the daily life of the school and provide pupils with nutritious and appetising meals.

41. There are good procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance and to follow up any unexplained absences. As a result, most pupils attend very well. Registrations are used well as a time for settling pupils into school and for pupils' own personal development.

42. Good use is made of outside agencies, for example, the physiotherapist and speech and language therapists work as an integral element of the excellent team approach that is focused on pupils with additional special educational needs.

43. The school's approach to the monitoring and improvement of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Since the last inspection, it has changed its approach so that behaviour management is a fundamental part of pupils' educational and personal support and guidance. Pupils' individual education plans have detailed behaviour management strategies and clear targets for improved behaviour which are regularly monitored and changed where necessary. There is frequent monitoring and analysis of behaviour record sheets and the strategies that staff have used to deal with any unsatisfactory behaviour. This is used to ensure that there is consistency in practice and to identify where staff may need training or support. Considerable time has been invested in staff training in behaviour management to ensure consistency of approach and a whole-school understanding of how positive behaviour should be reinforced.

44. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils have a very significant impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are treated with high levels of respect, care and maturity within clear boundaries and there are expectations that all pupils will behave well; for example, through the encouragement of appropriate social attitudes and manners at lunchtime. As a result, pupils demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviour than were reported at the last inspection.

45. The school has a very good range of ways to assess pupils' progress in all aspects of their development. The whole system of monitoring pupils' progress is very well organised and co-ordinated throughout the school. This is a very good improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection, when assessment was considered to be underdeveloped and fragmented. It is now thoroughly embedded in whole-school practice.

46. Teachers and support staff complete observations and often also fill in evaluation forms at the end of lessons, saying how well pupils have responded, how much help they needed, any significant progress they made, and so on. These forms vary according to the subject, being different, for instance, in computer-related sessions in the space room to those used for history and geography. Progress in English and mathematics is especially well documented. Pupils' progress in their personal and social development is also very well charted, as well as the physical and motor development of some pupils, and the behaviour of others. The school's internal methods of assessing progress are very well supported by a wide selection of commercial schemes for particular areas, especially in mathematics and communication. Samples of pupils' work are kept in a portfolio from year to year, so that their progress can be seen clearly. Each pupil also has a well-established 'Commendation Folder', which is a record of his or her achievements and experiences as s/he goes through the school.

47. The youngest pupils have a baseline assessment and this helps staff to plan their activities in the long term. As pupils mature through the school, their progress is continually re-assessed in each subject, or area of development. The school combines them into a very well integrated scheme of assessing all pupils' progress, and then providing a scheme of activities which best meets the needs of the pupils. Where pupils are seen to be making slower than expected progress in reading, for example, they may have 'booster' lessons individually or in small groups to help their progress.

48. Teachers carry out formal checks on progress through National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments in Years 2, 6 and 9. Teachers also conduct optional assessments at various ages between the official assessments. These are a valuable indicator of the progress of higher attaining pupils, and supplement information based on 'P levels' that are used for all pupils in the school. These small step improvements give a much more detailed picture of how well pupils are progressing. This is especially valuable with the lower attaining pupils, as these small steps are built in to their curriculum. The school is finding this to be very useful in planning future activities, teaching the appropriate lessons, and deciding how well pupils are learning. Senior staff have checked that teachers are using the systems of assessment in the same way throughout the school. This moderation ensures that everyone understands the system, and what each level within it means in terms of what pupils can do. The school is planning to extend its use of 'P levels', as the trial period shows every sign of success.

49. There are very good assessment and record keeping procedures for pupils with additional special educational needs, for example, there is continuous record keeping in the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment and careful records are kept for pupils using PECS. The school has developed good procedures associated with the Code of Practice, for example, in its transitional review reports.

50. All pupils have targets set in their individual education plans. These focus very well on the key areas of pupils' development. For all pupils, they include communication and mathematical targets. For some pupils, they include other priority areas, such as behaviour or physical development. The targets are well written. They are very specific to each pupil's needs, and staff check them regularly. Changes are made as necessary – when pupils have succeeded in meeting the targets, or when they experienced less success than expected and need a more precise target. Senior staff monitor the success of individual education plans as a whole, and they work with individual teachers in setting the new targets. The targets may need to be a little harder the next time, or go back a stage if the pupil has not made good progress towards them. Staff are very good at using these targets throughout the school, especially those to do with communication and behaviour which apply to all lessons, regardless of who is doing the teaching. Students at post-16 are consulted closely in deciding what their targets will be. This is part of their learning, as they increasingly take responsibility for their own actions and their futures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and works very effectively with them. As a result of the open and strong relationship between the school and its families, parents hold the school in very high regard. They are very positive about the education that it provides and the impact that this has on the achievements and happiness of their children.

52. In their questionnaire responses, parents showed almost unanimous support for all areas of the school's work. They strongly feel that the school works closely with them and that they can approach the school easily with any concerns that they may have. All feel that they are kept very well informed about how well their children are getting on. Parents are

delighted that their children like school and are making good progress. The inspection team fully endorses all the positive views of parents and recognises the further improvement in the home-school partnership since the last inspection.

53. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. School documentation is clearly written and well presented. It encourages parents to get involved with their children's learning at school and at home and to support the school as much as they can. Staff place high priority on frequent, often daily, communication with them through telephone calls, home-school diaries, letters and when parents come to school to collect their children or to speak to staff. The school is open and very friendly which puts parents at their ease when they wish to speak to teachers about their children's progress and any concerns that they might have. Parents receive very detailed information about their children's achievement and progress in their annual review reports and in the end of year reports. All records, such as behaviour management and individual education plans, are fully discussed in consultation with parents. This means that parents know how their child is being taught and managed and they can continue this support at home.

54. The school makes an excellent commitment to developing a strong partnership with parents in its parent participation policy. As a result, it has highly effective links with parents and provides them with many opportunities to be involved in school life. The 'Willoughby Parent and Carers' Group' is a well-supported self-help group where parents can share experiences and seek advice from visiting speakers. The school works closely with parents of younger children before they start school through the 'Portage' scheme. Portage workers develop very good and reassuring relationships with parents which eases the transition of their children when they start school either at Willoughby or elsewhere. Parents and grandparents who attend the 'School for Parents Group' appreciate the opportunity to learn how to work with their young children under the guidance of staff and to meet others who are in the same situation. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet staff in both formal and informal settings such as consultation meetings, open days and coffee mornings.

55. Parents are very well involved in their children's education and the life of the school. Attendance at annual review meetings and workshops organised by the 'Parent and Carers' Group' is high. Parents say that they appreciate the opportunity to discuss relevant issues concerning their children's personal, social and health education. A number of parents give their time to support activities such as swimming and outings. The school has a 'Hidden Talents' database and is able to call on parents' skills to enrich the curriculum. For example, parents have talked about their jobs to students at post-16 who are studying the 'world of work.' Individual parents come to support their children participating in, for example, physiotherapy sessions or specific work for visual impairment. Where appropriate, parents hear their children read regularly and sign their reading record books. The school continues to seek ways of further improving parental involvement in pupils' learning and intends to give parents more information in advance about what their children will be learning so that they can encourage their children's learning at home, if they wish. The Friends of Willoughby is a thriving group which organises regular social activities for parents and which raises considerable sums of money to enhance the school's resources. Parents who serve on the governing body are active in working to support the school and its development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The Headteacher provides excellent educational direction to the work of the school and is inspired by a quest for excellence. He has brought both stability and growth to the school after a period of much instability with two short-term headteachers, following the retirement of a very long-serving headteacher who had been in post since the school was built. Leadership is innovative and outward looking, and the school has moved on

considerably since it was inspected by OFSTED in 1997 and subsequently visited by HMI in 1998. It is now a popular choice with parents: numbers have risen significantly in the last few years and there is a list of pupils waiting to come to the school.

57. The headteacher is very ably supported by the assistant headteacher, who with the senior teacher, forms the restructured senior management team. This system works very well, with clear delegation of management responsibilities. The headteacher and assistant headteacher are both passionate about the school and hugely dedicated; together, they ensure that the school is very effectively managed and have worked relentlessly to improve the quality of education. The assistant headteacher and senior teacher are each responsible for a class and teach for much of the time. The headteacher also has a regular teaching commitment, so all the senior staff are closely in touch with the pupils and with the way systems work in practice throughout the school. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff: the school has just gained Investor in People status reflecting the fact that all members of staff understand the aims of the school and feel empowered to contribute in working to a common goal. Morale amongst the staff is very high and they feel valued for the contribution they make.

58. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed since the last inspection. Middle managers now fulfil their responsibilities well and contribute effectively to the management of the school. The co-ordinator of geography, history and religious education gained a Farmington Institute for Christian Studies Special Needs Millennium Award to conduct research and the impact of this is very evident in excellent curriculum planning in these areas. Co-ordination is good in English and mathematics, where enthusiastic and hardworking co-ordinators support other teachers well. The science co-ordinator has a very clear understanding and positive approach. The information and communication technology co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, very well organised and has clear vision for further development. Co-ordination is good in most of the remaining subjects. Co-ordinators collate evidence of pupils' work, and lessons are regularly evaluated; most co-ordinators monitor others' teaching of their subject. There is very good management of provision for pupils with multi-sensory impairment, physical and mobility difficulties, autistic and behavioural difficulties by specialist and well-trained co-ordinators. The senior management team meets regularly with all co-ordinators, and upper and lower school meetings are held where curriculum issues are discussed.

59. Monitoring and evaluation have been introduced throughout the school since the last inspection, and coherent systems give senior managers a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for potential development. The senior management team regularly monitors assessment records and curriculum planning, including samples of lesson planning, and provides feedback to staff. Through classroom observation, senior managers check that planning reflects information about pupils' prior attainment and addresses their individual education plans. There is a well-established programme for observing and feeding back on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are observed frequently. This system is used as a means of picking up any teaching that needs to be improved; its effectiveness is apparent in the distinct improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Subject monitoring weeks are held termly, and these enable teachers to observe colleagues. This peer coaching has been introduced because the headteacher is aware that some teaching is more effective than other teaching in the school; the intention is to fine-tune the satisfactory or good teaching and bring it closer to the best teaching. Strong senior management support is made available to teachers, through the headteacher and assistant head patrolling the school to assist staff in managing pupils' behaviour.

60. Both the headteacher and the assistant headteacher have attended courses in school self-evaluation, as well as training to develop their leadership and management skills. A

significant amount of work is done to evaluate the school's overall effectiveness. Internal analysis is undertaken to identify where practice is most effective and the school seeks external information, such as that provided by the Audit Commission and by universities, to assist in measuring school effectiveness. Evaluation feeds into detailed school development planning. The comprehensive whole school development plan is supported by subject development plans for each area of the curriculum. Plans appropriately include success criteria and costings, and financial management is very well linked to the identification of priorities for development. The school is identifying the right priorities and taking well-informed action to realise its aims to 'motivate, educate and celebrate'. It has now reached a point where it has all its main strategies in place, and where they are beginning to synthesise into a coherent whole. Minor shifts are needed to achieve total coherence across the school.

61. Governors provide very good support, and a number of governors have particular expertise that is useful to the school. The effectiveness of the governing body has improved very much with the establishment of a series of committees and working parties. These serve to involve governors and to provide opportunities for staff and governors to work together. Governors question the headteacher through the committee structure and are now more secure in their understanding because they have greater awareness than at the time of the last inspection. Members of the curriculum working party have a regular schedule for visiting classrooms to observe teaching and learning, and evaluate what they see against school policy. Direct monitoring by governors spans lessons, after school clubs and college links. Governors have a different focus for their visits each term and report their findings to the headteacher. All governors are kept well informed about the school because the headteacher provides a wealth of focused information and subject co-ordinators make presentations to the governing body. Governors are further informed by attendance at staff meetings, professional development days, and through governor training. They are appropriately involved in the drawing up of the school development plan and in evaluating progress against it. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities very effectively.

62. The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The financial administrator and other clerical staff ensure that financial control is thorough. As part of their role in monitoring the school's budget, governors are very concerned to achieve best value by putting services, such as the provision of school lunches, out to competitive tender. In deciding on the provision it makes, the school challenges itself about whether spending decisions are in the pupils' best interests. However, a self-evaluation exercise shows that more work is yet to be done to ensure spending decisions are informed by making comparisons with other special schools, and by consulting all those concerned in order to adhere fully to best value principles. In other respects, governors monitor financial decisions carefully through the finance committee and make recommendations to the full governing body. The school makes very good use of new technology, both in its educational provision and in its administration. All the resources at its disposal are used very well and special grants are spent appropriately. The cost per pupil is somewhat high compared with similar special schools nationally, but pupils' achievement is good and their personal development is very good. The overall effectiveness of the school is very good; it therefore provides good value for money, despite the relatively high costs.

63. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum, induction arrangements are thorough and opportunities for professional development are excellent. The headteacher is committed to empowering the staff and ensuring that teachers and support staff are equipped to respond to the specific needs of individual pupils. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in staff expertise in relation to pupils with multi-sensory impairment and autism. All teachers are numeracy and literacy trained, and contact with beacon schools has assisted in developing greater subject knowledge in a number of areas and in improving the curriculum. All teachers

work closely with visiting professionals such as physiotherapists and speech therapists, thus increasing their skills and enabling them to support all aspects of a pupil's development.

64. A number of staff regularly provide training and support to teachers in mainstream and special schools and the school itself is very well placed for training teachers. A graduate trainee who is about to complete her training will lead links with further education. Furthermore, the school offers National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) placements and has two NVQ assessors on the staff.

65. Learning support assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and are regarded by the school as 'co-educators' alongside teachers. Support staff feel highly valued and have had excellent opportunities for training. For example, almost all the learning support assistants and midday supervisors have gained NVQ at Level 3. They have been trained in autism, behaviour management, citizenship and information and communication technology. All staff, including midday supervisors and the caretaker, have been trained in Makaton. The skills of learning support assistants are further enhanced by their involvement with teachers in lesson planning. Administrative staff have received up-to-date training in information and communication technology, and those support staff who run the Portage system (funded by the local education authority) are very well trained and therefore able to fulfil their role very effectively.

66. The school has very good procedures for measuring the performance of all the staff. The headteacher is now seeking to streamline and further upgrade the school's performance management in collaboration with local businesses. Two cycles of performance management have been completed and the performance management of learning support assistants and support staff is just entering its second cycle.

67. At first sight, the school appears to be attractive and purpose-built, which it is. The outside space is extensive and provides hard, grassed areas, and wildlife and adventure play areas. All areas of the school are accessible for those with mobility difficulties. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements to the accommodation: the school offices have been re-modelled; access to toilets has been improved; hoists, tables, rise and fall plinths have been installed. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory to meet the full needs of the curriculum and to accommodate the number of pupils and staff. Since the last inspection, the school roll has increased significantly, whilst the accommodation has not.

68. The following weaknesses in accommodation impact on provision:

- There is no special provision for students at post-16 to prepare them for living independently.
- There are no specialist facilities for art and design, design and technology, or science.
- The hall is too small to be fully effective for physical education sessions, especially for older pupils, and there are no changing facilities for physical education.
- The outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage is very limited and immediately near the road.
- There are no designated rooms for use by therapists, for learning support assistants to work with small groups of pupils, or for the use of parents, although the Portage scheme and other parents' support groups are based at the school.
- The library and computer area is a thoroughfare, which affects pupils' concentration at some times in the day, and there is insufficient storage space.
- The learning environment for older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is far inferior to that provided in the class for younger pupils with similar

difficulties, and some classrooms are cramped when the diverse needs of the pupils is taken into account.

69. The school makes use of facilities at mainstream primary and secondary schools in an attempt to counteract shortages in accommodation for art and design, design and technology and physical education. Whilst this provides pupils with better facilities and some valuable opportunities to mix with mainstream pupils, it does not overcome the limitations in the school's own accommodation.

70. The school is aware of these significant deficiencies but has so far been unsuccessful in its bids to acquire funding to make the required improvements. A mobile classroom has been added and a new mobile is awaited to gain some additional space, but these go only a small way towards overcoming the shortfall.

71. The site manager and cleaners take enormous pride in keeping the building very clean and well maintained, and it is enhanced by displays of pupils' artwork and other visual and tactile stimuli. The combination of very carefully staged displays and background music in the communal areas creates an inspirational atmosphere that is immediately uplifting. Continuous slide shows celebrate pupils' work, serving to promote their sense of identity and raise their self-esteem.

72. The quality and range of resources to support learning activities is good overall. Since the previous inspection, there has been a good improvement in the number and appropriateness of the books in the library. Resources for information and communication technology have been improved. The installation of an interactive whiteboard is a very positive development and opens up many new teaching and learning opportunities. There has been an increase in the number of switches, for example, a chin switch enables pupils to access the computers, and in the number of 'Big Macs' to increase their opportunities for independent communication. Resources for science are now good. The range of resources for religious education studies, including artefacts is now very good; the co-ordinator is developing story bags that will include sensory materials. Excellent use is made of facilities and resources in the local and wider community to enhance and support learning in all the subject areas.

73. The school is in the process of developing and extending the very good resources provided for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6 into the classes for older pupils. It has also been recognised that there is a need to improve the age appropriateness of subject resources in Years 7 to 11 and the school is aware of the importance of improving technological aids (which are already good). It has not yet been able to find a suitable source of supply for these specialist resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to build on its many strengths and improve the quality of education further, the headteacher, senior managers and governors should:

(1) Further improve teaching by making use of excellent practice already evident within the school, particularly in relation to*:

- the match of activities to individual learning needs and prior attainment;
- the clarity of learning objectives in teachers' planning and the choice of varied activities to meet these objectives;
- joint planning between teachers and learning support assistants so that support staff are very clearly directed and all work to the same high expectations;
- the pace of lessons and sufficiency of subject content to provide continuous challenge and motivation;
- annotating pupils' work so that their progress can be easily tracked across all subjects.

See paragraphs 15 and 19

(2) Push for improvements to the accommodation in order to address the shortcomings listed earlier in this report*.

See paragraph 68

Minor issues for consideration:

To extend curriculum opportunities in Years 10 to 13, especially by increasing opportunities for pupils and students to gain accreditation*. *See paragraphs 23 - 24*

**The school has already identified this as an issue for future development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	28	32	16	0	0	0
Percentage	6	35	39	20	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	71

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	64
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.15

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for last whole term before the inspection

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR– Y13

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	549

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	780630
Total expenditure	810240
Expenditure per pupil	12861
Balance brought forward from previous year	63210
Balance carried forward to next year	33600

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

66

Number of questionnaires returned

47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	92	8	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	24	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	23	0	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	34	2	2	2
The teaching is good.	86	12	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	29	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	19	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	81	10	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	79	21	0	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

75. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is very good overall, representing an improvement from the last inspection when it was good. Children enter the early years class⁴ and that for children with mobility and physical difficulties with very low levels of attainment. However, because of the good teaching and the very good range of interesting activities, the children make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. In the class for children with physical difficulties, much of the organisation is based on the principles of conductive education⁵. Both classes use a curriculum based on national guidance for the Foundation Stage, which focuses on six areas of learning, together with the Essential (Equals) curriculum for pupils with more complex needs. The curriculum has been very well developed since the time of the last inspection: the planning to cover the areas of learning is clearly linked with focus activities, and is of a high quality. At the time of the inspection, the focus theme was 'movement', and activities in many areas of learning were linked to this topic.

76. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. The quality of teaching has a very positive impact on children's learning. The teachers have a good knowledge both of the needs of young children and of their different special educational needs. They plan very effectively to ensure that all areas of learning are covered, although on a few occasions, the objectives for lessons are not clearly identified and the focus of the lesson is unclear. The good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that children have a good range of opportunities for learning. Staff provide a calm atmosphere in which children feel confident to try activities. Children generally enjoy their lessons, and take part enthusiastically in many of the activities, for example, those with more complex needs reach out to touch bubbles, smiling and showing pleasure as they develop their movement skills. Effective assessment procedures are in place, starting with initial assessment when children enter the school, and their development is closely monitored. All have individual education plans with very specific targets, which are regularly reviewed. Observation sheets are completed and the information is used to track progress, particularly in language and mathematical development. More detailed tracking in other areas of learning would provide teachers with easily accessible information for use in planning. Staff work hard to develop good relationships with parents and carers, starting with initial visits before children begin school. Parents are encouraged to be involved in various aspects of their children's education, for example, in attending review meetings, helping with visits or with physical activities. This partnership further enhances learning opportunities for children. Reports to parents are well written, so that they know how their children are progressing. There are very good links with the mainstream schools to which some of the children transfer, which ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

Personal social and emotional development

⁴ This class currently caters for children of reception age and provides a means of assessing under fives. When they leave the class, some children transfer to mainstream schools while others remain at Willoughby.

⁵ Conductive education is a system that involves intensive individual work to increase the development and mobility of children with physical difficulties and with conditions that impact on the physical and cognitive development of children.

77. Children make very good progress in this area. Adults provide an interesting and safe environment for the children, who respond well to their surroundings and grow in confidence. They begin to develop an understanding of the structure of the school day and of routines. They are learning to settle well, to be involved in individual and group activities, and some are developing concentration, which enables them to stay on task to complete activities. Teachers provide children with choices, for example, of early morning activity, and encourage children to do as much for themselves as possible, for example, in changing for physical development sessions. Teachers have very good strategies for helping pupils become more independent and they are encouraged to help others, for example, by getting out and putting away equipment, or by taking the register to the office. Children with mobility difficulties are provided with bags in which they can carry the register, thus giving them the opportunity to take part in this activity. Children are beginning to form very good relationships with adults and some are beginning to talk to, or play with, others. They are encouraged to develop social skills, such as turn taking and sharing toys. Adults explain clearly the difference between right and wrong and, as a result, behaviour is usually very good. Where children have difficulty in managing their behaviour, as in the case of children with autism, there are clear plans for returning them to their tasks, and all adults know these and follow them carefully. All adults are good role models and staff praise and encourage children so that positive attitudes are consistently reinforced.

Communication, language and literacy

78. Children are making very good progress in developing language and communication skills, and are given good opportunities to develop these through many of the activities that take place during the day. Children are beginning to listen well to adults and to respond appropriately, for example, they were able to explain how they had made rockets from cardboard tubes. Some pupils do this by the use of single words or short phrases, while higher attaining children give a more detailed description. Children with more complex needs are encouraged to sign, point or vocalise whenever possible, and often respond well, for example, by responding to their names during the 'hello' session. Adults provide good role models for the development of language, and support children's learning by means of signing, or the use of symbols, where these are needed. Very good use is made of the picture exchange communication system (PECS) in a variety of contexts. Children are learning to recognise the symbols and some are able to match them to objects and to words. Listening skills are being well developed, and children are learning to follow instructions of increasing length. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books with an adult. Pre and early-reading skills are being well developed as children learn to follow the story in a book. Some children are able to recognise their names and those of some of their class mates and the most able can recognise a number of words from their reading books and begin to use these to make short sentences. Some are beginning to make marks on paper as a pre-writing skill, while higher attaining pupils are beginning to form letters with reasonable accuracy. Teaching of communication, language and literacy is good, with well-planned experiences across the curriculum that have a positive impact on the progress the children are making.

Mathematical development

79. Children are making very good progress in acquiring pre and early-mathematical skills. Teaching is good and lessons are well planned to give many different activities to reinforce concepts such as number, colour and shape. As well as specific lessons based on number, there are many mathematical activities throughout the day, for example, identifying the colours of balls in the soft play area and in sequencing the day's activities. Mathematical language is well developed, for example, talking about 'long' and 'short' when sellotape is used to stick things. When children go to a park, staff talk about turning 'left' or 'right'. In sand

and water play, children develop understanding of capacity. Children join in number rhymes and activities that help them learn to count. Higher attaining children count the number of children in the class or the number of skittles that they knock down. Some are beginning to recognise and write numbers to ten.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well developed through a variety of practical experiences. They learn to find their way around the school building, and they are encouraged to observe their environment, for example, by looking at the weather. On outings, they are encouraged to look at features such as animals and plants, and those with more complex needs enjoy experiences of touch and smell as they encounter different plants such as cacti. As well as regular visits to a variety of parks, they are involved in outings linked to curriculum topics, such as to a local reservoir and to the zoo. In addition to reinforcing their learning, these visits have provided good development of social skills as children become increasingly independent in moving about and in interacting with other adults. They are introduced to a variety of materials and textures, which they enjoy exploring, while those with more complex needs show an increased tolerance of touching items such as cotton wool, sand and jelly. Children are beginning to use information and communication technology. Higher attaining children choose the font and colour they wish to use to write with the computer; they are developing control of the mouse and learning how to select the icon to print. Others are beginning to move arrows around using a joystick. Children use battery-operated and remote-controlled toys. Teaching in this area is good, with plans linked to other aspects of the curriculum. Learning is supported by exploration of the environment.

Creative development

81. Children make good use of paint, pencils, crayons and different types of modelling material. During the inspection, they constructed a rocket from cardboard tubes, and painted and decorated it with shapes and stars, with many paying careful attention both to the way in which they painted and to the pattern of shapes which they created. Children with more complex needs are able to finger paint with some support. They become very involved in making collages, for example, of leaves and flowers. Singing is used well on a number of occasions throughout the day, for example, to focus children's attention during literacy sessions. Children enjoy the opportunities to sing and to play a variety of instruments. In the class for children with physical and mobility difficulties, the integral use of singing helps pupils to participate in movement, as they follow rhythm and melody. Teaching is good, with clear learning objectives that focus on the development of skills.

Physical development

82. Children are making good progress in this area of learning. Teachers make good use of the small hall, the soft play area and the sensory room. The outdoor play area for the early years class is very limited, although opportunities are taken in the summer term to visit a variety of local parks. Further development of the outdoor areas would enhance learning opportunities. Children are developing physical skills at levels appropriate to their abilities. Those with more complex needs are tracking lights and objects in the multi-sensory room; some reach out to hold a ball or press a switch. In the soft play area, other children experiment with a range of movements, rolling, jumping, sliding, and throwing. Children in the class for those with physical difficulties make very good progress towards their personal targets in movement. Children are developing physical control through activities such as cutting and sticking and playing with construction toys. Some higher attaining children are able to draw round stencils, and are developing an awareness of the features of faces. Some copy patterns of dots and circles. Awareness of space is developed as children complete

jigsaw puzzles. The progress that children make in their physical development is a result of good teaching, and of close collaboration with the physiotherapist.

ENGLISH

83. There has been good improvement in the provision for English, the quality of teaching throughout the school, and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in English is good for pupils of all ages, and they make good progress in lessons.

84. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening, and in communicating, develop very well throughout their time at the school. Younger pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and many are able to listen attentively to adults reading to them. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils can answer questions about what has been read to them. They are able to follow instructions, both in lessons and on social occasions. Lower attaining pupils name objects around them and speak in single words or short phrases. Many recognise the signs which are in everyday use in the school, and some develop use of signing to communicate. By the end of Year 6, pupils have continued to develop these skills, and the more able talk about books which they read. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are able to make use of these skills in a variety of contexts, for example, in discussing stories they have read, and in answering direct questions in a variety of lessons. Students at post-16 share their news of weekend activities. They talk about newspaper articles and talk in simple terms about whether the stories will affect them and if the news makes them happy or sad. Some engage in role play and undertake mock interviews as newspaper reporters. Pupils with more complex needs enter the school with limited communication and their skills in speaking (communicating) and listening are developing well as they begin to use gesture, eye pointing or vocalising to make their wishes known. They are provided with a range of ways of supporting their communication, where this is appropriate, and good use is made of switches, signs and symbols.

85. Younger pupils begin to develop pre-reading skills, looking at picture books, listening to, and enjoying, stories, and by the end of Year 2, many pupils know where to start reading a book, and that the pages need to be turned to follow the story. Some know words from their reading books, or the outlines of stories and use these to 'read' the text. Higher attaining pupils begin to recognise letter sounds, some common words and the names of the characters in their reading scheme books. On a visit to the library, they are introduced to the indexing system, and enjoy looking at, and borrowing books. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils can read simple texts such as those in the 'Storyworld' scheme, and follow and join in the text of 'big books' being read in class. They join in with reading the text, and enjoy taking turns to read parts from a play. They develop some knowledge of common words, and some use phonic skills to break down words they do not know. Some have very good reading skills, but do not always understand what they read. These pupils are being supported well through a range of experiences to help to develop their comprehension. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 continue to develop their reading skills. Some recognise familiar words and higher attaining pupils read accurately and fluently simple texts such as the books in the reading scheme. They show understanding of these and of books when adults read to them, being able to answer questions about the stories and the characters. Lower attaining pupils have a limited sight vocabulary and sometimes lose the place when they are reading. Some are still at the stage of sharing books with adults. Pupils are given regular opportunities to read in school, and many take their books home to read with parents or carers. Many of the students at post-16 have limited skills in reading, as their special educational needs are more distinct than some of the younger pupils, but some are able to extract basic information from newspapers and magazines and to work out the times of programmes on the television. Others learn social sight vocabulary words for use when they are outside school, and learn the symbols for key activities such as 'shopping' and 'bus'. Pupils with more profound and

multiple learning difficulties begin to develop some understanding of stories read to them because of the very good range of sensory experiences that accompany the stories, and because of the repetition that is provided. For example, a group of pupils in the class for multi-sensory impaired who had heard the story of 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' showed that they understood aspects of the story as they smiled and pointed and indicated by vocalising their responses to the idea of eating mustard sandwiches. Some develop knowledge of symbols and are able to match symbols to spoken words for words such as 'book' and 'telephone', or to match symbols to objects related to stories they have heard.

86. Younger pupils develop pre-writing skills, such as mark making. By the end of Year 2, many pupils can copy their names, either over or under an adult's writing, while the lower attaining pupils trace over letters or words with their hands held by an adult. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils write for a variety of reasons such as describing visits and writing their autobiographies. They begin to record their work in other subjects. Lower attaining pupils progress from writing over to copying under words. Pupils make some use of opportunities to present their work using word processing. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 use a variety of methods for recording their work. For example, following discussion of a story, the higher attaining pupils wrote sentences with some help, about the characters in the story, while lower attaining pupils copied the sentences staff had written for them underneath the pictures. Some pupils are developing a neat, cursive style of writing and are using punctuation such as full stops and capital letters. Those with more complex needs make up simple stories using pictures and symbols. Students at post-16 develop writing skills appropriate to their abilities. For some, this is learning to write their names and addresses, while others record work for their accredited courses. The majority copy write, although some are more independent in writing. The higher attaining students write about visits they have made to events such as the dance festival in Boston. They list different types of job and explain what these would involve. While a few students use a word processor to present their work, the lack of access to programs such as 'Writing with Symbols' limits students' opportunities to become more independent in writing.

87. Teaching is good overall, with many very good features. The best lessons are well planned, clearly linking the curriculum to the individual needs of pupils, who can then make progress against their individual targets. A variety of strategies is used to gain pupils' attention and to help them to respond. For example, puppets and feely bags were used well in a primary class to engage pupils' interest and encourage responses. Consistent use of signs and symbols ensures that all pupils are fully engaged. Well-paced lessons, with a number of different activities, help to maintain pupils' attention. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and adults give pupils the confidence to attempt work that they find difficult. Adults show that they value the efforts which pupils make. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons provide opportunities to discuss what has been covered in the lesson, and these are used well as a means of consolidating pupils' knowledge. Opportunities are taken to praise pupils both for their work and their behaviour. Learning is sometimes limited by the use of small books instead of 'big books' to read to the class, giving pupils little opportunity to follow the text or to read aloud with the teacher. In a few lessons, further planning to meet the needs of individual pupils would allow them to make even more progress than at present.

88. There are good examples of pupils being enabled to develop their speaking and listening and literacy skills in different subjects. For example, in religious education, pupils visit a church and discuss its main features and their uses. In history, there is very good development of speaking and listening skills as pupils look at and talk about photographs of their visit to the seaside. Good use is made of a 'big book' to help pupils to look at the seaside in the past and present, and pupils are able to read some of the more common words in the text. Lower attaining pupils are able to select the names of people in the photographs from a

choice of two names, and a pupil with communication difficulties is able to select sentences by using a chin switch.

89. The co-ordinator for English has been in post only since January. In that time, much work has been done in developing the curriculum, which is now very good for pupils in the primary classes. The Early Literacy Support Strategy, which is closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy, has been used as the basis of the planning. This has been carefully related to a range of literature. At present, pupils in the secondary class are also following this programme; there are plans to develop the curriculum further for the higher attaining pupils in this group. Pupils with more complex needs are following the Essential curriculum, while students at post-16 continue to develop their skills through work in the 'Moving On' modules of the Equals curriculum, which gives opportunities for accreditation. There are some opportunities for drama, but this is not yet planned in detail and pupils could benefit from more opportunities in this aspect of the curriculum. The co-ordinator provides good support to colleagues through monitoring both the curriculum and the teaching, ensuring that pupils' needs are met.

90. Assessment in English is being developed and is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is tracked against the National Curriculum levels and, for younger pupils and those with more complex learning difficulties, use is made of the Equal levels. However, there is no consistent system for recording on-going progress, so that teachers have to track through their lesson evaluations and observation notes when they need to reach a judgement about pupils' levels of attainment. There is a lack of consistency in the annotation of pupils' work so that there is not always sufficient information about the level of independent working to allow for a judgement to be made about pupils' progress. This is an area which requires further development in order that information about pupils' progress is immediately available to all staff who might need this.

91. Resources for English have been well developed with the acquisition of further reading books, 'big books' for whole class reading and story sacks containing a variety of support materials. The library contains a satisfactory range of books, but is in a small area that is used as a thoroughfare, so that it is not possible to work there with groups of pupils. All reading books are stored in the library and access to these is difficult. At present, there is a limited number of books which are age appropriate for the older pupils, and the co-ordinator has identified this as an area for development. There are plans to give pupils more access to computer programs such as 'Writing with symbols', and it is hoped to introduce these in the near future, once staff have completed the training in their use. Good support for the curriculum is provided by visitors to the school such as drama groups, and activities such as World Book Day. There is a well-focused plan for the development of literacy, which identifies areas for development including assessment and recording, and a consistent approach to teaching handwriting and phonics.

MATHEMATICS

92. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and the good provision reported at the last inspection has been sustained. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in the key areas of number, of shape and space, and of time. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed many number skills. Higher attaining pupils count up to ten objects, do simple addition sums by adding the numbers that appear on dice, and draw correctly a number of objects that match a written single-figure digit. These pupils insert missing numbers in a number-line, know ordinals up to 'fourth', and use arbitrary units such as small cubes to measure the length of objects. They develop knowledge of shape so that they name some basic two-dimensional shapes, match them and continue a pattern made of different shapes. During Years 1 and 2, pupils also begin to establish understanding of concepts such as 'bigger' and

'smaller', mathematical language like 'before' and 'after', and positional vocabulary such as 'in front of' and 'next to'.

93. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 build well on pupils' prior learning and focus on increasing their knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils are able to demonstrate their new skills by the end of Year 6. They know units of length and use a rule to measure objects and to draw a line of a given length. They understand signs such as '+' and '=', doing simple addition sums involving two-digit numbers, and higher attaining pupils write numbers as both words and digits. These pupils know aspects of time like o'clock, half past and quarter past. Appropriate mathematical vocabulary also continues to develop well so that by the end of Year 6 pupils know terms such as 'take away' and 'less than' and understand concepts like 'heavier', 'lighter', 'longest', 'shortest' and 'the same as'.

94. Pupils in the secondary department integrate and apply aspects of previously learned knowledge. Therefore, by the end of Year 9 they know, for example, how many children are in front of them and behind them if they are sixth in a queue of ten. They know about odd and even numbers and some of the features of simple three-dimensional shapes, such as the number of faces. Higher attaining pupils also show understanding of estimating and how information can be represented in different ways. Consequently, they estimate whether different containers will contain more or fewer beads and interpret simple pictograms that show people's favourite pets.

95. Students at post-16 make satisfactory progress in acquiring the mathematical skills required for when they leave school. Higher attaining students recognise the price of items and identify the appropriate coins to pay for them, and sequence everyday routines like getting out of bed and leaving the house. Lower attaining pupils require a greater level of adult support with these activities.

96. Pupils with more complex difficulties make good progress against their prior attainment. Younger pupils take part in exploratory play that encourages awareness of the environment through tactile experiences. By doing so, they develop the concept of permanence of objects and one-to-one correspondence. As they get older, pupils develop simple concepts about making things happen and changing the environment. Adult support enables them to build towers from blocks, fit shapes into cut outs and sort objects using understood criteria such as whether they are associated with school or home. Pupils in Year 7 onwards use switches to signify their involvement in activities, as they match objects based on single criteria like colour and begin to group similar objects. By the end of Year 9, some pupils order objects, from heaviest to lightest, and use text and symbols to sequence events such as the days of the week and the lessons in a day. Pupils with multi-sensory impairment make very good progress in developing very simple concepts associated with sequencing everyday activities. This is made possible because of very good teaching that has a consistent focus on establishing and reinforcing appropriate time vocabulary like 'before', 'after', 'first' and 'next'.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall. Very good relationships together with strong pupil and classroom management underpin the provision of good learning opportunities for pupils. An additional strength of teaching is the constant reinforcement of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Activities are carefully chosen to build on prior learning and effective planning means that tasks meet individual needs, so that pupils work with a good understanding of what they are required to do. New technology is used well in some lessons to enrich and extend learning as well as making content more relevant. For example, a class in Years 7 to 11 used a computer program to reinforce their understanding of the prices of snacks and their recognition of coins by dragging the correct virtual coins into vending machine slots. This activity had a practical and relevant focus, as pupils will be using such

machines when they attend college. Similarly, a group of pupils in Years 3 to 6 used personal experience to consider ordering and sequencing events by using text and symbol cards to produce their ideal daily school timetable, which opened up a discussion on explaining the reasons for their choices. Occasionally, time is not used well because activities and resources are not sufficiently varied to maintain pupils' interest and higher attaining pupils are not always challenged. However, generally pupils are enthusiastic, listen carefully to instructions and are keen to work. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to maintain this enthusiasm and motivation.

98. An enthusiastic co-ordinator manages the subject well. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and this has been influential in helping to raise standards in some aspects of the subject. However, the three-part lesson format is not always employed effectively and consistently, particularly the initial mental warm-up session. On these occasions, pupils' rehearsal and consolidation of their mental skills and strategies is compromised. Detailed long and medium-term planning ensures that the curriculum for pupils with severe learning difficulties and for those with more complex learning needs is broad and balanced. Overall, assessment procedures are good but pupils' work is not always annotated to provide additional information about the context in which the tasks were completed, such as the degree of support provided and the learning resources used. The local community is used well to provide opportunities for using mathematics in real life situations, such as visiting the local supermarket to buy items for food technology. The lunchtime mathematics club also widens pupils' experiences by introducing them to activities they might not otherwise enjoy, such as using calculators.

SCIENCE

99. Pupils achieve well in science, although lack of specialist accommodation for the subject places some limitations on what can be taught to pupils from Year 7 onwards. Throughout the school, pupils learn about the different aspects of the subject, and their learning is mainly through a good practical approach based on investigations.

100. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils have learned that there are different forces around us. They know that these include electricity and magnetism, and they know that magnets will pick up things made of some metals, but do not affect paper and plastic. They make simple circuits that will light up an electric bulb, and they understand that the circuit has to be complete or the electricity cannot 'get round'. An understanding of some different animals and small creatures is learned, as well as the variety of habitats that different creatures live in, such as the woods, pond and hedgerows around the school. Pupils learn that people change as they grow up, and that they develop in different ways. Lower attaining pupils also make good progress.

101. They learn, for instance, the importance of looking at the weather, and deciding on appropriate clothes. There is a developing awareness of how to operate switches to make lights and screen displays appear, as they learn cause and effect. Much of their learning is about self-development and hygiene. Pupils also learn that there are forces that push and pull, as in a lesson in which they were pushing and pulling each other on low 'skateboard' trolleys, pushing balls down a ramp, and pushing large balls across the floor to each other. Because they are not able to interact very actively with much of their surroundings, a lot of their learning is through experiences. This includes, for example, accompanying other pupils to the pond and looking at the small creatures that are found there. They feel the difference between different textures, see the different colours, and feel the different weight of, for instance, paper and stones.

102. Pupils' progress continues well through the next five years, to the end of Year 11. By this time, the higher attaining pupils help to plan their own investigations, and make good efforts to record what they have discovered, perhaps using a computer to record results on a graph. Many pupils learn to predict what might happen, and afterwards they think of reasons why they were right (or wrong). Pupils understand, for example, that yeast is alive, and will grow under the right conditions, such as on a windowsill. They know how to carry out a survey of the different creatures that live in different places around the school, and they know that animals can be classified in different ways, for example, by how many legs or wings they have. Some pupils have made a wormery. Their understanding of forces is extended to light and sound, as well as knowing more about pushing and pulling forces. For instance, they have measured the pulling force of different weights on an elastic band. Pupils learn to take measurements, such as the weight of things (in Newtons), or the temperature of melting ice and water, or the rate of their heartbeats. They learn to put together several different electrical circuits, and can find simple faults in them to make them work properly. Some pupils understand that there are substances that can be changed, such as by dissolving sugar and salt in water. They also understand that other things can be changed by heating or freezing them. In a science club during the inspection, they learned that some objects will sink and others will float. They were beginning to understand why this is so, and higher attaining pupils could predict which objects would sink, and which would float.

103. The lower attaining pupils also learn well up to the end of Year 11. They learn that there are different substances, such as soil, rock, plastic, paper and wool, and that these have a different feel. Pupils understand that they can make choices, using looks, gestures, sounds, signs or switches. They accompany other pupils on trips out, and take part as well as they can, perhaps looking at animals in an exotic pet shop, or on a farm. Warm and cold objects are experienced, as well as things that vibrate, such as toothbrushes, a foot spa and a drill. Pupils go around the school and identify different features in their environment, having their photographs taken, and being helped to take pictures of the features, such as the school fountain, memorial garden and greenhouse.

104. Students in Years 12 and 13 make satisfactory progress. They study some aspects of science through a series of lessons about the environment and the wider world. They learn, for instance about recycling, pollution and litter, as in one lesson during the inspection, when they classified many items of rubbish into paper, plastic and metal.

105. Teaching is good overall, and it is very good for pupils in Years 7 to 11 who are taught by a specialist teacher of science. At post-16, the lessons are not always as well focused. Teachers have very good knowledge of their pupils and the subject. This enables them to plan their lessons very well. Lessons are very well prepared, with a very good range of equipment being ready and working. Often, the outside environment is used, whether it is the sand tray for the youngest pupils, or the pond for the older ones. Learning support assistants are an invaluable resource. As part of very capable classroom teams, they work very well with the teachers to support individual pupils, or small groups, and are often involved in making notes about how different pupils are progressing. In one very good lesson, for example, the teacher was demonstrating that some things change by heating, and the changes can perhaps be reversed, or perhaps not. Support staff led two groups, and the teacher led the other group. Each group was very well engaged in melting chocolate in a microwave oven, or frying eggs, or making toast, or making chocolate cakes. Pupils tried to predict whether or not the changes were reversible, and they described the different changes in the look, feel and smell of the different things. This was a very well managed and organised lesson. The aims were very clear; the activities matched them precisely; and the pace of the lesson was kept up throughout. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff use language very clearly, often with appropriate signing to help pupils to understand, and they use the correct words for different scientific things. In most lessons, this starts with the

teacher introducing herself clearly to each pupil, with clear speech and signing where appropriate, along with a reminder of the class rules and each pupil's individual targets.

106. This subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator is very well qualified, and has a positive attitude. She has a clear awareness of pupils' prior attainment, as well of the best ways to teach science in practical ways. Increasingly, computers are used in lessons, such as making graphs of the results of experiments, or attaching a computer camera to a microscope and looking at the tiny creatures on the screen. There is scope for more use of high technology equipment. Pupils' progress is assessed well, and the information is used carefully when deciding what needs to be taught next, and how it should be taught. Very good use is made of outside people and places, such as 'Pet City', a farm, and having visitors from the Meteorological Office for a 'balloon launch' day. The curriculum is a very good combination of the National Curriculum and the Essentials curriculum. It is well balanced and very appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The school has good resources for science but the lack of specialist facilities impacts especially on the curriculum for pupils of secondary age. This places some restrictions on topics that can be covered.

107. There has been a very good improvement in this subject since the previous inspection, when standards of curriculum planning, teaching and learning were much lower.

ART AND DESIGN

108. Pupils make good progress throughout the school as a result of good teaching, a curriculum that is generally well matched to their needs, and a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities that extend their horizons and stimulate their visual perception. The school has sustained the good progress reported in the last inspection for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and improved on its provision for pupils from Year 7 onwards.

109. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils draw recognisable figures, which include facial features, feet and the suggestion of hands. In their paintings of animals, following a visit to the zoo, pupils included interesting markings and stuck crepe paper onto their animals to show the stripes on a tiger. In their finger paintings of flowers, pupils revealed a good sense of composition and some good colour awareness. They are developing control when painting or colouring within a pre-drawn image.

110. In the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment, pupils make very good progress, experiencing paint and other materials directly through sensory interaction. In the class for pupils with physical and mobility difficulties, pupils have developed their physical control by working from an African batik to represent a sunset, using paint and straws and are making good progress.

111. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils can weave wool and fabric. They can select from a range of materials and combine them to represent figures, as evidenced by a large-scale collage produced by a number of pupils collaboratively. Lower attaining pupils can apply paint to paper, experiencing the plastic qualities of the paint. Following a visit to a museum, pupils made models of Medusa's head in clay and then wrote about the trip. These showed that they are able to shape and mould the clay effectively. Pupils record from secondary sources with some accuracy, for instance, when working in pastels.

112. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have produced pictures of boats by rolling printing ink over stencils, and they have done relief printing using string. Their observational drawing of flowers and their drawings after Andy Warhol show that they are able to look carefully and record in detail. In their paintings of poppies, inspired by a poster, pupils have been able to reproduce some tonal variation in the petals by varying the thickness of the paint. Higher attaining pupils have achieved a more translucent effect at the edges of the petals. In a lesson during the inspection, pupils made good progress by working together to paint an Islamic design onto a white tablecloth. They showed good levels of accuracy in painting within the lines and one pupil showed good concentration when designing a pattern on the computer. Others made their designs using felt-tipped pens and squared paper.

113. Pupils in Years 8 to 12 with more complex difficulties have made good progress, working in a wide range of materials and processes with a sensory emphasis. Work on display shows that they can paint with their hands, weave with wool and paper, and work in mixed media in two and three dimensions. Good use has been made of the work of other artists as a stimulus and pupils have achieved tremendous variety in their collages on 'texture'. They know some words to describe texture, such as 'rough' or 'hard'; a minority can recognise colours.

114. Students at post-16 have worked in collage, cutting and sticking petals to represent Poinsettias, and produced potato prints. An article on Paul McCartney's paintings has been used particularly well as a stimulus for students' own pictures in oil pastels. These are very expressive in their use of colour and line, and quite closely reflect the originals from which they were derived.

115. Although it was only possible to observe a small number of art lessons during the inspection, it is clear from work on display that the teaching of art is good across the school. Teachers make very good use of visual reference material and the work of other artists as a stimulus for pupils' practical work.

116. In a lesson in Years 7 to 11, staff provided good support to pupils and kept them on target. They demonstrated techniques and encouraged pupils to work carefully. Pupils concentrated very well on painting and clearly enjoyed the activity. The teacher asked pupils about the Islamic patterns they were producing and explained that Islamic art is mainly based on patterns. The plenary session provided pupils with good opportunities to talk about what they had done and the teacher discussed their designs with them. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 8 to 12 with more complex difficulties, work was very carefully matched to pupils' different learning needs and objectives were shared with the class very effectively. Pupils' behaviour was managed exceptionally well in a calm but firm way. The teacher encouraged pupils to focus closely and look carefully. Learning support assistants were very clear about their roles and there was a strong sense of teamwork. Music was played gently in the background, as the teacher encouraged pupils and evaluated their work.

117. The co-ordination of art is good. Curriculum guidance that is provided nationally is adjusted to the needs of pupils in each class, and then used to inform planning. Class teachers review the effectiveness of planning and return their evaluations to the co-ordinator every half term. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly, however, taking photographs of the work completed by students at post-16 at the local further education college would enhance the existing assessment procedures. The co-ordinator visits classrooms to support teachers whenever possible, but most art lessons are timetabled on a day when she accompanies students to college, so opportunities to monitor teaching are limited. Staff have sufficient subject knowledge for the current curriculum and training sessions have been provided by a local art gallery. An art club is run each week and pupils have very good opportunities to go on trips to galleries, museums and other venues that provide stimulation for their practical

work. An exhibition of pupils' artwork was staged in Lincoln Public Library to raise money for a local night shelter, and students have visited the Hindu temple on a number of occasions. Some pupils use the facilities in the neighbouring grammar school, because Willoughby has no specialist art room. Some classrooms are not suited to anything but the cleanest activities and there are, therefore, restrictions on the type of activity in which pupils may engage. At post-16, students do art as part of their programme at the further education college, where they have access to clay and other materials or processes that are not available in school. A satisfactory selection of consumable materials supports the subject; teachers borrow or bring in their own visual reference materials.

118. The school has made good improvement in its provision for art since the last inspection. The curriculum is planned more thoroughly, a system of assessing pupils' work is in place and very good use is made of the local community. Standards have risen, especially in the upper part of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Achievement is good throughout the school, as a result of good teaching and the high level of support that is available to pupils. Close links with mainstream schools, which give pupils access to specialist facilities that are not available in the school itself, make a very good contribution to their overall achievement.

120. By the end of Year 2, lower attaining pupils can manipulate materials, for example, by rolling, cutting and squeezing play dough, and use simple tools to cut out shapes. As a result of close support from the learning support assistants, they make good progress in their control of the materials and extend their vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils investigate mechanisms, such as clockwork toys and can talk about how the toys are wound up. They count the number of times the key has to be wound and begin to recognise which toy 'lasts' the longest. Following a visit to a toy museum, pupils explored winding by wrapping wool around a piece of card and in a workshop where they looked at Indian saris, they discovered how a sari is wrapped and draped around the body.

121. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils join materials to make products. For instance, pupils have folded and joined fabric to make purses, and then decorated them. In a lesson that involved making a vehicle from junk materials, they could say what type of vehicle they wanted to make, then fold and join cardboard boxes ready for painting. They have drawn images that suggest parts of a vehicle, such as the wheels, and one pupil has combined shapes that represent a train and shaded in parts of it. In selecting materials, they show some insight into how different materials can be combined to arrive at a given outcome. They are gaining in their knowledge about food and how it must be kept. For example, pupils know that biscuits go soft if they are not wrapped up; they know that tinfoil or cling film keeps food fresh, and that food can also be kept fresh by putting it in a freezer. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 spend alternate design and technology lessons at a mainstream school, and their knowledge of design is extended very well through trips out of school. A project on chairs has involved them in researching types of chairs, in visiting a church to draw the pews and using the Internet. They have made model thrones and experimented with various methods for decorating them with gold paint to arrive at pleasing outcomes.

122. In the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment, pupils made excellent progress in a lesson where they were exposed to tactile and auditory experiences, because staff paid excellent attention to focusing their attention, linking cause and effect. Signing and objects of reference were used very effectively to make language relevant. In response, one pupil made a sandwich and was able to say a number of words related to the ingredients and recall the

making process. The remaining pupils showed enjoyment and engaged with the activities, pressing switches to make coloured liquid move in a tube or to turn music on.

123. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11 are able to work with materials to make models and are learning about how to use control technology. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 join materials effectively, as when sticking junk materials together to make vehicles and preparing to add the chassis. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show more refined skills in cutting and joining, for example, working to achieve greater precision when using balsa wood and card to make their vehicles. Pupils show a range of attainment in their capacity to join fabric using running stitches.

124. In the class for pupils in Years 8 to 12 who have more complex difficulties, pupils make good progress in their independence, as well as having access to a range of experiences. Those pupils who are mobile are developing skills such as pouring, spreading, stirring, mixing, beating, chopping and grating. They make drinks, use a toaster and are learning to rub fat into flour to make pastry. Some pupils can wash up, with guidance, and wipe the tables at the end of the lesson. Through working closely with adults, they are learning to follow instructions and gaining in their communication skills. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to sensory stimuli by smelling and tasting ingredients, and react to sounds and movements by looking or by reflex actions. Some pupils are able to press a switch to turn on a piece of equipment.

125. At post-16, students work mainly on projects that are relevant to their daily lives. For example, they have designed signs to show someone the way in the school and learned about some of the skills needed in DIY. Higher attaining students are able to write about the design brief, using a well laid out design and technology booklet. They can draw pictures showing their basic design, after looking at some existing artefacts or designs to help with their ideas. They list the materials used and can evaluate their outcome in terms of their own satisfaction, writing 'I am happy with my design. I like the way it is'. In designing a game, a student used the Internet to research his idea, and then created a board with a simple landscape. He was able to say what materials he used and to identify that a counting game would be made easier by use of a calculator. In another project, the same student cut plastic to form a puzzle with pieces that linked together. In a lesson focusing on DIY skills, students were able to use sandpaper to smooth wood, join parts of a flat-pack towel rack, and fill holes with Polyfiller. With some prompting, they could choose the appropriately sized screwdriver to use and talk in simple terms about what they had done.

126. Teaching is good throughout the school; it is very good for pupils with complex difficulties in the upper school and excellent in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Teachers communicate objectives very clearly to pupils and planning ensures that tasks are matched closely to the different levels of ability within a class. Visits out of school make a major contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding, and the subject is used very well to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively, so that classrooms are calm and orderly, and learning support assistants are very clear about their roles. As a result, pupils show interest and enjoyment in the activities and concentrate well. In a lesson in Years 3 to 6, the teacher used questioning skilfully to gather pupils' ideas and to test their knowledge. She demonstrated techniques effectively, showing pupils how a box is made from a net, and encouraged them to broaden their horizons by thinking of a number of design possibilities. The teacher and the learning support assistants encouraged pupils to think about the shape of different boxes and helped them to open out used boxes and turn them inside out for painting. In response, pupils showed interest and were very keen to answer questions. They listened carefully to the teacher's instructions and tried hard with their practical work. Teachers provide opportunities, wherever possible, for pupils to exercise responsibility and develop their independence,

through handing out equipment and clearing up at the end of a session. When working with pupils with more complex difficulties, staff are particularly good at giving them time to respond, encouraging them to think about what they are doing and prompting them to recall procedures. They generally communicate very well with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and all staff show marked respect for pupils' experiences, linking new stimuli with previous sensory experiences and focusing very carefully on pupils' responses. Teaching is excellent in the class for pupils with multi-sensory impairment, as a result of exemplary planning, excellent attention to the needs of individual pupils, the precise guidelines the teacher has provided for learning support assistants so that all follow the same procedures, the continuous recording of pupils' response, and the huge dedication of all the staff involved.

127. Subject co-ordination, although already good in many respects, is identified by the school as an area for further development. The co-ordinator, who is just completing her graduate traineeship as a teacher at the school, has good subject knowledge; other teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach the current curriculum effectively. The co-ordinator normally teaches the subject in Years 7 to 11 and has developed a scheme of work for use in the upper part of the school. Lessons are evaluated, and pupils' attainment is assessed each term. Resourcing for the subject is adequate but there is no specialist room for the teaching of resistant materials or food technology. Lessons that involve cooking take place in the kitchen that adjoins the resources room. This has only one sink and does not lend itself to the teaching of a full range of skills to a class of pupils; this was evident in a lesson for older pupils with complex difficulties. Work in resistant materials can only take place in an ordinary classroom, necessarily limiting the types of activity that can be undertaken. In an attempt to counteract limitations in the accommodation, the school is making very good use of its links with mainstream schools to extend pupils' learning opportunities. Pupils from Year 3 upwards have regular access to specialist facilities in nearby mainstream primary and secondary schools. This provides pupils with opportunities to integrate socially with mainstream pupils as well as enabling them to work on a wider range of projects. The school has also made use of the expertise of a technology college, with whom it has close links, and a design and technology specialist from there has been into Willoughby to work with the pupils.

128. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, when progress was unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and also in some lessons in Years 1 and 2. Progress in other years was satisfactory and sometimes good. Although lack of specialist accommodation continues to place some restrictions on provision, the school has sustained the good quality teaching and extended curriculum opportunities through developing close links with mainstream schools. This has enabled it to provide a good range of opportunities that support pupils' good progress in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Pupils' achievement is very good overall. This is the result of excellent curriculum planning, very effective methods of assessing pupils' attainment and very good teaching in the subject.

130. During the journey to visit a park in Peterborough, pupils in the class for physical and mobility difficulties were asked what animals they could see in the fields and the number of roundabouts the minibus went round. They were alert and showed interest in their surroundings. On arrival at the park, they were able to give left or right directions to get to the paddling pool with good support from staff. When pretending to drive a model train, a higher attaining pupil could say that the train was going to Leeds and Manchester and the journey would take three hours.

131. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to use simple geographical vocabulary to describe the different features on a pictorial map of an island, for example, indicating the beach and the farm. During visits to Ferry Meadows Park and the seaside, they locate the island situated in the lake, experience collecting shells and seaweed and develop the understanding that seals and penguins live in the sea. Pupils can state what the weather is like and can dress a cardboard model figure of a person with the correct items of clothing to suit different conditions.

132. By the time they have reached Year 6, pupils are beginning to understand that the climate in different places around the world is different. Through the use of photographic evidence, they are able to see the effects that extreme weather conditions produce, for example, a tree blown down in a teacher's garden. In a lesson in Years 3 to 6, pupils were developing the link between trees and the fact that many objects are made from wood. When playing with a range of wooden toys, they were fascinated by the way they operated to produce various movements.

133. By Year 9, pupils are using the data they have collected, for example, on wind speed and rainfall to draw conclusions about local weather conditions. In small groups, pupils use the computers, with support from staff, to create graphs of daily rainfall measured in millimetres. Others draw charts to illustrate the direction of the wind. They are developing their knowledge of geographical features in the wider context of countries throughout the world. On a visit to the Tropical World Centre, pupils were able to see the vegetation of a rainforest and the lifestyle of tribal people from the Amazon. Pupils are able to locate France on an atlas, name Paris and the River Seine and in a study on food around the world, make comparisons between the methods of agriculture in Kenya and Britain.

134. Pupils with complex learning difficulties make very good progress because the learning activities are broken down into small steps. These activities are focused on the development of pupils' awareness of their positions and locations in the classroom, the school and the local environment. For example, pupils use symbols and tactile cues to sequence a route around the school and develop the understanding of how to cross the road safely. They experience the sounds made by the animals on a farm, taste cheese and butter, and understand the reason for putting on a scarf, coat and hat to keep themselves warm in the cold weather.

135. The wide range of practical activities and well-prepared resources exemplifies the very good teaching seen during the inspection, for example, the use of visits and artefacts to support and stimulate learning. Pupils show good levels of concentration, apply effort in order to succeed and show real enthusiasm to answer questions. For instance, in a lesson in Years 7 to 11, when asked the purpose of an anemometer, they could describe that it is used to measure wind speed.

136. Since the previous inspection, there have been very good improvements in the subject. The well-informed and hard working co-ordinator has provided a detailed structure to the curriculum for all pupils ensuring that they all receive appropriate learning activities. This, alongside the very good teaching, well-organised resources, the good use of ongoing assessment and the introduction of a pilot scheme of accreditation, has had a very positive effect on the achievement and progress of pupils throughout the school.

HISTORY

137. Pupils' achievement is very good as a direct result of the very good provision for the subject.

138. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to identify the similarities and differences between photographs from the past and the present. For example, in an excellent lesson on comparing seaside holidays in the past and present, pupils were able to recognise that the fashions in clothes are different but that children building a sand castle using a bucket and spade is the same. By looking at the photographs, they were able to say which are old and which are new. One pupil suggested that asking their grandmother would be a good way of discovering how holidays have changed. Pupils have visited Peterborough Museum to look at toys from the past and have taken part in role-play when learning about the Queen's Coronation.

139. By Year 6, pupils have visited a museum to extend their studies about Ancient Greece. A display in the classroom shows them making a clay model of the head of Medusa, decorating cardboard vases and designing necklaces, during their visit. Pupils have studied the Vikings as part of their topic on 'Invaders and settlers' and photographic evidence shows them dressed up as Viking warriors, holding shields and axes. Pupils have visited Tumbledown Farm and observed tools and equipment used in farming throughout the ages.

140. By the time they reach Year 9, pupils have made very good progress in their understanding of events, people and the differences that have occurred over periods of time. Pupils participate in researching historical information by visiting an archaeological site called Flag Fen, where they experience making clay pots and discover what life was like for people living in mud built houses. They have studied rural changes over the past two hundred years and how children lived in Victorian Britain.

141. The activities for pupils with complex learning difficulties are focused on their daily routines involving regular activities and people with whom they have close contact. For example, pupils with multi-sensory impairment show recognition of the next activity through facial expression and gesture.

142. The two lessons seen during the inspection were taught by the co-ordinator. The standard in one of the lessons was very good and in the other was excellent. In both lessons, the practical activities were exceptionally well organised to meet the varying abilities of the pupils. For example in a lesson in Years 1 to 3, higher attaining pupils were studying photographs of their visit to the seaside and with staff assistance were writing their own simple sentences to describe what they were doing. The pupils with more complex difficulties were playing in the sand and dressing up in relevant clothes, for example, a sun hat and sunglasses. A pupil showed good progress in the use of PECS with support from staff and was able to identify other members of the class who were in the photographs. The same opportunity for accessing the activities applied to a lesson for pupils with complex learning difficulties in Years 8 to 12. The pupils worked in small groups with staff assistance on a range of activities, for example, collecting shells from several locations around the school and responding to a variety of sensory stimuli, such as listening to the sound of the sea, and smelling and tasting crab stick. In both lessons, the pupils were fully involved and showed very good levels of concentration and interest in the subject.

143. Since the previous inspection, there has been a very good improvement in the quality of provision. Alongside the very good and excellent lessons seen, there is evidence of very thorough and detailed lesson planning and good use of ongoing assessment information to illustrate the very good achievement of the pupils.

144. The subject is very well co-ordinated. At present, a pilot scheme of accreditation has been introduced for the older pupils. The co-ordinator has a clear perspective on areas for development based on information gained from the regular monitoring of the subject. There is a good range of resources to support the learning activities and these are cross-referenced with the teaching topics.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well because teaching is good and there have been many recent developments. These have given rise to very good improvements in standards and in provision since the last inspection.

146. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils use a computer keyboard to enter simple text; they save their work, with help, and print it out. They are able to draw and write in large letters on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils learn how to operate electronic toys such as cars and robots, using remote controls. Lower attaining pupils switch on a variety of equipment such as the television, video and cassette players. They learn cause and effect: they begin to operate simple switches so that they can watch screen displays, listen to music or voices, or operate a food mixer, a vibrating foot spa or an air fan. In the space room, pupils with complex difficulties learn to use simple switches in order to operate a selection of bright moving lights. This is an early step towards operating other, useful items, in everyday environments.

147. Pupils' progress very well from Years 7 to 11. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils have learned to open Internet pages such as web cams that look out at places around the world. They send and receive e-mails, with help from staff. Pupils learn to use a 'Roamer', which can accept simple sets of instructions to move in different directions and different distances. Computers are also used for pupils to take part in games that are simulations of real or imaginary situations. Many pupils use a digital camera to take photographs around the school, or on special occasions, or out on visits. Some pupils have gained skills in how to use a video camcorder, but need a lot of help with the planning, speaking and editing. When using the computers for word processing, they enter letters mostly accurately, though very slowly. They learn how to change the colour of the text, and the size and style of the lettering.

148. Lower attaining pupils learn many of the same things, but need more help in carrying them out successfully. They need a lot of reminding of how to do things, and what the different things do on a computer or camera. Pupils with complex difficulties continue to develop their skills with single-touch switches, such as pressing a switch to hear a voice saying "hello", or a message from home. They watch computer screens with interesting patterns and sound effects, and are learning how to make the patterns appear themselves. Often, pupils need a lot of prompting and encouragement to start or stop the displays. Some pupils learn to choose between two or even three separate switches to make different things operate, such as the light displays in the space room, or gadgets and toys in the classroom. This is leading them very well to making choices in other aspects of their lives. Throughout the school, lower attaining pupils use single-touch switches very well as part of their general communication, often in morning registration periods, in small-group discussions (circle times), and in specially organised sessions.

149. Teaching is good. Teachers use the equipment very well, whether it is well established, such as battery-powered toys, or very new, such as the interactive whiteboard. The equipment in the space room is used in an especially positive way. Learning support assistants have very good skills in supporting pupils positively, whether in the space room, in the computer area, or in classrooms. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the pupils. Lessons are planned effectively and well prepared in advance. One good lesson in the computer area, for instance, saw a group of lower attaining pupils being encouraged to use the large screen, and to make the displays change. The teacher used clear language and signing to emphasise the messages. The situation, however, was not ideal: people walking by distracted the pupils, as did sounds from the kitchen, and music and pictures on other nearby computers. Several pupils found the distractions more interesting than the screen displays. At other times, however, pupils are well motivated, whether they are the higher attaining pupils working on computers, finding out some facts about Paris, for instance, on the Internet, or the lower attaining pupils using switches to say "Hello" in the morning. Pupils are increasingly enjoying the work they do with the computers. They are respectful of the equipment and look after it well.

150. In lessons in other subjects, information and communication technology is used effectively. In some lessons, it is used especially well, such as in a geography lesson where pupils were making graphs of the weather, and a science lesson where pupils made graphs of their heartbeats before and after exercise. In one assembly, there was very good use of the computer to show a live web cam picture of 'ground zero' in New York as the teacher talked about Independence Day and September 11. There are occasions, however, when teachers could make greater use of computers to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There is very little use of word-processing in English and science, for instance. The computer club for higher attaining older pupils is valuable in helping pupils to practise their skills by accessing different sites on the Internet, with little adult guidance being required. At post-16, computers are used satisfactorily to support some learning.

151. This subject is very well managed and led by a particularly positive co-ordinator. The curriculum is good, and is especially appropriate to the needs of lower attaining pupils, as well as being challenging for higher attaining pupils. It is planned in a good sequence of skills throughout the school, at all ability levels. The curriculum is being actively developed as pupils throughout the school gain higher skills. Staff have undertaken a lot of additional training, and this has been effective in raising confidence as well as skills among teachers and support staff. Some of this recent development has involved very good links with a partner school and Humberside University. There has been a presentation to parents to raise their skills and awareness of what the school is doing in this subject. There are good and clear plans for the next developments, including the direction of future training; a range of new software, such as a wider selection of visual displays to motivate lower attaining pupils; linking more of the computers together; and upgrading some of the equipment.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FRENCH)

152. Pupils make good overall progress in learning French and higher attaining pupils achieve very well. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection.

153. Some pupils begin to learn French before Year 7, but most do so from Year 7 onwards. By the time they reach Year 11, higher attaining pupils understand a range of everyday words and phrases in French, such as greetings, numbers, days and months, sports they like, the names of different things in the classroom, and how to ask for something to eat and drink in a café. Many of them make appropriate replies to questions they are asked, especially if they are prepared for the question, and have practised the answer. A very

few pupils have developed beyond this and are able to hold a brief conversation in French about a subject that is familiar to them, such as their family members and what they do in different rooms in the house. Most of the learning is in spoken French, listening to the teacher and to each other, and holding conversations. Sometimes, pupils write phrases and words, usually copying them, and they use these to remind themselves of what the words mean. As part of the lessons, pupils also learn about the culture, history and geography of France, so the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' general cultural awareness. Lower attaining pupils have satisfactory experiences of French matters, such as tasting French foods and hearing French music. Students at post-16 make good progress. Their understanding of basic words and phrases is reinforced, and they learn more numbers and greetings.

154. Evidence suggests that teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe a lesson in the class for students at post-16. This concentrated on cultural aspects of France, particularly foods. There was not a strong emphasis on learning the new words. Other evidence, however, includes discussions with staff and pupils; and looking at plans and samples of pupils' work. This indicates that lessons are planned well, and they concentrate on pupils understanding the spoken word, and being able to reply properly. Pupils enjoy their French lessons; they like the 'newness' and challenge, and try hard to do well.

155. This subject is well organised and led. The coordinator has a clear view of standards throughout the school. The plan of what is to be taught is good, being well based on official guidelines, and supported by a sound range of books, posters and videos. A 'French Day' is being organised to help to embed much of the learning with pupils of all abilities. There is some use of computing equipment, such as using the Internet to find out things about Paris. The coordinator has clear plans for developing the subject further, including re-starting a link with a nearby mainstream school for lessons for higher attaining pupils. Proposed developments also include: training several members of the support staff to help pupils more individually; building up sample packs of what pupils can do, and have done; and setting up a formal method of assessing how well pupils are progressing.

MUSIC

156. The school makes good provision for music. A very knowledgeable teacher teaches pupils in Years 1 to 6, and so they achieve well.

157. Younger pupils follow a curriculum that focuses on listening to music and performing. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a number of skills. They make different sounds with their voice and some sing, such as accompanying the teacher singing a class song about 'The Hare and the Tortoise'. Higher attaining pupils beat out a rhythm on a drum, playing quickly or slowly on request. Pupils with more complex difficulties need significant support to do this but they choose, by eye movement or facial expression, the speed at which they wish to play. Pupils are developing the ability to play percussion instruments loudly or quietly, and higher attaining pupils are beginning to appreciate that music can convey emotions such as happiness or sadness.

158. By the end of Year 6, pupils tap out the name pattern of themselves and other members of the class, playing wooden and metal percussion instruments. By this stage, pupils are aware of others when they play and sing and the higher attaining pupils perform together, playing their instrument alternately with others as an 'echo'. Whole classes sing rounds, listening carefully and concentrating hard so as not to be distracted. Pupils extend their understanding of musical qualities so that the higher attaining ones demonstrate their knowledge of pitch, for example, through physical actions like stretching high and reaching low.

159. Teaching in Years 1 to 7 is good and lessons taught by the subject specialist are of very high quality. At these times, pupil management is excellent so that the teacher is able to maintain a learning focus even when the activities make pupils excitable. Therefore, although a group of ten and eleven year olds became very excited singing 'One Man Went to Mow' at increasing pace, the teacher was able to restore calm and order very quickly. The quality of classroom management and organisation means that pupils follow well-established routines. Consequently, they collect and put away instruments independently and hold instruments quietly when the teacher holds up a hand. Time is, therefore, used very efficiently. Music lessons provide many opportunities for the reinforcement of other areas of learning and teachers in the primary department seize them very well. For example, a class consolidated their understanding of fast and slow music through considering the story of 'The Hare and the Tortoise' but the teacher also developed their mathematical knowledge. Pupils' attention was drawn to ordinals, first and second, and simple positional vocabulary such as before and after was emphasised. Another teacher took the opportunity provided by singing 'One Man Went to Mow' to encourage counting back in ones.

160. There was insufficient evidence for a clear judgement to be made on the achievement of pupils from Year 7 onwards or on the overall quality of teaching. Very little work was available for scrutiny, and assessment statements are too general to identify what pupils know, understand and can do. Older pupils do not have the benefit of specialist teaching and the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. However, pupils benefit a great deal from extra-curricular provision and the wealth of musical experiences afforded by visitors to the school and visits out. Their overall progress is, therefore, more likely to be good.

161. In a music lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection, relationships were good and pupils were well managed but lesson planning was not sufficiently focused on identifying specific learning outcomes. Some activities, such as developing a simple dance routine, encouraged pupils' listening and sequencing skills very well but these activities were not developed and extended. Through drawing about how they felt whilst listening to music, pupils were encouraged to link music with the expression of emotion and given an opportunity to express themselves.

162. The co-ordination of music teaching is satisfactory overall, but some aspects of provision are managed very well, such as links with the community and visitors in to school. These planned activities make a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, as well as to their understanding of music. Multicultural appreciation is enhanced through listening to performers such as African and Baroque musicians. The latter was particularly impressive as pupils in the lunchtime recorder club performed with professional musicians in front of an audience. The school has invested in music therapy and the friends' association has funded visiting musicians to extend pupils' experiences. Other aspects of the subject's co-ordination require further development and the subject leader has already recognised these. The provision of music in the secondary department requires monitoring, and current assessment procedures do not allow pupils' small steps in achievement to be recorded accurately.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 sometimes achieve well in lessons and make good progress; no lessons were taught in the secondary department during the inspection. However, accommodation places restrictions on the progress pupils make in some physical education lessons: the hall is too small to be fully effective, especially for teaching physical education to older pupils, and there are no changing facilities for physical education. The very limited space in the hall restricts the range of activities that can be offered, although the school makes very good use of external facilities to give pupils access to a range of challenging physical experiences, as well as regular hydrotherapy; it buys in the expertise of a gymnastics instructor and works closely with physiotherapists. A class for younger pupils with physical and mobility difficulties provides very well for their needs. Older pupils have opportunities to engage in strenuous physical activities, including rock climbing and fitness training, through a residential experience at an outdoor education centre. Overall progress in physical education is therefore good, despite limitations in the accommodation.

164. By the end of Year 2, pupils wait for instructions that require careful listening, such as 'ready, steady, start' before beginning an activity, and stop working when they hear a signal played on the piano. Pupils throw beanbags accurately into a hoop on the floor and roll a large ball into skittles. They show a range of agility and dexterity. Higher attaining pupils use a hockey stick to pass a puck to each other and jump on to and off a bench nimbly, whilst less confident pupils support themselves with their hands as they climb carefully on to the bench. They also follow, and remember, a series of instructions such as running, getting over a bench, collecting an object, returning, dropping it into a hoop and repeating the exercise twice more.

165. Pupils at the end of Year 6 follow a simple warm up routine, watching well and copying the teacher's actions. They throw for distance and accuracy with varying degrees of success. They experiment throwing a 'javelin' made of foam and a 'discus', using different foot positions and body postures. The highest attaining pupils discuss the relative success of these different techniques.

166. Swimming forms an important part of the subject curriculum although only the youngest pupils were observed swimming during the inspection; this was a session that they thoroughly enjoyed. Although pupils are still gaining water confidence, the high ratio of adults to pupils in the swimming pool means that pupils feel safe and well supported. The adult support and use of different buoyancy aids gives pupils the confidence to take part in activities. Therefore, they participate in games, such as jumping up and down together, floating and going into the water down a small slide, and make good progress.

167. The overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils are always well supervised and managed and teachers have very high expectations of behaviour. This is an important feature of teaching. Teachers use praise and encouragement well and so pupils are well motivated and respond very positively. They listen to instructions and watch demonstrations, trying very hard in all activities and with a very good attitude to the activities and to each other. Consequently, a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils celebrated each other's success quite spontaneously when throwing beanbags for accuracy, and they collected their own bags sensibly, handing them on to the next pupil. Teachers provide pupils with well-chosen and challenging activities that build up towards developing particular skills, building on previous learning. Individuals are well supported as they practise but teachers do not always exploit opportunities to use higher attaining pupils to demonstrate their technique to the whole class.

168. Other subjects contribute well to the physical education curriculum. For example, a group of Year 11 pupils with more profound and complex difficulties made very good

progress in developing problem-solving and orienteering skills in a science lesson when they were required to find their way around the school grounds matching photographs of objects with the real thing.

169. There has been satisfactory improvement in provision since the previous inspection. A recently appointed co-ordinator has produced a subject policy and is aware that further development is required in certain aspects of the subject's management. These include producing effective long and medium-term planning that identifies what should be taught, and when, and implementing assessment procedures that will enable pupils' achievements to be recorded accurately. Very good use is made of local facilities for activities such as swimming, horse riding and hydrotherapy and there are very good links with other schools. Pupils are able to compete in many sporting activities like cross-country running, swimming galas, athletics, unihoc and kwik cricket, and have experienced coaching from a professional cricketer. Lunchtime and after school clubs, like country dancing and gymnastics, also provide valuable opportunities for extending and enriching pupils' learning. Opportunities such as these make a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development; their moral development is enhanced in terms of playing to the rules and learning how to win and lose.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. Excellent provision is made for religious education throughout the school. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. This is the direct result of the co-ordinator devising an extremely detailed and relevant curriculum. Suggested methods of teaching and a range of appropriate resources support planning very well.

171. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand the fact that certain books are special. During the inspection, they visited the local church and looked at the hymn and prayer books and discovered that the book on the lectern was the Bible. They could remember from a previous visit that the font is used to baptise people. One pupil referred to the process as 'dunking' the baby. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to discover and appreciate the wonder and beauty of our living world by using their senses, for example, feeling and drawing sea-shells. They are encouraged to share different feelings and experiences with others to recognise what makes them happy or angry.

172. By Year 6, pupils are developing understanding of a parable. In a lesson during the inspection, they listened to the story of the wise man building his house on the rock and watched as the teacher demonstrated what happens if you build a house on sand. They were fascinated as the sand collapsed and the model house fell into the water. Pupils used drama to depict the story of Noah in a class assembly.

173. By Year 9, pupils study the meaning of symbolism in worship and understand that praying and meditation are important in different beliefs. They make prayer beads from pasta and one pupil has written under his drawing of the Star of David that this is his favourite symbol. In a lesson in Years 7 to 11, pupils worked collaboratively, painting an Islamic pattern on a tablecloth. Individual pupils designed patterns using the computer. The teacher emphasised the point that Islamic patterns consist of patterns without any human figures. In a lesson for pupils with more complex learning difficulties in Years 8 to 12, the teacher explained the purpose of re-cycling waste. The pupils created a collage by using waste products, such as cans and newspapers, and experienced the different textures of the materials. Pupils visit a Hindu temple as part of their topic on the features of religious buildings; one pupil commented on how much he enjoyed the visit because he saw 'lots of statues'.

174. Religious education for the pupils with more complex learning difficulties is taught using a scheme of work that is closely linked to their personal and social development. During the inspection, pupils listened to music from different cultures and were given opportunities to communicate and to reflect on their experiences. They study festivals and traditions, for example, they visit the church and make gifts to celebrate Easter.

175. Teaching is very good overall. This is exemplified by the very good use of practical activities and resources in lessons, and by visiting places of worship to develop the pupils' feeling of awe and wonder. The teachers and learning support assistants provide good ongoing reinforcement of the learning objectives in lessons and this has the positive effect of engaging all the pupils in activities.

176. The subject is excellently co-ordinated by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher. The co-ordinator had a fixed term secondment to devise the curriculum structure and this will be repeated for the co-ordinator for pupils with multi-sensory impairment. This will enhance the religious education experiences for this group of pupils. The co-ordinator is further developing the range and quality of resources through the production of story bags to support the curriculum activities. Since the previous inspection, there has been a very good improvement in the provision for religious education, particularly in the appropriateness of the curriculum activities and in the relevance of the resources, for example the range of artefacts.