

INSPECTION REPORT

FAIRFIELD SCHOOL

Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107802

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Williams

Reporting inspector: Charlie Henry
16979

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 March 2002

Inspection number: 195348

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dale Lane Heckmondwike West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF16 9PA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pauline Lawton
Date of previous inspection:	13 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16979	Charlie Henry	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	<p>Art and design</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Personal, social and health education</p>	
2351	Jacque Cook	Team inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>Foundation stage</p> <p>Music</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
10449	Rowland Hull	Team inspector	<p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Post 16 education</p>	
22391	Nick Smith	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>Science</p>	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	<p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p>	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fairfield School is a mixed community special school for 92 pupils aged 3 to 19 years old with a wide range of special educational needs. Throughout this report all of these young people will be referred to as 'pupils', unless specifically referring to 'children' for pupils in the nursery and reception years, or to 'students' for those in Years 12 and 13 in the further education base. Of the 88 pupils on roll there are nine children who attend the nursery part-time. There are 16 students in the further education base. Overall, boys outnumber girls by about three to two. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs except for two who are undergoing statutory assessment. The school has approximately equal numbers of pupils who have severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many of these pupils also have physical disabilities. Many pupils have additional special educational needs resulting from visual or hearing impairment or from autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Since the last inspection in 1997 there has been an increase in the complexity of many pupils' special educational needs.

The school is in the Kirklees Local Education Authority area of West Yorkshire and shares the rich and diverse ethnic make-up of the area. Almost half of the pupils come from Pakistani, ten per cent from Indian and the remainder from white UK cultural heritages. Fifty-one pupils come from homes where English is an additional language and many of these children are at an early stage of learning language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high at 43 per cent.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Fairfield School is a very good school where all pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. The school's rich multicultural diversity is promoted exceptionally effectively. This is part of the very successful achievement of an inclusive school where each pupil is valued highly. Pupils receive a very high quality of education and have their needs very well met. As a result pupils' enthusiasm for school is excellent and their effort in lessons is outstanding. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall, all pupils achieve very well and make very good progress as a result of the very high quality teaching and the teamwork of all of the staff.
- The school provides a good curriculum for all pupils that meets their needs very well, especially for children in the early years base and students in the further education base.
- It is exceptionally effective in promoting pupils' social and cultural development, especially through its excellent use of the cultural diversity of its pupils, their homes and the school's locality.
- It provides a very caring environment where pupils achieve very well in their personal development. Pupils' relationships with one another and with staff are excellent.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is outstandingly high and they work exceptionally hard in lessons.
- The school works very well with parents.
- The headteacher and senior management team, supported by the governing body, provide very good leadership and management for the school.

There are no significant areas for improvement. Three minor points regarding the circulation of the termly Individual Education Plans (IEPs), the inclusion of drugs education and the storage of chairs and physical education apparatus in the hall are referred to in the report.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good overall improvement since the last inspection in January 1997. The key issues from that inspection have been addressed almost either fully or in the most part. Plans are in place to address the remaining aspects. The school has worked very successfully at revising its curriculum, including developing planning to ensure that pupils build upon what they know, understand and can do as they move up through the school. There is effective use of assessment to inform this planning and raise achievement even higher in English, mathematics, science and physical education, and in the further education base. The use of assessment in the other subjects is developing and identified as

such within the school's improvement plan. While there is much effective monitoring of teachers' work through their subject and pupils' plans there is not yet comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. There has been a substantial improvement in the school's identification of areas for improvement, the prioritising of these and their link with finance and training. Throughout most aspects of the school's work there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. These include, especially, the raising of pupils' progress and achievement, which are now very good overall, and, similarly, the overall quality of teaching and learning. The quality of the leadership and management and the commitment of all staff provide a good basis for even further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good A
reading	A	A	B	A	good B
writing	A	B	B	A	satisfactory C
mathematics	A	A	A	A	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

It is too early to judge how well the school meets its targets, as these have only recently been set. Overall, however, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. This is the result of the very high quality of teaching found throughout the school and the improvements made to the curriculum and in planning for meeting pupils' needs. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics, art and design and personal social and health education. In all other subjects, progress and achievement are good. Students in the further education base have made a successful start to accreditation through the Essential Skills Award.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent. They are exceptionally eager to come to school and they work outstandingly hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well. They are polite and thoughtful towards one another and staff.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good. Relationships are excellent. Pupils show very good respect towards others and their views and take on responsibilities very well when they can.
Attendance	This is satisfactory.

Pupils' very positive approach to school and their work helps them learn. They are kind to one another and their relationships with their teachers and other staff are outstanding.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Almost all lessons are of good quality and in most the quality is very high or occasionally excellent. This standard of teaching and learning is particularly due to the detailed planning to meet each pupil's needs and the extent to which all staff work very effectively as a team. Teaching of all pupils, including those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and those for whom English is a second language, is at an equally high standard. The teaching and learning of English are very good throughout the school, with an appropriate emphasis on the development of effective communication. Literacy is taught well across all subjects, although occasionally opportunities are not taken in the middle school to use information and communication technology to contribute fully to this learning. The teaching and learning of mathematics and numeracy are also of a very high standard. Staff use many opportunities to involve practical activities to help children learn. The teaching and learning of personal, social and health education are very good, based on very good planning and implementation of the school's ethos of equality of opportunity for all.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and very appropriate for the needs of the pupils. It is particularly good for children and pupils in the early years base and for students in the further education base, where work is exceptionally well chosen to ensure progress is made. The curriculum for all pupils is enriched through very good use of the local community and the provision of specialist weeks such as music week, book week and science week.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is very good provision for pupils with English as an additional language. Two Ethnic Minority Assistants work very effectively with individuals and with groups of pupils. They have developed strong links with parents and have made a strong contribution to the emphasis placed by the school in ensuring that these pupils do well in all areas of their work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, this is excellent. Pupils' social and cultural development are promoted exceptionally well; moral and spiritual development are promoted very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good care for its pupils. It is excellent at promoting pupils' good behaviour.

There is good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, adapted to meet the special educational needs of the pupils who have very significant learning difficulties. There is very good provision of personal, social and health education, with appropriate sex education. However, there is no education provided concerning the misuse of drugs. Careers education and guidance are very good. A few pupils in the early years base successfully attend local nurseries and schools. The curriculum for students is extended very well by links with a local college of further education. The school's approach to encouraging good behaviour is excellent and is underpinned by the strength of the relationships that staff have with pupils and in their knowledge of their needs. Assessment has developed well since the

last inspection and is rapidly being implemented across all subjects. Links with parents are very good. Information provided about how well their children are making progress has improved well since the last inspection and they contribute effectively to the progress pupils make at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and management. The headteacher is outstandingly successful at encouraging staff to be creative and show initiative.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body knows the school very well and provides very effective support for the school's development, particularly at a time of uncertainty about its future. Overall, it fulfils its statutory duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its work very well and uses this information very effectively to improve further.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used wisely. The school uses finance very well to meet its priorities for further improvement.

There has been substantial improvement in the quality of leadership and management of the school. This is based on a firm understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the outstandingly effective promotion of the school's philosophy of valuing everyone. The headteacher and senior management team are well supported by all staff who have management responsibilities within the base areas and as subject co-ordinators. There are sufficient, experienced staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some can be cramped when there are wheelchair users in class. The new accommodation for the further education base is of high quality.

The school has a good approach to the principles of best value in its approaches to change and use of resources.

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. • Behaviour at school is good. Their children are helped to become more mature and responsible. • Their children make good progress and they are kept well informed about how well they are doing. • Teaching is of good quality and staff have high expectations of their children's work. • The school works closely with parents and they feel at ease if they need to discuss any difficulties with the school. • It is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents questioned the extent of the extra-curricular provision • A very few parents questioned the amount of homework the school set.

It is clear from the parents' meeting and inspection questionnaires that parents are highly supportive of the school and its work. The inspection supports these very positive views of the school. The inspection considered the range of activities outside lessons and found that this aspect of the school's work is satisfactory for a school of this size and nature. The school has made several attempts to increase provision and there are plans to develop these efforts further. The inspection also found that the use of home-school books was a very effective way for pupils to work on important areas of their development and learning at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, pupils make very good progress and they achieve very well. This is the result of the very high quality of teaching across the school and the improvements in the curriculum and planning for pupils' needs. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when overall progress was found to be satisfactory. At that time progress was found to be good for children in the early years base and students in the further education base. This continues to be the case and these children and students are now deemed to be making very good progress. The very high quality of the curriculum in these areas and the way in which individual needs are planned for across all of their subjects and activities explain this improvement. This very positive view of how well pupils are doing is shared by parents.
2. The school has started to set targets for itself based on 'P levels'. These are sub-levels below the first level of attainment of the National Curriculum and are now widely used within special schools. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of the use that the school is making of these targets to raise achievements even higher. However, plans that are in place show how these targets will be used to evaluate how effective teaching and learning are and this will inform school improvement, including further staff training. Students in the further education base are increasingly following a curriculum based on the Essential Skills Award. As this approach is new, students have yet to achieve accreditation for their achievements.
3. There is no noticeable difference between the progress and achievement of pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and those who are more able. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when more able pupils did not always make the progress they should. This reflects, in particular, the improved planning contained in individual education plans (IEPs) and the effectiveness of the monitoring of these plans by base leaders and the headteacher. Boys and girls also achieve equally well. Similarly, there is no difference in the achievements of pupils for whom English is an acquired language (EAL). Again, this is due to the high quality of the work of all staff, especially the bilingual support assistants, and the emphasis across the school on valuing all pupils and promoting the diversity of their heritages.
4. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in English. Children in the nursery and reception classes within the early years base improve their communication skills very effectively due to the appropriate emphasis placed on this area of learning. Children learn to listen attentively and to enjoy stories. This focus on communication is built upon as pupils become older. More able pupils speak increasingly well about things they know, while those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to vocalise, and to use other means of communication such as raising their head and using switches. Pupils make good overall progress and achieve well in their literacy skills. This development is well supported across all areas of the curriculum, especially in the early years base and in the further education base, where children and students make the most progress. Overall, information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support this progress and is planned to develop still further.
5. Pupils do very well in mathematics and in learning number skills. They learn very well from the many interesting and practical activities that their teachers and support assistants give them to do. Pupils become increasingly accurate in counting and in simple addition and subtraction, and in using these in everyday situations. Thus, many students learn to use money when they go to college link course, when they prepare sandwiches to sell to staff and when they go shopping for ingredients for a meal which they are to prepare with their group. Less able pupils build on their understanding that they can have an effect on their surroundings.
6. Progress and achievement in art and design are very good across the school, as a result of the very high quality of teaching. Pupils really enjoy this subject. They develop from looking and

exploring different materials to learning a wide range of techniques to use. The subject is very successful in promoting the rich multicultural influences of pupils' home backgrounds and the area where the school is situated. Pupils make good progress in physical education. Staff work very well with physiotherapists to improve pupils' body movement through a broad range of activities and use of apparatus. In all other subjects pupils also make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The quality of pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and personal development were all judged to be of at least satisfactory or good quality at the last inspection. This standard has improved well and now these important aspects are at least very good and, in the case of enthusiasm for school and in pupils' relationships, they are excellent. The inspection supports parents' very positive views that their children become mature and responsible.
8. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. Their eagerness for school is outstanding and this shows in the way they maintain such very high levels of attention throughout their classes. They really do not want to miss anything that is happening. This is especially noticeable for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, who concentrate for longer than would usually be expected. In one science lesson, a group of senior pupils tried exceptionally hard to feel the range of hard and soft materials when given the opportunity to do so.
9. Behaviour is very good both inside the classroom and around the school. Pupils are polite to staff and to visitors to the school. They are keen to talk about what they are doing and, in the case of visitors, to ask why they are in school. Pupils who have difficult behaviour that is related to their special educational needs are effectively helped to improve, and incidents of anything less than very good behaviour are unusual. Pupils show a very high level of respect and concern for the views and experiences of others. They listen carefully when anyone is speaking. There is no bullying.
10. The quality of pupils' relationships with one another and with staff is excellent. This is the result of the school's approach to valuing everyone equally highly. They are eager to take responsibilities, for example, when taking the register to the office or in helping to tidy up after activities, especially following food preparation in design and technology. The students show the effectiveness of their personal development when they attend college. They cope with new situations very well, showing characteristic keenness.
11. Attendance is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with other similar special schools. Attendance levels are similar to those of the last inspection. The school is aware that unauthorised absence is well above the national average and continues to work with parents on this. The level of authorised absence is high and this is due to a very high level of illness and for medical reasons. Many pupils originate from the Indian sub-continent and this accounts for a significant proportion of authorized absence due to extended holidays. Transport arrangements to the school are very well established so that punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is very good overall and, as a result, pupils learn very well indeed. In almost all lessons, the teaching and learning are of a high standard and in the majority of lessons they are very good or occasionally excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
13. Teaching and learning are very good overall for children in the early years base and students in the further education base and in English, mathematics, art and design and personal, social and health education. This is because of the very careful and detailed planning to meet individual needs, based on teachers' knowledge of each pupil. This results in pupils showing exceptionally high effort and wanting to do well for their teachers and support assistants. In all other subjects the quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

14. In addition to the quality of planning, the other most important factor in this picture of high quality is the very high standard of teamwork among teachers, support assistants and other members of staff. All work together very well indeed, with great enthusiasm to make sure that pupils do as well as they can. There is very effective briefing of assistants by teachers about what the pupils are intended to learn and support staff often contribute to the planning of pupils' work. This thorough approach, with commitment to the view that each child is special and that their efforts will be highly valued, results in pupils who are very keen to learn and whose level of attention is very high. The needs of all pupils, including those who have additional special educational needs resulting from sensory impairment, are met to an equally high standard. Those pupils who have English as a second language learn very well, supported by the bi-lingual support assistants, especially through their teamwork with other staff and their liaison with parents. All staff use the range of multicultural experiences of the pupils to enrich their lessons and, in so doing, promote this aspect of school very well indeed. They expect pupils to be very active participants in lessons and pupils respond accordingly. The level of pupils' alertness and interest is a notable feature of most lessons.
15. Teachers know the pupils very well and also have high levels of knowledge of the subjects they teach. This is supported and developed by the work of subject co-ordinators. They are clear about the particular points of the lessons that are most important for the pupils to learn and they focus on these very well. For example, in a science lesson about different materials with pupils in Years 10 and 11 the teacher concentrated on the pupils' learning about 'light' and 'heavy'. She used a range of objects to show the difference, including dropping very heavy metal and concrete objects onto the floor, resulting in sounds of excitement and glee from the pupils. Teachers' classroom management is very good. They prepare a wide range of activities that contribute to the overall aims for the lesson and pupils move smoothly from one activity to the next. This means that pupils waste no time and maintain their concentration very well. The management of any instances of difficult or inappropriate behaviour is based on teachers' confidence in their knowledge of pupils, and is invariably positive and very effective. For example, a pupil who continually puts his hands in his mouth and thus cannot fully take part in lessons, is skilfully and successfully being guided to more appropriate behaviour. Home-school books and discussions between parents and school staff provide very good opportunities for parents to work with their children at home to support work that they are doing in school.
16. The teaching of literacy throughout the school is good overall. A characteristic of most lessons is the emphasis on effective communication, with the use of signing and simple electronic communicators to involve pupils more. Staff are very good at waiting for pupils to respond. Since this can take a little time, they do not rush and eventually the responses they expect are given. They use simple language to support their teaching and learning targets, with much repetition to consolidate the important words and concepts; for example, in a mathematics lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6 looking at the properties of rectangles the key words were repeated frequently. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching and learning of literacy is good overall, although there are a few occasions, particularly in Years 7 to 9, where opportunities are missed. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught very well to use eye pointing, gesture and vocalising to make their views known and to contribute fully to the lesson. They are also taught to operate switches, for example, to indicate they are in school when answering the register and to reply to important parts of the lesson.
17. The teaching of numeracy is very good throughout the school, with many opportunities taken to consolidate skills and knowledge in the practical activities which occur in most lessons. These include practice with counting, measuring and using mathematical language, such as 'large' and 'small' and 'more than', 'less than' and 'same as'. The older pupils are taught to use and develop their knowledge of money in the mini business enterprise of making sandwiches for staff. Students in the further education base are taught particularly well to use and develop their numeracy skills as they prepare for the transition to college and adult life; for example, in their use of public transport and in weighing and measuring ingredients as they prepare snacks and meals. These activities raise pupils' awareness of what they know and can do. Information and communication technology is good throughout the school and continues to improve as a result of staff training.

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

18. The curriculum is good overall, which represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, schemes of work (plans of what is to be learned) have been, or are in the process of being completed, to take account of three broad bands of learning: experiential, participator and creator. This is very effective in helping staff to plan work at the right level for each pupil. Pupils in Years 3 to 11 are taught a broad curriculum, based on the National Curriculum and including religious education, which has been appropriately adapted to meet their needs. There is sufficient time for each subject, although music for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is taught in only one term out of three and there are indications that pupils do not do as well as in other years. Older pupils do not have regular lessons in a modern foreign language, but they spend at least a term a year learning about a European country. For example, in the autumn term, pupils in Year 9 studied Italy. They learnt about the way of life in that country and to make simple greetings in Italian. Many pupils signed or spoke greetings and enjoyed exploring Italian food, indicating very clearly their likes and dislikes. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good. Elements from the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies are appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Opportunities are taken to group pupils according to their ability for lessons, for example, across three classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6, a system which works well. Classes are taught as 'pastoral', age-based groups on other occasions, bringing together the range of ability.
19. The curriculum is very good for children of nursery and reception age and pupils in Years 1 and 2. They are taught in the early years base. The areas of learning from the Foundation Curriculum are skilfully linked with the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The use of topics on a rolling programme ensures that the content of what is taught changes from year to year. The topic 'myself' is repeated in the first half term of the autumn term each year. This gives newly admitted children the opportunity to work on what they know and older children and pupils revisit the topic and update their knowledge and understanding. In many lessons, pupils are grouped according to their learning needs. Nursery aged children are included during the second session of the morning but have their first and final session with their 'pastoral' group. This provides the routine they need and gives them confidence to learn effectively. 'Workshop' sessions are very well planned to give children and pupils a wide choice of activities so that they learn effectively through play.
20. Staff have worked hard and successfully to review and revise the curriculum for students in the further education base since the last inspection. A wide range of activities prepares students very well for when they leave school. External accreditation of students' achievements is being developed using the Essential Skills Award. This approach is being phased in during the school year. It currently includes daily living skills, including snack preparation and other household skills, and personal and social skills. Community leisure activities are already part of students' timetables and accreditation for their achievements in this area, as part of the award, is scheduled for introduction this autumn. The range of activities offered is relevant, meets the needs of students and is a good natural extension of their earlier education. The school is taking appropriate steps to ensure that the targets from students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are included. There are effective links to ensure that students' work is built upon when they transfer to the college after leaving school, since the college uses the same curriculum framework. The school has a clear focus on planning for this transition to further education. Students enjoy attending the local college on link programmes and they join sessions in computing, catering and performing arts. These programmes are accredited through the award of the college's own certificates.
21. Careers education and guidance are included effectively in the curriculum. Children and pupils in the early years begin their careers education through imaginative play and role-play. The personal and social education programme helps older pupils to learn about themselves and the wider community. A careers convention at school was well attended by pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students from the further education base. Local colleges and the social centre attended and parents appreciated the opportunity to think about the next stage for their children. There is very

good liaison with the careers officer, who supports the school in an effective manner. Currently, innovative developmental work is being undertaken to help students understand the options when they leave school. Where appropriate, students participate in work experience. One more able pupil worked for one day per week over an extended period of time with a local employer and gained much from this real life experience.

22. Particularly good account is taken of the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs. Pupils who are visually impaired have sessions in the sensory room designed to explore and develop the use of their vision. Lessons in the swimming pool are used effectively to help pupils move and exercise supported by the water and rebound therapy is also beneficial.
23. There is very good provision of support for pupils from ethnic minorities. Many have specific sessions with specialist support staff, often working in both English and in their first language. Staff also work with groups of pupils, translating where necessary, to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what is being taught. Specific courses study Asian media and Asian cooking. In response to parental requests, separate swimming sessions for older girls have been arranged, to ensure that requirements for modesty are met.
24. Throughout the school, the provision for personal, social and health education is very good indeed. A very clear policy and detailed scheme of work give staff the guidance they need to plan their lessons effectively. Sex education is taught appropriately but education in drug misuse is not yet included.
25. A series of specialist weeks enriches the curriculum and deepens pupils' understanding. A recent science week studied the topic of space. An exciting music week also gave staff an opportunity to learn new skills. There has also been a book week, an art week and a mathematics week. These are very carefully planned and often involve visitors with specific expertise. A small number of parents feel that the school does not provide a sufficiently interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors felt that this aspect of the school's provision is satisfactory for a school of this size and nature. The school has made several attempts to improve these arrangements and these efforts continue with clear plans for the future. There is a social group of Year 10 and 11 pupils and further education students who meet together at lunchtimes with support staff in their common room. They use the play station that they have raised money to buy second hand. A school choir meets each week and learns new pieces and practises for competitions. Staff arrange discos after school, but difficulties with transport limit the attendance of a number of pupils. Particular skills are noted and, where possible, fostered. For example, two pupils have additional singing lessons from a peripatetic teacher and two other pupils have just started lessons in percussion with another peripatetic teacher.
26. There are very good links with the community. Visits are made to local theatres and museums. The choir has performed in a number of venues including the Leeds Town Hall and in Halifax. Very good use is made of local parks and shopping centres to widen pupils' experience. Additionally, the community is invited into the school. For example, the Interplay Theatre visited and performed and the mayor visited as part of pupils' learning about citizenship. A local animal centre brought an owl and a hedgehog into school as part of a science topic and pupils observed animals in their own environment at the centre. Students visited a florist's shop and then worked in school with the florist, making bouquets and baskets. Links with partner institutions are good and improving. Of particular note is the regular attendance at local nurseries of children and pupils in the early years base. This is very successful indeed. Five children and pupils regularly join classes and it is planned for one child to increase his attendance next term to half time. A few children have transferred from a local nursery that uses the school swimming pool each week. Children from the nursery visit the early years group on these occasions, thus furthering the link. Although there are good links for students with the further education college, it has proved difficult for the school to become involved with primary and secondary schools. There are plans to develop e-mail and web page contacts and to explore video links next term for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Local schools send students on work experience placements and one also arranges a trip for pupils each year.

27. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection.
28. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. This provision can be seen across the school through many of its activities. In religious education and assemblies pupils are helped to understand the spiritual aspect and values of Christianity and the major faiths of the world. The school maintains a very good balance between the various religions represented amongst the pupils and staff. For example, in an art and design lesson, older pupils very effectively design fabric prints and tie-dye cloth to produce materials representing the art and symbols of Muslim culture. Artefacts from the culture were displayed and incense was burnt to create an appropriate atmosphere. A very good atmosphere is created for collective acts of worship with accompanying music being carefully chosen and candles lit to create a feeling of calm and reverence, allowing opportunities for reflection. At the end of physical education lessons curtains are drawn, lights switched off and the pupils lie silently on mats with opportunities to reflect and to calm themselves.
29. Provision for moral development is very good. The school provides a clear moral framework for pupils and all adults provide very good role models. There is excellent teamwork among all staff and these relationships pervade the school. This has a very positive effect upon how pupils behave towards and value one another. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are helped to develop positive attitudes through the gentle and caring approach of the staff who work with them. Pupils are taught to distinguish what is right and wrong and to apologise for any mistakes they might make. They are encouraged to praise each other's work and this results in spontaneous applause as celebration of other pupils' efforts. This also helps pupils to take a pride in what they do themselves.
30. The school's promotion of pupils' social development is excellent. It is characterised by the excellent commitment of the staff to pupils' well-being and is supported by a wide range of social activities. These include visits, residential trips, concerts and performances given by pupils. As the pupils get older they are given a greater say in the provision the school makes, both within school and in the wider community around the school. For example, an Eco committee meets fortnightly to focus on awareness and care for the environment. The committee's representatives from the junior, senior and further education bases of the school are helped to prepare their own agendas and minute their meetings. They are also helped to promote their views and plans to governors and parents, for example, in re-cycling materials. Staff encourage pupils to help and support each other both in lessons and in their social activities. The school's personal, social, health and communication programme contributes very well to pupils' social development.
31. Pupils' cultural development is promoted in an excellent manner throughout the school. A wide range of very good displays around the school demonstrates the importance of the celebration of the cultural diversity of the school. For example, displays of art and other work illustrate Indian, Pakistani, African, Chinese, as well as Greek, Irish and other European cultures. The curriculum is enhanced through music from a range of different cultures and there are visits to school by representatives of a range of faiths and traditions. Pupils are introduced to the major faiths of the world and celebrate their various festivals. Food technology lessons prepare foods representing these cultures. Art and design lessons include designing fabrics and making artefacts representing different cultures. The wide cultural and linguistic experiences within the staff team are used most effectively to broaden and support the cultural development of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Overall, the school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils. Procedures have improved since the last inspection. The designated officer for child protection is appropriately trained and deals with issues effectively. The school also has a fully trained deputy. Staff show very high levels of care and vigilance at all times and know the procedures to be followed if they have concerns. The school has now formally adopted the local authority's health and safety policy. Staff carry out comprehensive and regular risk assessments. This includes individual risk assessments for all pupils so that staff are aware of the need for

support both in school and on school trips. All staff have received training in 'movement and mobility'. Electrical equipment and appliances on the premises are checked regularly. Fire drills are carried out frequently and are appropriately recorded. An appropriate number of staff are trained to administer first aid. A full-time nursing sister and assistant nurse are based at the school and they play a very strong role in medical matters.

33. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are outstanding. This marks considerable improvement from the effective procedures found at the last inspection. Detailed records are kept of any incidents of bad behaviour. Any problems are carefully monitored to ensure that improvements take place. The school is careful to ensure that pupils are only given individual behaviour plans for as long as necessary. There is such very good behaviour management by staff that other measures to manage unacceptable behaviour are hardly ever necessary. Staff know pupils so well that they know when to intervene and when not to. For example, in the early years, a child throwing objects is made to pick them up and return them to where they came from. Then, alternative soft objects are offered for play. Excellent use is made of a variety of rewards to maintain high standards. Teachers and support staff frequently praise good efforts and behaviour in lessons. Certificates are awarded at Friday assemblies with many comments on pupils' kindness and consideration towards others.
34. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good overall. An effective absence reporting system is in operation between the school and the transport escorts. The school maintains appropriate records regarding attendance and punctuality. This enables staff to identify patterns of absence and provide support where necessary. There is a strong partnership with the education social welfare officer, who attends the school frequently. Home telephone calls are made promptly regarding any unexplained absence and parents are given frequent reminders about the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters.
35. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. This is a good improvement on the previous report. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and progress in English, mathematics, science, physical education and in the further education base. The school has adopted a widely used system to record assessments for all pupils and has set targets for them to improve by the end of each important stage. Procedures for assessment in other subjects are less well developed, and this is recognised as an area for development in the school improvement plan. Assessment is well monitored by the co-ordinator, who has a clear vision of future development. Teachers make good use of assessment information in deciding how pupils should be grouped in order to give them the most appropriate work. Records of achievement are well presented and well maintained with carefully annotated examples of work. Photographs are very well used to record the work of the least able pupils. Students in the further education base are effectively involved in setting their own targets and in assessing their progress. There are also valuable opportunities for more able pupils in other parts of the school to evaluate their work themselves. The annual review cycle for Statements of Special Educational Needs is well established and these reviews provide a good summary of pupils' progress over the year. Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and specialist teachers for hearing impairment and visual impairment regularly visit the school to monitor pupils' progress and check equipment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Links with parents have improved considerably since the last inspection. For example, the quality of information to parents has improved significantly.
37. Parents have very positive views of the school. It is clear from the parents' meeting and inspection questionnaire that parents are highly supportive of the school and its work. The inspection team agrees that parents' positive views are well founded. The school has been successful in developing even better relationships with parents than those found at the last inspection. All parents replying to the questionnaire said that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on, and that they are comfortable about approaching staff with any problems.

38. The quality of information to parents, especially about pupils' progress, is very good. There are many positive features. The 'community notice-board' and other notices and photographs around the premises give parents much information about school activities and educational initiatives. Pupils' annual reviews involve parents, staff and external advisers appropriately. These reports give parents a very good picture of how their children are doing and what they know, can do and understand. Records of achievement are well presented and give parents first hand evidence of what their children have done. The school provides a detailed prospectus outlining its policies and routines. Curriculum information is sent out at the beginning of each term so that parents can stay abreast of their children's work. Newsletters are sent home regularly giving information about pupils' achievements, events and important dates to remember.
39. Links with parents are very effective, and their involvement has a very good impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is good. Bilingual staff are very helpful. For example, they provide translation services at school events and at annual reviews and undertake many home visits. They also spend time each day telephoning parents, dealing very effectively with points raised by teachers, reasons for absence and appointments. The level of telephone contact maintained with parents is very high.
40. The home and school agreement is well established and makes the expectations between parents and staff clear. The home-school books are used effectively and also promote good joint working, detailing activities that children can do at home to build on their work in school and giving parents good opportunity to inform staff about what their child has done at home. The school welcomes parents' involvement in its work. Parents are invited to events and celebrations such as Eid, Christmas musicals and UNICEF Day. Parents enjoyed eating lunch in school during the 'Lunch on us' day. A strong feature of this school is the level of consultation carried out with parents and the consequent influence on school practice. For instance, school workshops have included parents in discussions about sex education and 'equal opportunities' policies. Although parents have a role in setting targets in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for their children through the annual review meeting, the termly reviews of these IEPs are not yet routinely sent home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body have a very clear view of the direction of the school. Their very effective leadership and management have provided the basis for significant improvement since the appointment of the current headteacher in December 2000, based on accurately identifying the important areas for school improvement. This is a good achievement in the light of the uncertainties generated through the local education authority's ongoing review of the role of the school as part of its general review of special education within the borough. A special strength of the headteacher is the way she provides opportunity and support for staff to show initiative within the overall development of the school. The result is a very strong team of all the school's staff, where all feel valued and are keen to work together for the benefit of the pupils. The resulting feelings of mutual respect, positive challenge and support reflect the way that staff approach their work with pupils.
42. The school seeks to provide a high quality education for all pupils. Its aims include the promotion of equality of opportunity and valuing all individuals. It achieves these exceptionally well and they are reflected in all aspects of its work, from the reception of pupils to the school at the start of the school day to the 'goodbye' as they go home. All aspects of the school's work focus on the needs of each and every pupil. The broad multicultural heritage of the pupils is celebrated exceptionally well, so that all opportunities are taken to make each pupil feel special. Parents are rightly pleased about the quality of teaching and leadership and management of the school.
43. Responsibilities are delegated well to staff. The role of subject co-ordinators has improved well since the last inspection. They have effectively developed schemes of work and offer support and guidance to other teachers. They carefully monitor the planning of other teachers, although all do not yet observe teaching as a means of improving pupils' achievements further in their subjects. There are good examples, such as in English and music, where the co-ordinators have visited other classes to see the teaching and learning and then have provided feedback to all staff. This

information has been used well to improve the subjects. The base leaders have responsibility for the different age groups of classes in the school: early years, juniors, middle school, seniors and further education. These key members of staff have responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the full curriculum in each of these age ranges. They monitor very well the Individual Education Plans for each child within their base, checking that the teachers' lessons are planned to meet the targets. Most have been involved in the observation of their team members' teaching, as part of the performance management process. Their role is still developing and they are increasingly working closely with subject co-ordinators. The regular base team meetings are joined by subject co-ordinators to discuss how the subject plans are to be implemented and to offer guidance to teachers. The headteacher also closely monitors these key plans for subjects and for individual pupils and provides comment back to staff, which therefore results in a very good overview of the working of the school.

44. The commitment to improve the school even further and to work towards each pupil doing even better is very high indeed. This is shown in the importance given to looking at how well the school is doing in all its areas of work. The resulting school improvement plan is a most valuable document. It is the result of detailed knowledge of the school and all staff have contributed to it. The senior management team monitor the plan's implementation. It is contributed to well by plans to improve each area of the curriculum and age group bases. These are based on analyses by the co-ordinators and base team leaders of the strengths and areas for improvement. Plans are carefully costed. Whole-school areas for improvement are also tackled, such as the development of additional extra-curricular activities for pupils. The school has started to use P (performance) levels produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for pupils who are below the lowest level of attainment of the National Curriculum. These results are being used to look at the achievement of its pupils and to see how these can be used to set targets and raise standards even higher.
45. The governing body have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas where it is working to reach even higher standards for its pupils. They provide very effective support for the staff, especially the headteacher and senior management team. Governors are fully aware of the developments that have been made and appropriately question these changes as part of their valuable support. Recently, they have been heavily involved in discussions with the local education authority about the future of the school. Consequently, although there is not now a regular pattern of visits by governors to see the school during the working day, such visits do still happen and the visiting governor reports back to the full governing body. They have started to review the range of existing policies and discuss and agree new ones as a matter of routine. They meet their statutory responsibilities well, with the exception of inclusion of education about drug misuse in pupils' personal, social, health and communication programme.
46. There has been a significant improvement in the financial planning within the school. The current headteacher, with the senior management team and governing body, set the school's budget for the first time last year. Further improvements have taken place this year to ensure that the next budget has an even closer link to the school's improvement plan and is used to meet priorities. This includes the closer connection with the plans to improve each subject area. There are satisfactory arrangements to achieve the best value in the school's purchases. This includes a careful look at the need for expenditure and the range of options available. The administrative staff are very efficient and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. There are significantly improved and effective procedures in place to make sure that the school's finance is monitored and the information given to the headteacher and governing body. The use of designated funds, such as the Standards Fund, is firmly linked to their required uses, through local authority procedures. In the case of the school fund, there have been significant improvements following advice from the local authority's auditors.
47. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and sufficient in numbers to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. There is also an adequate number of support staff, some of whom are qualified nursery nurses. The school also has full-time support and specialist support from visiting teachers for pupils who have hearing or visual impairment. Two bilingual support assistants provide valuable support for developing pupils' language and in liaison with their parents. New staff are supported very well when they join the school. This includes all new staff;

for example, new lunchtime supervisors are paired with an experienced member of staff so that they can learn how best to meet their responsibilities. Likewise with new teachers there is very effective linking with experienced staff and they feel well supported. Arrangements for the performance management of staff are effective and all teachers have targets set. The support assistants meet together with the headteacher each half term. Staff training is now closely linked to the school's identified areas for development and, for example, has resulted in the significant improvement in curriculum and pupils' planning since the last inspection. For example, staff have received training in basic Punjabi, Makaton signing and in meeting the needs of pupils with sensory impairment.

48. As at the last inspection, accommodation is satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. It continues to be used well in many ways. Classrooms are mostly of sufficient size, although they can get cramped depending on the number of wheelchair users. Good specialist facilities include the swimming/therapy pool, multi-sensory facilities, specialist food technology rooms and a 'sensory garden'. The new suite for students in further education is of high quality. It has been very carefully designed to create a flexible area for teaching and learning, with a large open plan area alongside a smaller study area for more formal work. The suite is suitably different and separate from other parts of the school to make students feel they have 'moved up' from school, as would be expected at their age. The school has a separate library and also a computer suite. The computer facilities are well used, alongside those to be found in each classroom. However, the library is not well located, close to the entrance to the school, and this results in little use. The multi-sensory room is well used for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are many inviting and stimulating displays around the school that provide a positive source of information for pupils. The premises are well maintained by a caretaker and cleaning staff. The school is aware of the storage problems it has, especially in the hall, and also the deterioration of the school driveway and paths.
49. Overall, learning resources are good in relation to the needs of the curriculum. There are good resources for all subjects. In religious education, resources are very good. Learning resources have improved from satisfactory since the last inspection and they remain well used.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. Although there are no significant areas for improvement, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should consider the following actions:
- (1) Circulating the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to parents on a termly basis.
 - (2) Including drugs education within the programme of personal, social, health and communication education.
 - (3) Addressing the potential safety concern with storage of chairs and physical education equipment in the hall.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	50	34	4	0	0	0
Percentage	3	55	38	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	88
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	51

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	11.6	School data	3.8

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	9
Pakistani	42
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	37
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)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.9
Average class size	8

Education support staff: YR – Y13

Total number of education support staff	32
Total aggregate hours worked per week	702

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	1,025,034
Total expenditure	990,249
Expenditure per pupil	11,252
Balance brought forward from previous year	57,211
Balance carried forward to next year	34,785

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	88
Number of questionnaires returned	21

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	33	0	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	52	5	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	43	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	38	5	10	33
The teaching is good.	57	33	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	33	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	43	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	24	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	24	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	38	14	10	10

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

51. The provision for children of nursery and reception age is very good and, as a result, children achieve very well and make very good progress in all areas of learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is largely due to the very high quality of the teaching and learning. There is exceptional teamwork by the staff and very good quality of planning, which ensures that all children are constantly involved in activities. As a result, by the time children move to Year 1, they have made very good gains on the 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Curriculum and are very well prepared to begin work aimed at the National Curriculum. Great care is taken to ensure that children from homes where English is an additional language are well supported in their learning. A specialist support assistant works with individuals and groups of children ensuring that their understanding is clear and reinforcing instructions or requests from the teacher or other support staff. Additionally, many staff use words or phrases from home languages, for example, to ask a pupil to sit down. Nursery aged children attend in the mornings, gradually building their time and when they are of reception age they attend full time. Very effective use is made of class times when children of the same age are taught together. Additionally, children are grouped by ability at times, for example, during a language session, or they choose activities and may work with older pupils in Years 1 and 2 and younger children.
52. The work of the early years base is very well led and managed. There is a clear action plan linked to the school improvement plan showing how improvements have been and are being made to the quality of education for the children. Staff meet regularly to discuss and plan, which ensures that the organisation runs smoothly. Roles are very clearly defined and detailed planning ensures staff know what to do to enable all children to learn very well. Where classes work together, a member of staff is designated as a 'mover' to ensure children are involved at all times so that no time is wasted. The accommodation is used very well indeed, with three separate classroom areas and a larger area for whole base work. Specific areas enable children to move from one to another and to know what to expect when they get there. For example, there is a messy area for water and sand, leading to a painting area. A home corner is set up and resources are very well stored and easy to access by staff and, where appropriate, by children, thus increasing their independence. Individual classrooms are stimulating and exciting with interesting displays and items for children to handle and each has a particular focus, for example, language and numeracy. Very good use is made of information from the Portage Service through initial discussion and in the form of checklists. These provide a base line for staff to measure children's progress. Individual Education Plans are very good and set clear targets for children in all areas of their work. This also shows how well children are doing. Additional assessment is carried out during sessions and recorded. Excellent links are maintained with parents through weekly newsletters. Half-termly plans of what is to be taught are sent home so that parents know what children will be doing at school and can contribute if they wish.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. Children make huge gains in developing their independence. They are encouraged to make choices at every opportunity. When activities are arranged for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, alternatives are invariably offered. Staff take care to talk children through what will be happening and, as a result, children learn to trust the adults who work with them and to relax, helping, for instance, to position themselves in their chairs. Many learn to look at the reflections of their faces in a mirror because staff help them to notice the movement. Very good routines are established so the children are aware what will happen next, which gives them the confidence and security to learn. The greetings session in each class is a very good example of this. Children are clearly aware of others in the class and smile and laugh when it is their turn. More able children learn to select the correct photograph of each child and join in with the singing. All staff have consistently high expectations of children's behaviour and, as a result, children behave very well. For example, they quickly learn to remain in their seat during teaching sessions and are helped to develop good table manners during snack times. All children are

given opportunities to take on responsibilities; for instance, with adult support, they take the register to the office. More able children become aware of the needs of their less mobile classmates and often take toys to them. One child recently obtained an award for helping to clear away the dishes at lunchtime in the hall. Children are taught well to share and to take turns. For example, in the home area children investigated numbers and were asked 'whose turn is it next?' 'Who has not had a go?' By the time they are in Year 1, children are keen to learn and have improved their concentration considerably. They have made gains in learning how to look after themselves. For example, more able children learn to take off their shoes and socks for physical education with very little adult help. A few children successfully attend local mainstream nurseries and schools for an afternoon each week. They have developed their confidence and mix well with the other children. They take part in a range of activities and look forward to going each week.

Communication, language and literacy

54. A great deal of emphasis is rightly placed on improving children's ability to communicate. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties increase their ability to eye point, gesture and vocalise. They learn to operate switches, for example, to indicate they are in school when answering the register. Listening skills are developed well and they respond to their name, often looking at the person who is talking to them. Many children use a range of vocalisation, from single words to questions and sentences. They learn to carry out simple instructions, such as to choose an item or find their coat. Most staff use signing very effectively to reinforce their communication with the children, although a few do not consistently sign. Children are very aware of the meaning of 'objects of reference' used in the base. These are items that are linked to symbols and are used each time a particular activity is to take place. Staff are skilled in ensuring children have time to assimilate the meaning of the item; for example, a woolly hat represents outside play, a paintbrush is painting and a scoop is water play. Choices are made on the basis of understanding what is being offered. Staff tell stories very well and capture the interest of the children through using the tone of their voice and through exciting resources to bring the story alive. The story about the birthday party has balloons, streamers and pass the parcel. Children anticipate what will happen next. More able children name pictures in the storybook and repeat familiar lines in a story, for example 'we're going on a bear hunt'. Children are helped to develop their early writing skills through moving their hands in circles, feeling jelly. More able children make marks on paper using brush and paints, a few drawing good circles.

Mathematical development

55. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's mathematical skills. For example, in the home area, children are helped to count places at the party table, the number of candles on the party cake and the number of cakes each person has. During registration times the number of children present is counted and when stacking bricks they are also counted. As a result, children begin to copy adults and a few manage to get to five with a minimum of assistance. Specialist support staff ensure children make links between numbers in English and in home languages. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties explore shapes. They feel objects that are the same, for example, two cars that make a noise when moved across a surface. Most know that objects can be hidden but still they are aware of cause and effect, for instance when they press a toy that then makes a laughing sound. When children arrive in the morning staff often prepare activities with a mathematical focus for them. Even the youngest children begin to stack and explore shapes. More able children learn about the properties of shapes and post them through the correct holes in posting boxes. Staff make the learning fun; for instance, turning learning about round shapes into a game of pass the parcel and rolling balls from one person to another. Learning about shape is reinforced through use of a computer program showing circles. Children begin to understand capacity through filling and emptying containers during water play. At the end of sessions, groups are often brought back together and very good use is made of this time to reinforce what has been learnt and to celebrate success.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. Children are given opportunities to explore a wide range of materials. They help to make dough and discover the difference in texture of the dry flour, flour mixed with water and the cooked dough. When studying the topic of transport, children learnt about pushing and pulling and explored what happened when toy cars were pushed down slopes. Through good teaching, often hand-over-hand, many now use a computer independently for short periods, deliberately operating switches or a mouse to change the image on the screen. They particularly enjoy programs with sounds. More able children use tools carefully. They learn to flatten and roll dough and use cutters to make shapes and use paintbrushes and pencils to make marks with increasing control. Staff help children to establish the different properties of materials. For example, during sand or water play, they make suggestions and question children very skilfully to establish what is being learnt. Children are encouraged to make structures in sand and to explore floating and sinking objects in the water. They use simple construction equipment well. The more able model bridges and garages. Others are helped to stack and build with different large, soft shapes or to make towers with bricks. One child with profound and multiple learning difficulties stacked three or four bricks and managed to put a triangular shaped brick on the top before knocking it over with great delight. During science week as part of the space theme, children made silver rockets, developing skills in rolling and covering tubes in silver foil. Throughout the early years base, there are many multicultural artefacts and pictures on display. Children often have opportunities to listen to music from other countries, for example Indian music. They have made roti, a flat dough pancake, and served it with dips and many enjoyed the interesting tastes. This helps both to widen experiences and also to make links for pupils from ethnic backgrounds. During quiet times at the end of each day children have opportunities to reflect on the day.

Physical development

57. Mobility sessions are very effective in helping children with profound and multiple learning difficulties to improve or maintain their physical skills. Children work on a one-to-one basis with staff and follow a lesson which has been planned for the whole group but in which every activity is carefully modified to suit each child's abilities. Where possible, they learn to move themselves, rolling their bodies with adult support. Music and rhymes are used very effectively, for example in passing the baton to improve hand grasp. Sessions in the swimming pool are very effective in improving children's physical development as their movement is supported by the water and relevant buoyancy aids. They become confident in the water and move on their front and back. Children enjoy their sessions of rebound therapy with physiotherapists, which are very well organised and help pupils to relax as well as improve their muscle tone. More able children work successfully with pupils in Years 1 and 2 using apparatus in the gym. They warm up gradually for activities through working together on the mat. Staff use praise and encouragement and children's names to keep them involved in the activities. Once the circuit of apparatus is started, children demonstrate their skills in jumping and stretching, climbing up benches, through gaps and tunnels, down slides and over low boxes. Prompted and, where necessary, supported by staff, they improve their co-ordination and balance. They jump on small trampettes and carefully step across stepping blocks. Children's physical development is improved through their being able to play outside in a safe and easily accessible area next to the classroom. Using large play equipment helps them to improve their co-ordination and a few children learn to pedal trikes.

Creative development

58. Many opportunities are made for children to increase the range of media and techniques that they use in their art work. Staff demonstrate carefully and encourage children to participate. Initially, a few children are unwilling to feel different textures, particularly thick paint. Gentle persuasion and persistence gradually lead to their involvement. For instance, they paint with their fingers and make hand and foot prints. Children paint under ultra violet light to explore the exciting effects. They learn to blow through straws to make splatter painting and assemble collages, taking care to select materials and place them appropriately. Children make good progress in playing a range of percussion instruments, often with hand-over-hand support initially. Staff select instruments carefully to ensure that all children are able to perform: for example, instruments that can be easily shaken or can be held by an adult to enable a child to play. A resonance board is

used very effectively to enable children to listen to sounds that they make through movement and with instruments such as bells and shakers. Children learn to join in singing and with action songs. Imaginative play is developed very well. In the home corner, children pretend to make tea and cook meals. They enjoy the birthday party theme and put together 'party food'. All children are helped to dress up and move to music and by the time they are in Year 1, pupils can be seen happily dressed in such costumes as superman, a fairy complete with wings or smart glittery party clothes. At festivals children often perform, for example acting and singing 'The Enormous Turnip' at harvest time.

ENGLISH

59. Overall, the provision for English is very good. This is because most teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. This very good teaching takes into account the varied individual needs of all pupils at the school. Planning is very closely linked to pupils' Individual Education Plans and shows what pupils can do now and how well they are achieving over time. The consistently high standards are also due to the importance given to literacy throughout the school and the very good guidance and enthusiasm of the co-ordinators. The school's comprehensive English policy provides very good guidance and support for teachers. More able pupils are now better catered for than during the previous inspection when their English activities were considered to lack challenge. Achievement and progress are now more consistent and this is particularly noticeable in speaking and listening, where standards are very good.
60. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress in speaking and listening. There is very good and often excellent encouragement for pupils in these years to join in lessons. Pupils are able to communicate information about the stories they have heard and the activities that they have undertaken using their chosen method of communication. For example, one pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties shows great delight in reacting to staff singing 'Incy Wincy Spider' by lifting her head to follow the actions and sometimes vocalises to join in. Pupils in this age group develop their reading skills at a very good pace. Very good teaching and the lively interpretation of stories enable pupils to develop a good understanding of the stories they read as a class and most pupils are able to recall stories that they have read together. Pupils develop their writing skills very well, moving from mark making to copy writing. For example, one pupil with complex needs is able to make a variety of purposeful marks using pens, chalk, crayons and pencils.
61. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 practise their communication skills in groups arranged according to their ability. More able pupils can repeat parts of a story read by the class teacher and are able to share their reactions to it with other members of the group. Less able pupils can identify and point to household furniture. For example, one pupil makes the sound of a fire engine when shown a model and another uses a powerful microphone to practise saying "Good morning". In a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher used simple target language correctly focused on key points: "inside", "rectangle", "edge" and "side". Teachers, support staff and specialist visiting teachers use methods adapted from the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to develop a broad range of literacy skills. Progress in reading is very good. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to set attainable and realistic reading targets. Reading skills are very well developed using a combination of reading schemes, a phonics programme and "booster" groups to enable pupils to achieve their specific reading targets. Writing skills are also very well promoted for these year groups. Less able pupils practise mark making on large surfaces and can copy from circles drawn in sand. More able pupils are beginning to form letters and spell simple words correctly, although they often make mistakes.
62. Between Years 7 and 9 pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. For example, when they take on roles in the stories about Harry Potter, they are able to communicate with other pupils about what is happening. More able pupils can speak lines related to the story and can describe the characters and their role in the book. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are able to show awareness of stories and can often give attention and respond by moving their arms or achieving eye contact. Progress in reading is good. More able pupils are

given extra reading support and this is an improvement from the previous inspection when the reading skills of the more able pupils were not sufficiently developed. For example, one more able pupil can read over 30 symbols and can apply this knowledge to building simple sentences. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have access to a more age-appropriate reading scheme dealing with teenage situations and issues. Progress in writing skills is good, with less able pupils making marks supported by verbal prompting from the staff. More able pupils are able to form letters and write their names with prompting. The development of pupils' writing skills is supported well in most subjects by the use of ICT.

63. By Year 11 pupils' progress in speaking and listening skills continues to be very good. More able pupils can take part in a discussion lesson, with each pupil able to express his or her own views on a variety of topics from television programmes to teenage magazines. A number of pupils with complex learning difficulties are able to use pictures to exchange information with staff and other pupils. For example, during a dramatisation of "Kidnapped" by Robert Louis Stevenson all pupils were given a role to play, with pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties being given the choice of appropriate symbols to represent the characters' emotions. However, the use of signing and symbols with these year groups is not consistently used by all staff. Pupils' progress in reading is good, with more able pupils showing a range of abilities, from those that can define their day's activities using symbols through to those who read simple words. Because pupils have very good opportunities to take part in interactive drama sessions, they learn to enjoy a wide range of literature. Progress with writing skills is good, with pupils' work ranging from mark making to copy writing. A few pupils can write a small number of words independently, including their own name.
64. Students in the further education base make very good progress in English. Speaking and listening skills are promoted very well at the beginning of each day when the students discuss their targets for that day. More able students write out these daily targets and use the computer to redraft work. More able students also check the Internet for emails and other messages. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to develop basic forms of communication. For example, staff establish a familiar beginning and end to sessions, which successfully encourages students to give responses either vocally or by eye-contact. These students use a communicator to say 'hello' and press a musical button on a photograph of themselves to answer the register.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is particularly good in Years 1 to 6 and in the further education base where the standards are consistently very good and occasionally excellent. In Years 7 to 11 teaching and learning are good overall and, at times, very good. Teachers and support staff work very well together and have formed very good relationships with pupils. Their expectations of pupils' achievements are high and planning is very good, ensuring that all pupils' needs are met well. They are very effective at giving plenty of time for pupils to respond. The subject is very well led and managed, as shown in the good improvement since the last inspection. The improvement in standards during this time reflects the attention that has been paid to developing teachers' skills and knowledge in the use of signing, symbol communication systems and objects of reference. The school library has a comprehensive range of reference and story books; however, its position in the school entrance area makes it difficult for pupils to concentrate because of frequent distractions.

MATHEMATICS

66. Progress and achievement for pupils throughout the school in mathematics are very good. This shows a very good improvement since the last inspection. This improvement is due to the high quality of teaching and learning, especially the very practical nature of the lessons, which engage and interest pupils so well. The revised and clear curriculum structure helps teachers to plan to meet each pupil's needs very well.
67. By the end of Year 2 more able pupils have started to develop a firm understanding of number, counting successfully to five and taking away one. They sort objects according to shape and begin to follow simple sequences. A few can name the colours of the objects. Less able pupils

- respond to a range of sensory stimuli, such as lights and noises. They recognise familiar adults and locate objects by looking at them and then follow these as they are moved. They explore long and short, and heavy and light items. Pupils enjoy their work and they join in number songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They wait patiently at times to take turns. Teaching is very good, with thorough planning to meet each pupil's needs. Resources are used well to support learning in practical activities, for example in using a drum to beat out numbers as they are counted and using exciting red balloons to encourage attention to counting.
68. In Years 3 to 6, again, teaching and learning are very good, with well-planned lessons that make sure no time is wasted. Staff help pupils work towards their targets and pupils are very keen to learn. More able pupils increase their understanding of numbers up to ten. They count objects and correctly match the answer with the numeral. They start to use simple number lines when counting. Many begin to learn about the properties of simple shapes, for example, that circles are round and have no corners. Most pupils develop a greater understanding of relevant language, such as sides, corners and edges. More able pupils learn that rectangles have four sides and corners and that the sides of a box are rectangles. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties increasingly understand the effects of their actions, for example, when using a communicator switch to relay a simple message. They associate relevant objects of reference to the lesson and activity they are to do, for example, a coin used to indicate a mathematics lesson.
69. By the end of Year 9 pupils have developed a range of knowledge and skills that they apply to practical activities. They measure liquids and weigh using scales, reading the numbers correctly from the scale and estimating simple quantities. More able pupils count with confidence numbers over ten, and read information from simple graphs generated on the computer, such as which one of their class has the largest or smallest feet. Less able pupils interact more with their environment, especially in the multi-sensory room, for example, where they see how they have an effect on the fibre optic curtain. They handle a range of objects and increasingly explore their shapes and texture. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers and support staff use signing well to help pupils understand and they use practical activities wherever possible so that pupils are interested in their work. Pupils try really hard to please their teachers.
70. Pupils, by the end of Year 11, are using their understanding of mathematics increasingly in more "real life" situations. For example, they take part in a mini-enterprise scheme where they make sandwiches for sale to staff. This gives them opportunity to apply their understanding of money. They sort coins to make amounts such as £1.00, £1.20 and £1.25. Many have an understanding of the relative value of money, for example, £1 is more than 20p. Simple surveys are undertaken, for example, of birds around the school and the weather. The results are collated onto a graph and the more able pupils read these to answer questions about the most common bird or how days have been sunny. Many pupils write numbers to ten, understand 'more than' and 'less than' and measure lengths in metres and centimetres. They carry out simple addition and subtraction, with a few pupils checking their answers with a calculator. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils are able to use and build on their knowledge and skills on well-suited tasks. The high quality of the relationships with teachers and support staff ensures that the high expectations are maintained and pupils are well motivated.
71. Students in the further education base continue to improve their mathematical skills. More able students use money in practical situations. For example, they shop for food they are going to cook and have money to spend when they are at college. They weigh and measure in their cooking and use simple mathematical language with increasing accuracy. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to consolidate their understanding of cause and effect. They are clearly aware of the daily routine and anticipate enjoyable lessons such as music. They are very prepared to explore objects and react to different shapes and textures.
72. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has effectively used training opportunities to revise the curriculum. The revised curriculum ensures that there is a good sequence of activities that build upon pupils' skills and knowledge. Photographs taken during a very successful "maths week" show an exciting and varied range of activities. There is good use of mathematics in other subjects, with staff taking opportunities to count out loud when practical. Information gained from assessing pupils' progress is used well and teachers work closely with support staff monitoring pupils' work. A strength of the teaching is the very close working

relationship that support staff and teachers have. This high level of attention to detail means that progress for pupils is sustained effectively. The use of ICT is low key, but relevant. Where computers were seen in use, the tasks set were helpful and supportive of the lesson objectives. Resources are good and suit pupils' needs well.

SCIENCE

73. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in science. This is due to the good quality of teaching and the very good planning for what pupils are to learn. The school has developed plans showing what pupils will learn at each stage based on the National Curriculum and on a published curriculum designed for pupils with learning difficulties who are at the earliest stages of the National Curriculum. Pupils benefit from the approaches, which encourage scientific enquiry. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress overall. Pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties also make very good progress.
74. By the end of Year 2, many pupils understand that properties of materials can change. For example, they experience making dough and finding out what happens when the dough is heated. The pupils all participate in experiments where they observe melting. The most able work on techniques to enable them to participate in practical work on forces, involving blowing and moving. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties work on sensory tasks involving tasting and choosing. They explore pushing and pulling, and work with a range of materials to experience hot and cold, and hard and soft. All pupils know some of the consistent features in their own environment and gradually become aware of the wider environments.
75. Pupils in Year 6 continue to develop their understanding of the environment. Many can explain the simple patterns of the water cycle and they try to predict how water will behave. They experiment, choosing equipment to move water and indicate outcomes. These pupils use their knowledge of forces to make boats move. They also experience a range of materials, establish a basic understanding of size and methods of separating solids using a range of sieves. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties react to visual stimuli, track lights in dark rooms and recognise changes in their immediate area.
76. By the end of Year 9, pupils are widening their experiences. For example, they explore the sensory garden and respond well to practical activities that involve noises and flashing lights. The more able groups complete interesting work on simple circuits and enjoy making the buzzers work. Pupils in this year group are experiencing work on the weather and seasons; they begin to understand plants and how they grow.
77. In Year 11, pupils are beginning to use technology in exploring the environment. The least able continue to use a multi-sensory approach to the study of earth and beyond. The more able understand and observe bacteria and microbes. They can explain the differences between healthy and unhealthy foods. They all know about the damage man causes to the environment and take part in award winning schemes. Groups of more able pupils develop understanding of solids, liquids and gases and what happens to them when they are heated and cooled.
78. It was not possible to observe science lessons with students in the further education base during the inspection. However, their work shows a range of understanding of science and their progress continues to be good. For example, their understanding of the environment is very well developed and students help to plant and look after the sensory garden. Their awareness of properties of different materials is used in thinking about what boats are made of. Many students understand re-cycling and are part of the Eco committee that tries to promote this within the community.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good overall throughout the school. Teachers plan all of their work carefully and very well around topics or themes. This ensures that lessons are interesting and well matched to pupils' abilities. The range and consistent use of practical activities means that pupils learn effectively as they broaden their scientific knowledge. These approaches ensure very good links between science and other parts of the curriculum, including design and food technology and mathematics. Teachers provide many activities that reinforce and consolidate basic literacy and numeracy skills. These also support well the development of pupils' social and communication skills. The teachers and support staff work very well together with enthusiasm and high expectations for the pupils' achievements. The quality of planning and teaching effectively makes pupils want to learn and ensures that they use their time well. Pupils show interest in their work, concentrate well and are keen to explain what they learn. For

example, when working in a group considering a range of materials they sort these into rock, wood and plastic, try to say the names and explore shapes and properties.

80. Science is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has effective oversight of teachers' planning and assessment. She uses this to monitor and review the curriculum to ensure all pupils' needs are well met. The resources for the whole curriculum are very good, with the sensory resources ensuring that all pupils are able to experience science to the limits of their ability.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement across the school are very good. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The subject is now more distinctly taught and a greater range of three-dimensional work is taught. Progress, learning and achievement have all improved and teaching is now very good overall. Management of the subject is now good and monitoring and evaluation of teaching have started to support even further improvement.
82. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they draw and make marks, selecting and using colour effectively. They tear, cut and stick materials on pictures to make collages, developing successfully an interesting range of textures in their work. Pupils in a Year 2 to 6 class, supported by excellent teaching, examined work by Claude Monet and used colour in a sensitive manner to represent the sun and water they saw in the painting. A few more able pupils responded to questions about the colours they could see and mixed colours to get a desired effect. By the end of Year 6, pupils show an increasing awareness of the use of primary colours by mixing them with other colours. They use the paint taking greater account of composition and design. Pupils visited Salts Mill in Bradford to examine the work of David Hockney. The class completed very successfully a big, colourful landscape and painting of houses, in the style of the artist. Other pupils had produced a photomontage of pictures they had taken, influenced by his later works. With the help of staff, they had successfully used the computer to develop colour changes within the photographs. Pupils are conversant with a range of techniques and can print patterns and screen print, influenced by artists such as Andy Warhol. They use and mould clay to produce small pinch pots and clay tiles, making marks to produce a range of interesting designs.
83. As they get older, the range of techniques and skills which pupils use widens considerably. By the time they are in Year 11, pupils use printing blocks to design fabrics and are aware of the technique of tie-dyeing. Students in the further education base mix a range of poster colours onto a surface and, after developing a good range of patterns and textures in the paint, make prints. They expressed surprise and enjoyment at the range of prints they were able to obtain and how they changed as the colour dried. By the time they leave school, most have sufficient manual skills and awareness to make and decorate puppet heads. In one lesson, the pupils appreciated that all faces have the same basic features and that the complexion of skin, eye and colour may vary. They used glue to fix the hair, styling and cutting it to a desired length. Samples of work on display show very good achievements in making plaster casts of faces modelled in papier-mâché. A very good range of print making is shown where patterned pictures are designed using marks cuts into polystyrene and the making of a range of printing blocks, including making prints with rollers and other markers on surfaces.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Lessons are carefully planned using a good scheme of work. Resources are carefully matched to the pupils' needs and ready before the lesson starts. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' progress and these are used effectively to match work to the needs of the pupils. Time is very well used and there is excellent teamwork between teachers and support staff. In a Year 10 and 11 class, for example, all pupils were able to produce a fabric design, due to the very high levels of support they received from the teacher and support staff. Pupils work at a good rate, using their time well with very good degrees of interest and enthusiasm. They are proud to display and discuss their work.

85. The subject is led and managed well. The quality of teaching has started to be monitored and evaluated by the subject co-ordinator and there is an effective action plan for further developments. The subject links very well with other subjects and helps pupils with their understanding of the cultural and religious aspect of art. Good opportunities are used to develop the pupils' literacy skills, in particular their speaking and listening skills. Very good displays around the school illustrate work influenced by the pupils' studies of Indian and Pakistani culture, with an exciting range of two and three-dimensional work, interpreting cultural influences very well. Prints and friezes influenced by their studies of the Islamic and Buddhist religions are seen and, whenever festivals arise concerned with the range of cultures and faiths represented by the pupils in the school, opportunities are taken to use art and design as a medium to help the pupils' understanding. A recent art week, supported by a visiting artist, produced some very exciting work, where pupils made large clay tiles and fired and glazed them. The pupils' high achievements are acknowledged and celebrated by the number of occasions when samples of pupils' work are displayed in public places within the vicinity of the school. The local education authority produces a yearly calendar of pupils' art representing all the schools in the authority. It is to the credit of the pupils and staff of the school that, out of the 12 pictures represented in this year's calendar, three are from Fairfield School.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Pupils' achievements and progress in design and food technology are good overall. This is because the teaching is of high quality. Lessons are well planned with strong links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, there is a good link with science in the introduction of the ways that materials are used to make dolls and in observing changes when making dough. The subject supports well pupils' personal development and independence by providing a range of activities that ensure that many pupils can cook.
87. Pupils in Year 2 develop their skills in play when making models. This improves co-ordination and progress toward their individual targets in areas of movement and physical development. They take part in work based on a 'water' theme and understand use of the wind when designing boats, some with sails and some with jets. Most pupils improve their skills with different tools, including in cutting and painting. Pupils in Year 6 have developed a range of skills such as mixing ingredients and rolling dough to improve their cooking of French bread and pizzas. They help cut tomatoes to add to their pizzas. These pupils develop their use of ICT as they are all introduced to designing using the computer to provide borders around their work. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very good progress. They attend and concentrate well and inform staff of their choices. The more able pupils use construction kits to build towers.
88. By the end of Year 9, pupils have worked with great interest in preparing a wide range of meals. When working on themes of India and Pakistan, the most able know that they will cook with rice. Most use common kitchen utensils and know their names. Pupils compare textures of fruits, with all pupils taking part in chopping, feeling, tasting and mixing. They also observe changes that occur in cooking, for example, when foods become softer and tastier as they are cooked. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties indicate their preferences by eye pointing. They smell the many varied scents that are a feature of the meals. Their likes and dislikes of texture and taste are firmly developed. A strong feature of pupils' work in food technology is its contribution to their personal and social development. They prepare these meals to eat in school and, as a result, develop further their social skills as they get the meal ready and as they eat it together. They are very aware of the environment and of the needs of people in other countries, for example, the principles of fair-trading in its simplest forms. Pupils improve their understanding of the design process, which involves drawing up plans and reviewing their work. For example, when making a snack, they prepare a list of ingredients and the sequence of things they must do to make the snack.
89. Pupils in Year 11 and students in further education continue to make very good progress, particularly in food technology. These pupils and students widen their knowledge of food and their cooking skills improve. For example, they can make curries, bread, and snacks. A group of pupils make sandwiches to order and sell them to staff, helping with their understanding and use

of money. They know about, and take due care with regard to, the safety issues in kitchens and workshops. Further examples of developing knowledge of technology include their use of a range of switches and controls, including those on the microwave oven. Many appreciate variety in buildings and have an understanding of the different materials that are used in construction. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to learn about the use of tools, often experiencing activities, for example, applying butter to bread or cutting, with staff providing hand-over-hand guidance and pressure.

90. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is good overall, on occasions very good or excellent. Teachers and support staff work very well together. They have very good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' abilities and needs. This leads to very good planning and organisation to ensure that tasks are challenging and that effective learning will take place. The staff use a wide range of activities to meet pupils' needs and use signing well to communicate to pupils who require it. This range of activities helps pupils to be enthusiastic about learning and to want to do more for themselves. Pupils are very interested and really enjoy this subject. They learn to look after each other and to be aware of the needs of others.
91. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and assessment very effectively. There is a good and comprehensive plan of what pupils will learn, which is well linked to the National Curriculum and based on a published curriculum designed for pupils with learning difficulties. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The specialist accommodation is well used, especially the dishwasher in the further education base. Resources are good overall and well matched to pupils' needs. While there are few resources for work with a broad range of materials, this is balanced by the very good facilities for food technology.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

92. History and geography are taught from Years 3 to 11 as part of topics. In Years 1 and 2 they are covered as part of the broader area of 'knowledge and understanding of the world'. Due to timetabling arrangements it was only possible to observe limited amounts of humanities teaching and learning during the period of inspection. Judgements about geography and history are, therefore, based significantly on the scrutiny of previous work and on records of teachers' planning and pupils' achievements. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well in history and geography. There has been a good overall improvement since the previous inspection when only teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 were considered to be good.
93. By the end of Year 2, pupils have taken part in activities to develop their awareness of the local environment. Most are able to follow simple directions to find different rooms within the school and understand that different rooms are used for different purposes. Through studying toys pupils learn historical vocabulary such as 'old' and 'new' and 'long ago' and 'nowadays'. By the end of Year 6, pupils can recall aspects of the past as experienced through stories and can sort objects into old and new. Most understand that the Romans were people who lived in the past. They also understand a few of the ways in which life in Roman times is different to their own lives by exploring pictures of what the Romans wore, their houses, baths and roads. They also model Roman artefacts. Through the study of the seasons pupils have an understanding of how the weather changes with different times of the year. For example, one pupil in a Year 6 lesson was able to react to a story about Spring by spotting the deliberate mistake by saying, "No, it's not Spring in the story, it's winter because of the snow". Pupils also study other aspects of the weather, for example where rainwater comes from and how it changes shape and finds its own level.
94. By the end of Year 9, pupils have studied life in Tudor England. They know the importance of historical figures such as Sir Walter Raleigh and explore his role in Elizabethan England. More able pupils can understand the differences in life-style between living now and living in Tudor England. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study farming and how food is produced. They compare fresh food to the same product in a can. Pupils continue to make good progress during Years 10 and 11. They study the Victorians and participate in a Victorian drama through dressing up in period costumes. They learn about a few of the important social changes that took place and the people

who instigated these changes, for example, Florence Nightingale and nursing reforms. In geography, pupils compare the climate and physical geography of India and Pakistan with Britain. They understand the differences in weather and how this affects what crops can be successfully grown in each country. More able pupils can place the position of the Himalayan Mountains, the river Ganges and the Indian Ocean on a map.

95. The subject co-ordinator's role is currently undertaken by the headteacher, following recent changes in school staffing. Notwithstanding that she has limited time to monitor teachers' planning of the subjects throughout the school and the progress made from year group to year group, there is a clear vision as to how the subjects are to be developed further and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. Progress and achievement for pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) across the school and in the further education base are good. This is good improvement since the last inspection, especially for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, who made limited progress at that time. This overall improvement reflects the increased emphasis on ICT by all staff and their improved levels of knowledge resulting from further training. It is used effectively to support learning in most subjects and is developing well in the others. In the further education base, more able pupils have specific ICT teaching within their timetables and a few students attend ICT lessons on a link programme at the local college of further education.
97. More able pupils in Year 2 begin to use the keyboard to find letters on a large keyboard and, with considerable help, write simple sentences, for example, in replying to an invitation to a party. They know that when they move the mouse then the cursor also moves and that they can have an effect on what they see on the screen when they click on particular icons. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are developing an understanding of using a switch to make a response to a question from their teacher; for example, to say 'hello' by pressing a switch connected on a pre-recorded tape, and to have an effect on light and sound in the sensory room. By the time pupils are in Year 6 most have continued to become more familiar and confident with the use of computers. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties further improve their ability to use switches to have an effect on what they see or hear. More able pupils have increased their accuracy when using the mouse, for example in their use of the cursor to point to particular items of household furniture on one program. They continue to learn to find letters on the large keyboard, finding them more quickly and using them to write words.
98. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 use the computer to support the development of reading and spelling well. They match words on the screen that are the same. Many use a concept keyboard to write simple sentences from the choice of common words. A few type simple sentences with help using the keyboard. This literacy work is based on a commercial reading scheme used within school. The progress and achievement students have made by the time they are in the further education base allow them to use ICT for a range of learning. They use a program that includes both letters and symbols to write simple sentences. A few do this work independently. During their study in the further education base students continue to use another program to practise aspects of shopping in a supermarket for when they actually do their shopping for preparing meals. Many use the Internet to search for topics of interest and know how to use their list of favourite sites to find important ones very quickly. They write and receive emails, although many require help with this. A few are able to scan documents and place the pictures with text.
99. Teaching and learning of ICT across the school are good. Staff's increased knowledge has resulted in more detailed planning to meet individual pupils' needs. A greater use of the subject leads to pupils' gaining skills and knowledge more effectively. Consequently, pupils are very interested in what they do, they concentrate well and work hard. A strength of the teaching is the choice of software that teachers select for lessons. The school has a broad range of good quality interactive programs that encourages pupils to learn and links well to different topics they are learning about. One example promotes an understanding of shopping, another takes pupils on a tour of places of worship.

100. The subject is managed well by the school subject co-ordinator, who has a good understanding of the role of ICT in the curriculum. Overall, there are good plans of what pupils will learn, which ensure that knowledge and skills develop continuously as they move up through the school. These plans are not yet fully in place in all subjects so that all appropriate opportunities to use ICT are taken, particularly in English and art and design. Good outside links with other schools have been developed, which enable the school to extend opportunities for pupils, for example through email. The school has invested steadily in upgrading equipment, purchasing new, and developing existing, machines. The computer suite is linked to the further education base and has good quality broadband Internet access. Plans are in hand to link all class based computers to this network. The school has a good range of appropriate specialist switches for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and adapted equipment for pupils who have physical disabilities, which make the use of an ordinary keyboard and mouse difficult. Equipment is well maintained and supported by a technician who works part time for the school.

MUSIC

101. The provision for music has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is largely because there is now a clear and detailed scheme of work (plan of what pupils will learn) to guide staff. Additionally, staff have improved their skills through a range of in-service training. It was only possible to see a few music lessons during the inspection. Nevertheless, these lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' records and discussions with staff indicate that pupils make at least satisfactory and usually good progress in music.
102. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils are used to listening to and joining in with a range of songs and rhymes, which are used very effectively throughout their work. For example, songs are used to signal the start and end of an activity and lunchtime. This helps pupils to have a clearer understanding of the routine of the day and to anticipate what will come next. In mathematics, pupils sing about 'Five little bears' and join in with the actions for the song, often with well-timed adult assistance. They play percussion instruments, making a range of interesting sounds. Pupils enjoy listening to the sounds made by air escaping from a balloon and many clap in time to party music. The sound processor, a recent acquisition, is used very effectively to help pupils from all year groups to vocalise and make sounds. Pupils in Year 6 join in well with music, making their own compositions. For example, they use percussion instruments to play along with 'Aquarium music' from 'Carnival of the Animals'. The sounds that instruments make are continually explored with well-timed support from staff. For example, they learn to make their sounds at the correct time to the rhyme 'Incy, Wincy Spider', responding to prompts and very good signing from support staff. Most pupils understand the difference between loud and soft and fast and slow music.
103. By the time they are in Year 9, pupils have continued to increase the range of instruments they know how to play and, because they are constantly offered choices, have developed clear preferences for certain instruments. They think about and respond to storm music, playing louder to imitate the crashing waves. Most have a good understanding of playing loudly and softly and join in with familiar songs. Pupils follow strong beats well: for example, the samba rhythm encourages them to sway their bodies and dance or move to the music. During Years 10 and 11, pupils study music for one term out of three, which leaves too long a gap in their learning. Records show they enjoy singing and build on their knowledge and skills. Pupils learn to identify moods in music. By the time they leave school, students have developed clear preferences for music. They select which CD they wish to hear and react to strong beats. They make 'tick-tock' sounds using claves, accurately keeping time with the music. Students make very good progress when they have one-to-one support following a demonstration of what is expected. They pick up on tempo and clearly tap out the syllables of their names.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils learn well because they are constantly encouraged and praised by staff and they try hard to improve. For example, a pupil rises to the challenge of playing the drum softly and then louder. Lessons are planned well to ensure all pupils participate to the best of their ability. The range and change of activities, for example, from

listening, to playing, to participating in an action song, ensures that no time is wasted and that pupils' interest is maintained. Resources are to hand, often on a trolley so that pupils are able to make choices of which instrument they would like to play. Support staff are effective and play a vital role in ensuring that all pupils are able to participate successfully.

105. The subject is well led and managed. Much work has been done over the last 18 months to improve the quality and raise the profile of music in the school. A clear action plan for raising standards in music shows the steps that have been taken and what is planned for the future. The scheme of work ensures that music makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils. The range of music that pupils study is wide. For example, they learn about and listen to music from South Africa, Brazil and New Zealand. They also explore traditional music, for instance music used for Morris dancing and classical and modern pieces. An excellent music week provided a wealth of experiences for the pupils and also provided very good in-service training for staff. The co-ordinator produces a newsletter for staff on a regular basis giving details of courses or developments in the subject. This has resulted in staff attending training sessions and raising their levels of expertise and confidence.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. Overall, pupils' progress and achievements in physical education are good. Since the last inspection pupils' progress and achievements have improved well as a result of the quality of teaching and learning. There are better arrangements for physiotherapy, where most pupils are very effectively supported in their classes or by working in groups, as seen in rebound therapy, where the trampoline is used to improve their mobility and body movements. Pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities are now supported better due to the provision of resources to aid their input. In all lessons pupils, across all abilities, are now supported well due to the good input from teachers and support staff. By Years 2 and 6, progress and achievements are good. Pupils by Years 9 and 11 and students after the age of 16 achieve very well.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learnt to enter the hall sensibly and sit awaiting instruction about what they are to do. They follow well the actions of the teacher in both warm-up and apparatus work. Here most climb steps, up and down, walk across a bench, balancing well, crawl through a tunnel and roll across a mat. They successfully use wall bars to slide, climb up, and stand on and jump off a low box, with usually good degrees of control and awareness. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 successfully build on their learnt skills where they perform more complex movements on the apparatus, with improved levels of balance and control. They successfully perform an increasing number of activities at various heights and levels. For example, in the warm-up activity, pupils in a Year 4 to 6 class performed dance steps in time to music, moving backwards and forwards to a basic 'one, two' step. They enjoy using a larger range of apparatus, climbing ropes and wall bars with success, and are confident to climb on and off apparatus at higher levels. Most confidently improve ball control skills; for example, in a Year 3 to 6 lesson the pupils showed satisfactory skills to take, hold and pass a ball to one another.
108. Older pupils further increase their range of movements and skills. Most work well on the apparatus, both independently and with partners, and are developing a good awareness of teamwork. This was seen in a Year 7 to 9 lesson. After practising ball control skills by throwing and catching a ball, pupils progress to kicking and passing the ball with their feet. Their increasing skills allow pupils to take part in a friendly and enthusiastic mini game of football with two teams playing against each other. This provides good opportunity to put their skills into practice and develop even further their good achievements when controlling and passing a ball with hands and feet.
109. The work for students who are in the further education base is very well adapted to meet their increasingly adult needs and they make very good progress. Students play table tennis, badminton and snooker on appropriately adapted equipment. They show good levels of patience, wait their turn and share. They make very good progress in developing their finer motor skills and learn the rules and techniques as they start to play successfully games they can continue to follow as adults.

110. All pupils use the very good hydrotherapy pool. This supports very well their personal skills of getting dressed and undressed and their personal hygiene by showering after the activity. Classes for pupils in Year 7 and above are single sex to get the maximum benefit for each pupil and to respect their religious beliefs. In a Year 10 and 11 lesson three boys received one-to-one assistance, with the teacher and support assistants working very well together. The boys all managed to move across the pool, two with aids and one without, starting to learn how to propel themselves through the water with arm or leg strokes or a combination of both. One pupil dressed and undressed and showered himself without any help. A strong feature of all lessons is the good attitudes pupils have towards their lessons. They really enjoy what they do and try hard, showing high levels of enthusiasm and interest. Pupils persevere well and waste no time at all as they try new activities and improve skills they already have.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All lessons are well planned and teachers are clear about what the pupils are expected to learn, supported by a very good assessed awareness of their needs. Expectation is high, lessons proceed at a good pace and there is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, who know and meet the needs of their pupils very well. At the end of every session there is a cooling-down activity. Here, curtains are drawn, lights are switched off, and pupils lie on mats in complete silence. This gives them time to reflect, gather their thoughts and prepare themselves for the next lesson. The atmosphere created contributes towards a spiritual awareness of their inner self. Staff are appropriately conscious of safety and take sensible precautions at all times, especially when using apparatus. However, owing to limited storage space, which the school is addressing in its new building programme, there are chairs and a trampoline stored in the hall that is used for physical education, which constitutes a safety hazard.
112. The subject is well led. There is a good scheme of work, which includes a good range of relevant activities. The subject leader has not yet had the time to monitor and evaluate the teaching of the subject across the school. There is an annual sports day with activities, such as 'welly' throwing, suited well to the pupils' interests and abilities. A very good working relationship between physiotherapists and occupational therapist informs staff very effectively on the pupils' needs regarding their mobility and specialist equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Pupils make good progress and achievement in religious education (RE). The school has made good progress in the development of the subject since the last inspection.
114. Religious education is taught well overall, both as a separate subject and as part of the school's topic curriculum framework. It reinforces the personal and social education curriculum and is included in collective worship and the everyday work of the school. It is also well incorporated into many other subjects, for example, in making cards for Easter using design and technology and art and design. RE also makes a considerable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially through the thematic and sensory approach to the subject, for example the extensive work on the festivals of many faiths and religions.
115. Younger pupils learn about themselves and their relationships with others and care for each other. Older pupils develop further their understanding of their relationship with the world around them. They learn more about festivals, celebrations and ceremonies as part of relationships with others and with God. Many pupils understand that different faiths have things in common, for example, through the understanding of 'waiting' and festivals, where Christians wait for Jesus, Muslims wait for Eid ul-Fitr at the end of Ramadan, and Hindus celebrate waiting during Divali. Students in the further education base continue to use a sensory curriculum alongside their lessons on RE. The subject consolidates their work in personal and social education and citizenship.
116. The teaching and learning of RE are good overall; occasionally they are very good. Teachers produce lively lessons with regard for the needs of all pupils. They use many pictures and artefacts to make the subject more meaningful, occasionally using sensory input, for example, with incense, to help pupils reflect on what they learn. Teachers form very good relationships with

their pupils and use questions well to encourage pupils to recall and explore religious themes and beliefs. They make very good use of the diverse backgrounds of the pupils as they discuss the nature of the buildings in which religious celebrations are held, including temples, churches, mosques and synagogues. Teachers plan their lessons well and work effectively together with support staff in sharing these plans so that everyone knows what all pupils are to learn and gain from the lesson. Staff tell stories enthusiastically, which gains and maintains pupils' interest effectively. They support communication development well through the use of signing.

117. The subject is very well managed by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who encourages pupils and staff alike to enjoy activities. There is a very clear policy and plan for what pupils are to learn, adapted from the locally agreed syllabus, a published curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, and plans produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning very well and uses the information to develop the subject further. The range and quality of artefacts, books, pictures and resources are very good and they clearly help to increase every pupil's knowledge and understanding. Additionally, visitors from a range of faiths, including Jewish, Christian and Hindu, provide expertise for staff and a further very good resource for the pupils.