

INSPECTION REPORT

CATHERINGTON SCHOOL

Langley Green, Crawley

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126162

Headteacher: Mr D. Reid

Reporting inspector: Mr J. Donnelly
23637

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd June 2001

Inspection number: 194370

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:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Martyrs Avenue Langley Green Crawley West Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I. Simpson
Date of previous inspection:	24 th February 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23637	J. Donnelly	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8941	J. Fletcher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27424	A. Dobbins	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
11239	S. Flockton	Team inspector	English Geography History Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
13101	M. Kell	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Personal, social and health education Equality of opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22821	L. Wolstencroft	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

22620	B. Wall	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education Provision for post-16 students	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Catherington is an all age special school for 83 pupil's aged 2 to 19. There are two specialist classes for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, a nursery with one full-time and eight part-time children and a further education department. Most pupils have severe learning difficulties. Around one in four pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. A few pupils have Autistic Spectrum Disorder. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Many pupils are supported with a variety of medications to ease their medical conditions. The majority of pupils come from a white heritage background and the remainder, from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils have English as an additional language who are at a very early stage of language acquisition. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Currently pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught as a discrete group but opportunities for participation in activities with other pupils are being planned as a result of the assessment of individual needs. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is in line with that of pupils entering other schools for children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school is preparing to move into a new building in summer 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Catherington School is an effective school. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards overtime. Progress is good in English and science in the lessons observed. In music pupils' achievements and the progress they make is good. Pupils' achievement in food technology is good overall. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is good and leadership and management are satisfactory. The school, which no longer has serious weaknesses, gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' progress in English, science, personal, social and health education in the lessons observed is good. In mathematics it is good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils achievements and progress overtime is satisfactory.
- Students over 16 make good progress and achieve well, they benefit from consistently good teaching in a well organised department.
- The quality of teaching is good in the lessons observed as a result of the high expectations by staff, one in every four lessons was very good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and staff are very good role models.
- Pupils' personal and social development is very good.
- Parent's views of the school are very good.

What could be improved

- The clarity and quality of assessment procedures throughout the school, which should focus on what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of each lesson, week and term.
- The co-ordination and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by subject leaders.
- The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team which should reflect whole school issues.
- The time made available in some subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since their last short inspection in February 1999. The staff have worked very hard since that time to address the key issues and weaknesses successfully. Teaching is now consistently good and is now much improved from the last inspection when 20% of lessons were unsatisfactory. Schemes of work are now detailed. Procedures by the headteacher are now established to monitor the quality of teaching, then described as insufficiently developed, is now good. This has led to the good improvement in teaching and learning overall, then described as satisfactory, is now good. Good progress has also been made in improving the quality of accommodation and curriculum planning for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, then described as a "serious weakness", is now satisfactory. The school has the commitment and capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Children in the nursery class make satisfactory progress. By age 7, 11, 14 and 16 Pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory overtime. Pupils' achievement in music and personal and social development throughout the school is good. Overall pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. Students in the further education department make good progress. Pupils make good progress in their lessons as a result of good teaching, good preparation of materials matched to their age and ability to capture pupils interest. Pupils work and teachers records reflect the inconsistent time made available to some subject areas and therefore pupils make satisfactory and not good progress over time.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show genuine enthusiasm for school and enjoy their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons, at lunch times and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and particularly between adults and pupils are very good and sometimes excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is consistently good and this contributes positively to pupils learning and personal development

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good. The quality of teaching in all lessons seen was satisfactory or better and in 25 per cent the quality was very good or better. Teaching in the nursery class is not as challenging as in other areas of the school, however it is satisfactory. Teaching in the F.E. department is always good and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning. They know their pupils very well. There is a good range of methods to help pupils learn, relevant to their special educational needs. They use their learning support assistants very well, as they do the resources available to them. A good range of artefacts are very well used matched to the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. As a consequence, in all lessons all pupils, irrespective of the severity of their learning difficulties, are fully involved in their learning and make appropriate progress. The recording of pupils' gains in learning at the end of the lesson is inconsistent in quality across the school.

Switch technology is well used to support pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to include them fully in learning. All staff are aware of the physical needs of pupils and work closely with therapists to review and develop practice. The respect accorded to pupils by staff during all activities is exemplary.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall The breadth and relevance of the curriculum is well suited to all the pupils' needs but it lacks balance in some areas. The school provides broad range of learning opportunities for all and is relevant to their complex medical and therapeutic needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, with particular strengths in moral development and in social development which is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Teachers and all staff respond to the pupils needs with great respect and dignity. The safety and care of the pupils is of a very high standard. The procedures for assessing and recording pupil's achievement are inconsistent and unsatisfactory.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. Parents have very positive views of the school overall and the working relationship is effective and very supportive.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management overall is satisfactory. The headteacher has rightly focussed the school since the last inspection and has developed a committed hard-working staff. Subject co-ordinator and senior management roles are now under review
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is improving and satisfactory overall. Whole school performance management targets are precise and gives a good steer to the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory procedures are in place The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. There is a good balance of expertise amongst the staff to meet the complex needs of all of the pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The care and support the school offers to their children and the wider family. • Children enjoy coming to school. • The quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about what their children are learning and experiencing in class.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents and considers the quality of information provided for parents is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievement

1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in the nursery and during their time in school aged 5 to 16 and achieve appropriate standards. There is no measurable difference between the progress of boys and girls and pupils from ethnic minorities do as well as they should. The progress of pupils with additional special educational needs, including those with autistic spectrum disorder, is satisfactory. Pupils achievements overall are satisfactory. Student's achievements in the FE department aged 16-19 are good overall. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last short inspection and good for pupils with P.M.L.D

2. Many children join the school with very limited means to communicate and often with significant additional special educational needs, including autistic spectrum disorder. During their time in the nursery class they make sound progress in all areas of learning and towards meeting their targets on their individual and group education plans. They learn to express their needs and wishes effectively. Through looking at books and listening to stories they begin to identify characters. Mathematical skills in counting, sorting and matching items develop and re-inforced through singing number rhymes and exploring shapes in other activities. Children's independence and personal development are enhanced through making choices and working alongside and with other children. The organised classroom and activities selected ensure children's knowledge and understanding of the world widens. Opportunities for creative and physical activities are well-structured to ensure they all develop well in these areas.

3. Pupils' achievements in English, in relation to their prior attainment, are satisfactory in all key stages. Progress in lessons is often good. Pupils' skills in speaking (communicating) and listening, supported appropriately by the use of signs, symbols and switches, are developing well throughout the school.

4. Many pupils enter the school with little or no communication. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to sounds, music, and to other sensory experiences such as the use of a resonance board. Many of these pupils are at a pre speaking stage and some attempt to vocalise in response to these experiences. Others show response by nodding, raising their eyes or by being still.

5. By the age of eleven, many pupils are able to respond appropriately in the classroom and in social contexts. They begin to apply these skills in a range of situations; for example, in going out on visits and in speaking to visitors. They learn skills such as turn taking. Most can respond to instructions given to the class.

6. By the age of sixteen the vocabulary of pupils is further developed, as they are encouraged to incorporate new words in their speech. They begin to show their competence in answering questions in different subjects. Less able pupils continue to communicate using signs and symbols, and increase their vocabulary. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to their names, to stories and to a variety of sounds. They use 'Big Mac' switches to listen to messages or to give greetings.

7. Pupils' achievement in mathematics overtime is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in mathematics lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 and are satisfactory in the secondary

department. Progress is restricted by insufficient and inconsistent time allocation for the subject within class timetables in Key Stages 2 to 4, and short sessions, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.

8. Pupils' achievement in science overtime is satisfactory. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are good in lessons and result from good quality teaching. The good progress made in lessons is not reflected in pupil's work over a greater period of time such as a term, year or key stage. Over the longer duration, the progress pupils are making is satisfactory rather than good This is because planning documents do not provide sufficient information to guide the teaching of individual pupils or act as a base from which the small steps pupils are making in their learning can be recognised, recorded and used to help plan future lessons.

9. Standards of achievement in art and design are satisfactory across the school. Pupils at all key stages across the school show satisfactory gains in a range of art skills.

10. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making in design and technology in lessons are good in resistant materials and food skills. Over time, they are good in food skills.

11. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' achievement in humanities as insufficient evidence is available either from pupils' work or from teachers' records. In lessons seen, all of which were in history, progress was, overall, good. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory. Achievement in music is good overall. Pupils make good progress against the learning objectives, which are set for them .

12. Pupils' achievements in physical education are satisfactory. Appropriately chosen activities mean that pupils make satisfactory progress. . They make good, and sometimes very good, progress when taught by the subject specialist. Pupils achieve well during swimming sessions taken by an instructor at the local leisure centre, and those Key Stage 2 pupils who have weekly lessons in a local primary school as part of their integration programme also achieve well.

13. Students in the FE department make good progress across a broad range of learning areas. Accreditation, both external and internal, is now an established part of the age appropriate course. Students' achievements in all areas of study are good

14. Pupils make good progress towards meeting their targets on their individual education plans for personal and social development, which contributes to the good progress they make in personal and social education. The quality of teaching is good overall. However, the curriculum is still being developed for a number of subjects. As a consequence pupils make satisfactory progress over time in all foundation subjects except music where it is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The vast majority of pupils are keen and eager and show genuine enthusiasm to be at the school. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to the school community and to their learning programmes. Arrival at the school in a morning is a genuinely happy time for most pupils. They enter the school smiling and show real pleasure on seeing staff and friends and are excited to exchange greetings and experiences. Pupils respond positively to the safe environment, the school routines and the highly focussed personal encouragement provided by the staff. All pupils require and demand high levels of support

and attention as a result of their special educational needs and many find concentration over long periods challenging.

16. In lessons, most pupils show good levels of perseverance with tasks and staff show great patience and high levels of skill to keep pupils interested and learning; for example, pupils in a literacy lesson on the Tempest which involved the use of shadow puppets and music maintained interest throughout, showed a real enthusiasm to contribute to proceedings and made good progress in developing their literacy skills. In a joint physical education lesson at a local mainstream primary school a group of mainly Year 3 pupils interacted very positively with their hosts and showed a real determination to follow the activities and get the most from the experience.

17. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school at breaks is very good and impacts positively on their learning. In the vast majority of lessons seen behaviour was at least good. Interchanges between pupils and staff are generally courteous, civilised and often involve the positive use of humour. On the rare occasions when a pupil gets over excited or upset and does not conform to the expected standards, teaching and support staff effectively minimises the disruption to learning. There is great enthusiasm for the reward scheme and pupils value the public celebration of their achievements. Inspectors lost count of the number of times they were proudly informed how many tokens had been achieved.

18. The relationships between pupils and all adults in the school are excellent, a strength of the school and makes an important contribution to pupil's personal and social development. Pupils clearly trust and respect adults in the school and turn to them readily if they need support. The consistent interpretation of the school's aims and ethos by all members of staff creates an environment where all pupils are valued and is the basis for these excellent relationships. Relationships between pupils are also very good. In lessons the majority of pupils show respect for others, they listen to peers, share equipment happily and show patience and understanding with those having communication difficulties. Pupils generally show a very high awareness of the levels of disability of their peers and respond in a mature and caring way. There were several good examples of pupils supporting each other, working collaboratively, and sharing equipment and materials in lessons. In a Year 8 mathematics one girl spent some time helping a boy with a number exercise and in a Year 4 food technology lesson a boy ensured that his friend in a wheelchair did not miss the experience of feeling exotic fruits.

19. Many pupils contribute to the school community by taking responsibility for duties and tasks related to the day to day procedures and organisation. Pupils respond proudly and positively to these opportunities; for example, pupils attending a local primary school accepted their responsibility of being representatives of their school and set a good example. At the upper end of the school the opportunities to take on responsibility within the school community increase. There is a School Council and further education students have planned sessions helping in Key Stage 1 lessons. At lunchtimes and at the start and end of the day members of the further education class voluntarily help with the younger pupils. One particular boy is very evident at all these times and makes a positive contribution to the running of the school whilst considerably enhancing his own personal development. Pupils' enhance their personal and social development through the interaction with the local community, through inclusion arrangements with mainstream schools and the college, through the work experience programmes and through the numerous outings and residential visits. Staff encourage pupils to discuss the impact of their actions on others and there are good formal opportunities to reflect and explore

feelings and to discuss different values and beliefs in personal, social and health education.

20. The overall attendance at Catherington is good and contributes positively to the standards achieved and the progress made. There is no significant variation by age group or level of special educational need. Unauthorised absence is very low and the school works flexibly and effectively with the Educational Welfare Service to maintain the situation and follow up isolated cases of none attendance. Authorised absence is accounted for mainly through medical appointments and the normal range of children's ailments. Punctuality to school is good Throughout the day punctuality is satisfactory with staff working conscientiously to ensure pupils are in the right place and ready for lessons with the minimum of wasted time. The high standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' attitudes to learning have improved from good to very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching is good overall, at the last inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Now, it is very good or better in 25 per cent of lessons. These figures represent a considerable improvement in the overall quality of teaching. The teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has improved so that now they are making good or better progress. The quality of teaching for pupils at the foundation stage remains satisfactory.

22. The quality of teaching is good because teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning. They know their pupils very well. Staff are good at choosing appropriate methods to help pupils learn. Learning support assistants are used well. Lesson tasks are well matched to the needs of the pupils. As a consequence, in most lessons all pupils, irrespective of the severity of their learning difficulties, are fully involved in their learning. For example, in a lesson in food skills pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were able to complete all the lesson tasks because they were very closely supported by learning support assistants and used specially adapted switches to start and stop food mixers. In this lesson, they made excellent progress in peeling, cutting and liquidising various fruits in order to learn which was their favourite taste.

23. Planning for individual lessons in literacy and numeracy is good. However, on a few occasions planning for pupils aged 5 to 16 covering a longer time period do not always link clearly with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study or provide a good base from which lesson plans can be derived. Teachers make good use of questioning, both by speech and signing to find out what pupils know understand and can do. However, this information is not documented well enough to recognise the small steps pupils make in their learning, to reference the gains against the attainment targets of the Programmes of Study or to help plan future lessons. As a consequence of this, the good progress pupils make in lessons is not easily referenced against the attainment targets of the Programmes of Study over the duration of a term, year or key stage.

24. This is not the case for Post-16 students. They follow modules in the Steps to Challenge 2001 award. Assessment procedures are in-built into each module. They are used well, not only to recognise what pupils can do and what they understand, but also to help plan future lessons.

25. The very good relationship between teachers, support assistants and pupils contributes to them being confident as learners. This helps promote their learning including

their understanding of the specialist words of subjects; for example, 'Royalist' and 'Cromwellian' in history. The principles of the National Strategy for Numeracy have been effectively introduced into lesson planning in mathematics. Good use is made in lessons in the other subjects to reinforce previous learning in mathematics, for example when rote counting. The National Literacy strategy has been successfully adopted to meet the needs of the pupils.

26. Pupils work hard at their learning. This is very good or better in 21 per cent of lessons, good in 49 per cent and satisfactory in 28 per cent. Most lessons are taught by teachers who have specialist knowledge or specialist training in the subjects they teach. In these lessons, learning is invariably good or better. In the lessons taught by teachers without specialist knowledge or training, learning is mostly satisfactory, but very occasionally can be unsatisfactory.

27. Pupils behave very well and inappropriate behaviour is seen in only a very small number of lessons. When this is the case, teachers and learning support assistants deal with it very quickly and efficiently with little disruption to the learning of others. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons, especially those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. In their lessons, innovative planning, the very good teamwork between teachers and the learning support assistants and, especially, their excellent relationship with the pupils results in pupils wanting to do their very best at all times. To achieve this they work very hard, both physically and intellectually, at their learning and the standards they achieve and the progress they are making reflects this.

28. The school encourages parents and carers to help in its work. Many parents know the targets in their child's individual education plan, and they follow strategies equivalent to those followed in school to help their child achieve their targets. The procedures for setting homework are good. Both help continue the work of the school at home to the benefit of pupils learning.

29. Teaching is good in the lessons seen in English, as a result of which pupils' learning is also good. In the best lessons, a variety of strategies is used to gain pupils' attention and to help them to respond; for example, many resources are used to illustrate stories being read, and these help pupils' understanding. Well paced lessons, with a number of different activities, help to attract and maintain pupils' attention.

30. Overall the teaching of mathematics is good as lessons are characterised by teachers' use of good activities that match pupils' needs and therefore they are able to work with interest and understanding. Teaching is consistently good or very good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and satisfactory or good at Key Stages 3 and 4.

31. In science, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are good in lessons and result from good quality teaching and the detailed planning of individual lessons. In individual lessons, teachers challenge pupils well and effectively develop the skills of observation and comparison, as well as knowledge and understanding of science topics.

32. Teaching in art, design technology, music, physical education humanities is good overall. In the lessons observed and satisfactory in religious education and I.C.T.

33. Switch technology is increasingly being used to support pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils use 'Big Macs' to answer questions and a range of switches, keyboards and touch screens to operate the computer. All staff are aware of the

physical needs of pupils and work closely with therapists to review and develop practice. The respect accorded to pupils by staff during all activities is exemplary.

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

34. The school curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It provides a broad range of relevant learning opportunities for all its pupils and is effective in meeting pupils' individual medical and therapeutic needs. The school is committed to equality of curriculum access and therefore all pupils have the opportunity to follow the curriculum on offer. The taught day is below the recommended minimum at Key Stages 3 and 4 and this has an adverse effect on pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 4. Some subjects, including the core subjects of English and mathematics, are taught in thirty-minute sessions in the secondary department and this does not provide sufficient time for extended learning opportunities for higher attaining pupils. The post-16 curriculum is good and very relevant to students' needs.

35. The school has responded well to the findings of the previous inspection about the quality of the curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. The provision is now satisfactory with some good features. In particular, there are now plans that ensure that this group of pupils follows a curriculum that blends together varied multi-sensory activities that meet their diverse and complex needs.

36. The curriculum on offer is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils as it plans for the progressive development of pupils' individual communication, mobility, and independence needs. It places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and the life skills associated with living in a community alongside academic achievement and progress. This includes an appropriate and developmental sex education programme that is delivered in accordance with the emotional maturity and levels of understanding of pupils. Lessons in Key Stages 1 to 3 consider the implications of actions such as 'touching' before the biological aspects are considered in detail in Key Stage 4. The programme at Key Stage 4 also considers drugs awareness, and both sex and drugs education continue into the post-16 department. However, the curriculum does lack subject balance. In particular, there is insufficient time allocated to mathematics, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.

37. The secondary curriculum prepares pupils satisfactorily for transfer to post-16 education. The school offers only one accredited course, called Challenge 21, which forms part of the vocational curriculum in Key Stage 4. The structure and format of this course directs pupils towards developing the skills necessary for entering the world of work through activities such as visits to industry, training in travel and handling money. Pupils do not have work experience until they are in the post-16 department and then only when they are aged seventeen and are judged to have the necessary skills to make the placement a positive experience.

38. The school has a good strategy for teaching literacy skills and this has had a positive impact on raising standards through the school. There is strategy in place for teaching numeracy but its effectiveness is restricted by the inconsistency of timetabling arrangements in different classes. The Key Stage 1 class has a significant period of dedicated time for numeracy each day, whereas the two Key Stage 2 classes give a very different emphasis. Pupils in this key stage only have a dedicated mathematics session on three days a week.

39. Good relationships exist between the school and other institutions and the local community and make a positive contribution to pupils learning. There is an effective weekly

integration programme when Year 3 and 4 pupils attend a physical education lesson at a local primary school, and post-16 students spend part of their week following a course at the local college. Local facilities such as the leisure centre are well used and a number of visitors into school provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of the wider community. Recent visitors have included a representative of Guide Dogs for the Blind and a group of musicians who played Elizabethan music, and during the inspection a visitor brought owls into school and this linked in very well with the literacy work that pupils had been doing. Out-of-school visits to places like the Science Museum and the Bluebell Railway are used well to bring alive different aspects of the curriculum and to extend pupils' experience outside school. All pupils have the great benefit of attending residential trips that provide very good opportunities for social development.

40. The school aims to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils, in particular to help children and young people to develop independence, confidence and self-esteem, and to develop in pupils consideration towards others. In this context, very good provision is made for social development, while that for pupils' moral development is good, and for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There is, as yet, no policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, so that planned opportunities, particularly for spiritual development, are not yet in place.

41. Pupils attend a whole school assembly once a week, which is an occasion for celebrating achievement, together with elements of worship and reflection. During the rest of the week "assemblies" take place on a class basis. The use made of these is variable. In most, the time is used for some kind of discussion about the events of the day, often with the giving out of merits. In others, this is accompanied by reflection and sometimes prayer, music or singing. During the inspection, some very effective assemblies were seen, in which the atmosphere created by music, the lighting of a candle and prayer, provided a good opportunity for reflection and good support for spiritual development. Pupils showed feelings of awe and wonder in the course of some lessons, for example in a history lesson when they were given opportunities to touch, smell and feel a variety of herbs.

42. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are encouraged to understand the difference between right and wrong. In many classes they are made aware of class rules which are displayed in words and symbols in classrooms. All adults are good role models, and make use of opportunities such as circle time to reinforce the attitudes which the school promotes. Good behaviour is reinforced by consistent use of praise and reward, such as the merit system, which is enthusiastically regarded by many pupils.

43. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Relationships within the school are very good, and pupils are treated with respect. Many classes start the day with individual greetings, which helps pupils to feel valued. Pupils begin to develop responsibility as they help to get equipment ready for lessons or to take the registers to the office. In many classrooms there is a list of monitors, who have responsibility for different jobs during the school day. In one class, a very good system for paired tasks was noted, which encouraged pupils to work together. Pupils are able to be part of the School Council. They are made aware of social issues such as homelessness, through assembly and visits from organisations such as "Shelter". Good displays around the school celebrate pupils' work and achievements, and help to raise pupils' self esteem.

44. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their cultural awareness. Through work in English, they are introduced to different authors and to a variety of literatures such as stories, poetry and plays. Some appreciation of the work of different artists is encouraged

through art and design, and pupils have been introduced to the art of other cultures, for example, as part of a topic on North America.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Since the last inspection the school's procedures and facilities for ensuring pupils' well being, dignity and support have improved significantly. The school now provides effective personal support and guidance for pupils, which has a positive impact on the standards they achieve and the progress they make. Pupils are happy, feel safe and secure and respond well to the personal attention received and there is good evidence to show that the vast majority are enjoying and benefiting from their time at Catherington. Teaching and support staff know and understand well pupils' circumstances and difficulties and show great care and tact in the support and help they give to pupils; for example, staff caring for profoundly disabled pupils show great respect for their dignity by always asking and explaining before interacting. The well being of the pupils is uppermost in the minds of all staff at all times. Procedures to deal with Child Protection issues are good. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The school works effectively with a range of specialist support agencies and the benefits of these relationships are evident in the individually tailored care and personal development packages provided.

46. The school has good procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. Staff are conscientious in ensuring that any health and safety hazards are reported and quickly eliminated and that the buildings and site are safe for pupils. Since the last inspection many procedures and practices have been subject to review and formal risk assessment and there have been significant building alterations. Appropriate first aid supplies are available around the site and first aiders hold up to date accreditation. Three staff have accredited qualifications in restraint and handling techniques and all other staff are to receive formal training next term. Clear accident and incident records are kept.

47. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting attendance. Any unauthorised absence is followed up conscientiously and there is good evidence of the school working effectively with the Educational Welfare Service to maintain the good attendance levels. The behaviour policy outlines clear behaviour expectations which are consistently applied by all adults in the school. All staff make good and frequent use of praise and encouragement and the calm atmosphere and ethos of the school acts as a significant incentive to pupils to follow the behaviour code. A few pupils in school, who have experienced difficulties conforming with expectations, have personal targets for behaviour improvement agreed between the headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator in charge of behaviour and their parents.

48. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal and social development are good. There are clear targets for pupils' personal development and progress against these is regularly recorded as a result of observation, input from home, input from specialists and following the daily discussions between teaching and support staff. Targets are regularly reviewed and re-negotiated. Teachers and support staff do know pupils and their targets for personal development well. The school is effectively supporting pupils' personal development by building self esteem and encouraging pupils to take increasing responsibility for themselves and by providing chances to take on duties and responsibilities within the school community. .

49. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are not sufficiently well targeted to ensure that what pupils know understand and can do is effectively recorded and used. Procedures have been recently introduced and there is not yet sufficient information available to enable teachers to track pupils' progress. Individual education

plans are in place for all pupils but targets set for individuals annually and termly do not always clearly relate to one another and to the achievements recorded.

50. Individual education plans do not always show how the success of targets is to be measured nor what input is expected of other professionals and of parents.

Evaluations are inconsistently used to record the progress of individuals and some lesson planning does not always identify opportunities for assessment. There are examples of good practice in some classes where 'post its' are used to record small steps of learning as they occur. Modules of work in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are evaluated regularly but these evaluations often record the experiences which pupils have had and do not record what individual pupils have learned.

51. Provision as outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs is met by the school. The school works closely with a variety of agencies including speech and language therapists to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils. However it is difficult to determine the intended provision for the local education authority has not amended some pupils as a number of statements for some time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has worked hard in recent years to develop its partnership with parents and carers and the good links which now exist contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. A close and interactive relationship exists with the vast majority of parents. Responses to the inspection questionnaire and at the consultation meeting show a very supportive view of the school and positive comments about the approachability of the school and about the progress made by their children, particularly in terms of personal development. A few parents expressed a desire for more information about what their children are learning and experiencing in class and more information on academic progress. The school acknowledges these requests and is introducing a new annual report to give details of what pupils know, understand and can do and also has various initiatives in hand to tell parents more about the learning aims and programmes of study in key subject areas. There is unanimous appreciation amongst parents for the individual care and support that the school gives to their children and for the help and guidance that is provided for the wider family. It is particularly notable how many comments received refer to improvements in pupils' personal and social skills, satisfaction with the care arrangements at the school and the help being given to help prepare for adult life. The level of support for the school is reflected in the high attendance figures at both formal and social events. The partnership relationship with the home has been significantly strengthened through effective and regular parent support group meetings, siblings' evenings and the structured programme of home visits. Many parents now see the school as a valuable source of advice and guidance on all aspects of caring for and bringing up children with special educational needs and disabilities.

53. Communication with parents is good. The school operates an open door policy, actively encourages dialogue and ensures that views and opinions are taken into account. Frequent contact with parents through the home school diary, regular telephone calls from class teachers and the deputy headteacher's programme of home visits effectively ensure that progress against personal and social development targets is monitored. The school is also quick to involve parents and carers whenever there is cause for concern about any aspect of development or progress. Formal reporting of progress is effectively managed through the annual review and at termly parent meetings. Annual reviews are attended by the vast majority of parents who are fully involved in setting targets for individual education and development programmes. The new annual report should provide a good record of

what pupils have learned but care will need to be taken to ensure that information is provided in an understandable format and that there are clear statements on what pupils have to do to improve. Termly parent meetings are well attended and provide good opportunities for parents to see the work that children are doing and to review targets for development. The strength of the partnership with parents has been built effectively by focusing on the special educational needs and learning difficulties of the children. The school is now actively planning to build on these positive relationships to encourage more parental involvement in the academic learning programmes. Good progress since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory because since the last inspection in 1999, there has been a successful focus on implementing the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and improving the quality of teaching. Staff now have sufficient skills to teach the rising number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and progress in addressing the weaknesses and key issues is good.

55. The headteacher has led the school well towards meeting its priorities effectively. A great deal has been achieved in a short time by a hard working staff. The improvement work is on-going and not all has yet fully impacted on the work of the school and the standards pupils achieve. The school recognises, that the role of some subject co-ordinators is under-developed and do not yet effectively evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their subject.

56. After the last inspection the headteacher immediately set up clear strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. This became a clear focus for development. The current school improvement plan (2001-2002) recognises there is still work that needs to be done. The programme of lesson observations has been effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management targets have been agreed with all teachers related to pupils' progress and drawn from the school improvement plan as appropriate.

57. The governing body has a good range of committees to support its work and meetings are well conducted and appropriate. The chair of governors recognises that recent developments have moved the school forward. However, although the role of the governing body has improved, partly through participating in a range of appropriate training, the monitoring of the work of the school by the governors is an area for further development. Subject action plans are in place but the senior management team needs to develop whole school responsibilities as well as their designated department or key stage management roles.

58. The school has developed a resource library, working closely with parents, which helps inform them of the particular needs of individual pupils. A senior member of staff has oversight of behaviour and works with other teachers to develop and implement behaviour plans for individual pupils. A third member of staff has responsibility for developing provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This arrangement ensures that the needs of groups of pupils are met but no-one person has oversight of all pupils with additional needs. The school's policy on special educational needs does not relate sufficiently to provision, practice and procedures relating to groups of pupils with additional needs. Not all staff have received training in addressing additional needs such as those of pupils on the autistic spectrum.

59. The school has a good range of well qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, at present, the deputy headteacher is a full time class teacher, and this does not allow her sufficient time to fulfil all her senior management roles effectively. There is a good number of learning support assistants who are allocated to specific classes, so that they build a good working relationship with the class teacher, together with very good knowledge of the pupils.

60. Most of the inadequacies, which made accommodation a key issue at the last inspection have now been addressed. In particular, the hygiene and toileting facilities for classes for the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have been improved by new building and reorganisation of former classrooms. The health and safety issues in these rooms have been fully addressed, as have those linked with storage. There are, as yet, no specialist rooms for the teaching of science, art and design and design and technology for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, but these should be provided when the new school is built. There is no designated library area, and non-fiction books are displayed in corridors and fiction books in classrooms. This too will be addressed in the new building. Overall the quality of the accommodation is now satisfactory and in some teaching rooms it is good, which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their learning. The quality of the provision is enhanced by attractive displays in many areas.

61. The range and quality of resources is satisfactory overall and for pupils post-16 it is good. Resources are well used and have a positive impact on the quality of education provided. Resources for teaching literacy and numeracy are being developed well, and new books, particularly "big books" are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- (1) Review and further develop assessment procedures, which closely match the learning needs of individual pupils' so as to support their progress over the school's curriculum so that teachers have a clear record of pupils' knowledge skills and understanding;
(Paragraphs: 49, 50)
- (2) Enhance the role of subject co-ordinators so that they lead, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects.
(Paragraph: 55)
- (3) Review the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team to reflect the balance of whole school development;
(Paragraph: 57)
- (4) Ensure the taught time available to deliver the subjects of the national curriculum across the school is balanced.
(Paragraphs:34, 36)

PROVISION FOR POST-16 STUDENTS

63. There has been a good improvement in provision for post-16 students since the last inspection. The quality of teaching remains good overall, students make good progress across a broad range of subjects and accreditation, both external and internal, is now an established part of the provision. Students' achievements in all areas of study are good.

64. Students at post-16 achieve well and make good progress in English, which is used effectively to support all subjects. In a food technology lesson, lower attaining students follow simple recipes, reading the ingredients and instructions from a printed recipe card that includes text and symbols. Higher attaining students are able to complete challenging worksheets that require them to answer questions related to homelessness. The most able students are able to write sentences in print with accurate punctuation and spelling. Students are able to use computers to practice their writing skills, to present their work and to record their accreditation. Many students are able to operate computers independently.

65. Achievements in mathematics are also good. Higher attaining students are able to use calculators for more complex operations; for example, in a lesson on budgeting students were able to use the decimal point effectively to add prices together. Practical opportunities to practice these skills are well supported; for example, students operating the weekly tuck shop for younger pupils and staff were able to add prices of items costing 10p and 5p. Lower attaining students are able to count accurately up to 20 and give amounts to 50p in 10p coins.

66. Achievements in a broad range of subjects are good; for example, in an art and design lesson, more able students were able to make clay sculptures of their own hands, adding details of knuckles, nails. They then showed very good creativity to add rings and bracelets from their imaginations. In a horticulture lesson, lower attaining students were able to identify a number of plants, water the plants independently and create a hanging basket following simple instructions from a learning support assistant.

67. The social development of students at post-16 is very good. The behaviour of students is consistently very good. They show high levels of respect for each other, staff, pupils and students in all areas of the school. The students are consistently polite and provide very good role models for younger pupils.

68. The quality of teaching for students at post-16 is good overall with a number of very good features. The very effective use of learning support assistants to teach small groups of students is both highly efficient and supports a breadth and relevance of curriculum; for example, during one lesson students were taught in three groups; one group operating a mini-enterprise scheme making hanging baskets, another practising computer skills and a third completing art and design work on hot and cold colours. High expectations are a key element of teaching at post-16. During an externally accredited lesson on homelessness, students were challenged to suggest how they might feel if they were homeless. After probing questioning by the teacher, one student noted that she might feel "petrified". The quality and use of assessment is very good. Students are assessed on an on-going basis and at the end of accredited modules and these assessments form part of the accreditation certificates. The quality of learning in lessons matches the quality of teaching is good overall.

69. The curriculum for students over sixteen is good with a wide and relevant range of subjects included. An appropriate emphasis is placed on students working with increased

independence in all areas of the curriculum. The inclusion of the Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) in the curriculum for post-16 students makes a very good contribution to the development of students' language, communication and social skills.

70. Assessment of students learning at post-16 is very good. External accreditation is strength of provision for post-16 students. The school has worked hard to adapt the local education authority accreditation scheme (Challenge 21) for students at the school. The result (Steps to Challenge 21) is an assessment structure that is rigorous, externally validated and highly relevant to the needs of the students at the school. The scheme provides a very good introduction to accreditation for students who will encounter other accreditation schemes in their college placements when they leave school. The structure of the accreditation scheme places an appropriate emphasis on the development of key skills, especially literacy and numeracy.

71. The school has also developed very good internally accredited modules. These modules add significant breadth to the post-16 curriculum, covering such diverse topics as travel training, safety in the work place and making short biscuits. The recent introduction of certificates for these modules, which describe both what a student has learnt and experienced, is a very good development.

72. Pupils within Key Stage 4 at the school have well planned opportunities to access the post-16 curriculum. These lessons allow younger students to be taught accredited courses and ensure that transition to the post-16 class is both well managed and a positive experience for all students.

73. The leadership and management of post-16 provision at the school are good. Very good links have been developed with local colleges and with vocational experience providers. The co-ordinator has developed a clear rationale for both the curriculum and assessment. The additional responsibilities held by the co-ordinator for pupils in Key Stage 4 at the school has resulted in greater continuity of provision for pupils and students aged 14 to 19. A particular strength of leadership is high expectations of what should be provided, and an ability to negotiate with other agencies if this is not currently available. At present, the co-ordinator has no non-contact time to monitor provision for pupils and students, which is a weakness in the leadership of this aspect of the school's provision.

74. Links with the community are a particular strength of post-16 provision. The school has successfully negotiated a link-course with a local college of further education. Students develop a good understanding of the world of work. Work experience opportunities are carefully selected for those who will benefit; for example, one student who has completed a course on hair care as part of a college link-course is placed at the local hairdresser. Additional opportunities are successfully linked to accreditation, such as a recent visit to a clothing retailer as part of a challenge to design a tie. Students also benefit from an annual residential visit that provides a good opportunity to practice skills such as budgeting. Within school, post-16 students operate an effective mini-enterprise scheme that includes operating a tuck shop.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	24	49	30		0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y13
	Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	6
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y13
	Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	83

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

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	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.2%
National comparative data	5.2%

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5%
National comparative data	0.5%

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	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	72
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	6

Education support staff: YR – Y13

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	769

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Number of pupils per FTE adult	1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	948 998
Total expenditure	923 147
Expenditure per pupil	11 397
Balance brought forward from previous year	23 712
Balance carried forward to next year	49 563

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	31	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	19	32	3	23
The teaching is good.	69	25	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	25	6	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	19	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	34	3	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	72	19	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	22	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	25	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	28	9	0	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

75. Children enter the nursery at various times of the year. How many days each week children attend depends upon their age so children who are three attend for three days each week. Children are assessed on entry using a wide ranging system involving parents, teachers and other professionals. Nursery staff to set targets within the nursery curriculum uses the information gained. Children coming into the nursery are at very different stages of development and have a wide range of needs. Overall children make satisfactory progress which was also the case at the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Children under five make satisfactory progress in personal and social development. They settle well into a caring environment and adults have appropriate expectations of them. Basic routines are fostered and most children become familiar with them. They sit together in a circle to say hello to each other and join in action rhymes and songs. Staff ensure that there is a range of activities for children to choose from and to work and play together. Staff support children well in developing social skills. For example; during outdoor play two children were encouraged to ride in the truck pretending it was a bus. Children learn to share and to take turns. When singing action songs most children can choose an object which prompts a particular song. Children who have significant communication difficulties are encouraged to continue to sit with the group and join in. Many children show developing levels of independence in their activities for instance when making sandwiches for a picnic they try hard to spread butter on the bread and then choose fillings for the sandwiches. The social skills of children in the nursery are enhanced by regular visits to a nearby mainstream nursery.

Communication, language and literacy

77. Within the nursery the development of language and literacy is given high priority. The children enjoy a range of stories, songs and rhymes. They are encouraged to respond; for example, staff have collected a wide range of attractive and interesting props for the action rhymes that children sing. This helps children to associate the props with a particular rhyme and helps them to remember the song. Good use is made of big books in shared reading times. However opportunities to become more familiar with the National Literacy Strategy in order to develop this further have not yet been available. Children concentrate well on stories and look carefully at the pictures in the book. They have daily opportunities to recognise their own and the names of other in their class, through choosing name cards to go with photographs. Many children have not yet developed speech but some are beginning to use sign to support their developing skills. The use of sign is not yet sufficiently well integrated into the everyday activities of the nursery to ensure that all children benefit.

Mathematical development

78. Children in the nursery are introduced mathematics through a range of activities. They use numbers in songs and rhymes. Children set out plates for lunch and for cooking activities making sure that each child has a plate. They have opportunities to practice counting. During the inspection some children made sandwiches for a picnic. Supporting adults counted slices of bread and the number of pieces each sandwich was cut into as they put them in the box. Children make satisfactory progress in this area.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Children have a developing understanding of the routines of the day in the nursery. This is reinforced through the singing of songs children know well and the use of props and photographs. Children learn about direction through play with vehicles in outside play sessions and through the use of climbing apparatus. They learn about the school grounds and local places through walks and outings. They can use the computer, operating programmes using a touch screen and many begin to understand cause and effect. Children have access to musical instruments and experience music making together.

Physical development

80. Children overall make satisfactory progress in this area. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills. These include activities to develop early skills needed for writing and drawing and large apparatus for outside play and for activities in the hall. The small outside play area is well equipped with attractive climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. Adults support children well and join in with the activities encouraging children to explore. Children can climb steps, slide and use the swing. They are given opportunities to run and jump using the wider space in the school hall. Staff are very aware of children's physical development and in a lesson during the inspection there was spontaneous applause when a child walked a little way across the hall having previously taken only a few steps.

Creative development

81. Creative development is satisfactory. Children choose from a range of activities including a home corner, building materials, drawing and painting. During the week of the inspection there were many opportunities for children to sing songs and rhymes and to play musical instruments and make up games using the outside play area.

82. Switch technology is used well to support pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils use 'Big Macs' to answer questions and a range of switches, keyboards and touch screens to operate the computer. All staff are aware of the physical needs of pupils and work closely with therapists to review and develop practice.

ENGLISH

83. Pupils' achievements in English, in relation to their prior attainment, are satisfactory at 7,11,14 and 16. Progress in lessons is often good.

84. Pupils' skills in speaking (communicating) and listening, supported appropriately by the use of signs, symbols and switches, are developing well throughout the school. Many pupils enter the school with little or no communication. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and younger pupils respond well to sounds, and to their own names, especially where these are reinforced with objects and photographs. By age seven, pupils are generally able to listen attentively while teachers read stories and they begin to follow

sequences of pictures. They point to and name their classmates. They listen to tapes, and follow the instructions given. More able pupils answer questions about the stories, using word or gesture, their responses showing that they have listened carefully to the reading. They carry out simple instructions, and increase the length of their responses, and their vocabulary. Most pupils understand some basic signs. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to sounds, music, and to other sensory experiences such as the use of a resonance board. Many of these pupils are at a pre speaking stage and some attempt to vocalise in response to these experiences. Others show response by nodding, raising their eyes or by being still. By the age of eleven, many pupils are able to respond appropriately in the classroom and in social contexts. They begin to apply these skills in a range of situations; for example, in going out on visits and in speaking to visitors. They learn skills such as turn taking. Most can respond to instructions given to the class. The vocabulary of pupils is developed, as they are encouraged to incorporate new words in their speech. They begin to show their competence in answering questions in different subjects. Less able pupils continue to communicate using signs and symbols, and increase their vocabulary. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to their names, to stories and to a variety of sounds. They use 'Big Mac' switches to listen to messages or to give greetings.

85. By age 14, most pupils have developed a wider vocabulary and are able, for example, to describe objects or pictures. They can retell part of a well-known story. The length of the instructions to which they can respond is increased. Less able pupils use pictures and symbols to respond to questions, and switches to make a choice. By age 16, the less able pupils have increased their signing vocabulary to include a range of everyday activities and objects. All pupils show enjoyment of stories, and many are able to answer questions about what is read to them. More able pupils can retell stories, showing understanding of both the events and the sequence. By this stage, some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are able to show likes and dislikes by facial expression or by gesture. They use 'Big Mac' switches to respond to stories or greetings. Some begin to initiate communication, and use words, sounds, gestures and signs to show what they want to say. Their understanding is often more developed than their speech and they show by their responses that they have understood what has been said to them.

86. Younger pupils begin to develop pre-reading skills, looking at picture books, listening to, and enjoying stories and poems. By age seven, many pupils know where to start reading a book, and some know about titles and authors. They begin to recognise initial letter sounds, often using "Letterland" symbols, and can match words by these sounds. Some can recognise their names, and those of other pupils, and know the names of the characters in their reading scheme. More able pupils are able to match words on flash cards and are beginning to develop some knowledge of phonics. By Year 6, less able pupils understand that books are read from left to right, and can point to familiar characters in a book. They increase their knowledge of symbols, for example, in identifying activities on the daily timetable. Some recognise their own names, and those of the characters in their reading scheme. More able pupils are developing decoding skills, and are reading books and using both phonic skills and knowledge of frequency words. Some of the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties look at pictures in books, and attempt to track as adults point. They identify the symbols for their daily timetables. The more able in this group can find named objects in books.

87. By the age of 14, less able pupils make good use of photographs to identify themselves and others. They match pictures to objects and to symbols. Others are developing good knowledge of symbols and use them to label pictures. They learn words from their "Fuzzbuzz" reading scheme. More able pupils read from books and answer

questions, showing that they have understood what they are reading. By age 16, more able pupils make good progress in reading, using a variety of skills to decode unknown words, and reading with expression, showing understanding of the text. They are able to answer questions about what they have read, and predict what might happen. Other pupils have developed basic phonic skills, and use reading with symbols to support them with irregular words. Lower ability pupils match pictures to words and symbols. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties responded well to the reading aloud of books such as “The Fish Who Could Wish” as these are reinforced with objects which they can see and touch. Most enjoy exploring materials and objects used in connection with story telling. Some show recognition of familiar stories.

88. Younger pupils develop pre-writing skills, such as tracking objects and following lines and patterns. By the age of 7, most pupils can copy their names, either over or under an adult’s writing. More able pupils are able to copy over or underneath labels or short sentences, and a few are becoming more independent. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils are able to write simple phrases and sentences and put their work on the word processor. They can write some words unaided. Less able pupils learn to copy under their names, and to develop pencil control, as they track patterns, or colour in carefully. By the age of 14, lower ability pupils make marks on paper, developing control of crayons and pencils, and some copy letters and words. More able pupils write answers to questions or write a few words under a picture. Pupils in Key Stage 4 continue to develop writing and pre writing skills, with some still being at the stage of copying over words and letters, but with others being able to write independently, for example, in writing about the book they are reading, or writing a letter. At this stage, some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show interest in mark making and use their fingers to make patterns in the sand, or begin to develop control of a crayon to make marks on paper.

89. Teaching is good overall, as a result of which pupils’ learning is also good. In the best lessons, a variety of strategies are used to gain pupils’ attention and to help them to respond; for example, many resources are used to illustrate stories being read, and these help pupils’ understanding. Well paced lessons, with a number of different activities, help to attract and maintain pupils’ attention; for example, in a good lesson at Key Stage 2, pupils’ attention was gained by revision of letter sounds which were named, and then used as the basis of a song to revise the alphabet. At Key Stage 1, pupils’ interest was maintained by changes of activity, with each helping to develop their knowledge of sounds. Very good use is also made of display to support pupils’ learning, as well as to celebrate achievements; for example, many classrooms display letter sounds, key words and reading scheme characters, in addition to displays related to the books which the class is reading. Teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage careful listening, and they, in turn, listen attentively to pupils and respond to all attempts at communication; for example, at Key Stage 3, pupils were encouraged to listen to the story of “the Tempest” by the use of music and shadow puppets. Staff know pupils very well and can understand and respond to their non-verbal communications. Effective use is made of signing by most teachers and support staff. Good relationships with pupils encourage them to make an effort with their work. Pupils respond well to questions, which are well targeted to ensure that all are involved, and praise and encouragement are used appropriately, and these motivate pupils and help them to stay on task. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together, giving good support to pupils in group and individual work. Less progress is made when teachers do not plan in detail and do not provide work, which is appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils. This is linked to limited assessment and evaluation of lessons, which does not identify the progress made by each pupil, or the difficulties which pupils have with a particular topic.

90. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and is being developed to meet the needs of the pupils, and the format has now been introduced at key stages 1-3. The format of a class session, followed by individual work and rounded off with a plenary session, is proving a good structure to support the learning of many pupils. Appropriate flexibility in both format and timing is used, particularly for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The development of oral skills is well supported across the curriculum, and there are many examples of pupils using their skills in different subjects; for example, in history lessons, pupils in Key Stage 2 identify some of the aspects of the story of Grace Darling, while those at Key Stage 4 identify the differences between rich and poor children in Victorian times. Teachers take as many opportunities as possible to encourage these skills in all areas of the curriculum, in registration and at playtimes. The development of language is also supported through a social skills and language programme (SULP) which helps pupils with communicating in social situations. There is, as yet, no policy or scheme of work for drama, but pupils' records, photographs and displays show that they have a variety of opportunities for taking part in role-play and presentations. The development of language for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is well supported by a teacher from the Local Education Authority's Ethnic Minorities' Support Team.

91. The English co-ordinator has worked hard to develop schemes of work for key stages 1 and 2, incorporating the National Literacy Strategy and advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Further development is needed to make the scheme of work more useful as a planning tool, and to link it closely to the National Curriculum "P" levels for assessment. Much work has also been done in devising checklists based on the P levels, but the usefulness of these, and of lesson evaluation sheets is variable, as teachers are not consistent in the use they make of them. This lack of consistency also means that lesson plans do not always follow from previous learning in identifying pupils' needs. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring the subject has yet to be fully developed, and this forms part of the subject improvement plan. A satisfactory range of resources for English has been developed, with the acquisition of reading schemes and of "big books" for the literacy hour. The development of a library is affected by the limited space available. Non fiction books have to be displayed in corridors, and most fiction books are in classrooms

MATHEMATICS

92. Pupils achieve well in lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 and their achievements are satisfactory in the secondary department. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Further progress is limited by the inconsistent time allocation for the subject within class timetables in Key Stages 2 to 4, and short sessions, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.

93. Pupils in the primary department work on the key areas of number, shape and space, and money. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils trace over the numerals 1 to 5, count out up to three objects and add one more to a set of objects. They can copy a pattern of two different shapes and are able to recognise a 1p coin from a selection of coins. Lessons in Key Stage 2 focus on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas and as a result pupils are able to demonstrate their new skills at the age of eleven. They carry out simple written addition sums using single digits and count out small numbers of objects and write the numeral accurately. Some pupils are able to produce symmetrical patterns using large floor shapes, whilst lower attaining pupils require assistance to draw round shape templates and to fit different shapes into a board with cut outs.

94. As pupils move through Key Stages 3 and 4 they develop understanding of concepts such as light/heavy and bigger/smaller. In addition to continuing to explore number and money, pupils are also introduced to whole numbers and the concept of less than one. Therefore, at the age of fourteen some pupils put together two parts of a circle to make a whole one, although they are less competent when presented with four pieces. During Key Stage 4 pupils begin to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge in simple problem-solving activities in which they are required to use different areas of mathematical understanding. This means that some sixteen-year-olds pupils solve problems that require them to identify the price of an item from a worksheet; for example, chips or cola, count the number of items demanded by the question, and then calculate the final price; for example, they are able to calculate the cost of two packets of chips and a cola and to write this as a simple sum. These pupils also use appropriate units of measurement such as litres. Lower attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 have more limited skills and still require a great deal of help counting the number of large skittles they knock down with a ball.

95. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in the primary department engage in a great deal of tactile and exploratory play. At the age of eleven some pupils respond to visual and audio attention grabbers by moving their gaze from one object to another when the second is introduced. By the time they reach the end of the secondary department some pupils have an understanding of permanence, being attentive and prepared to wait for an object to reappear if it has been taken away from them during a game. Others are able to make a reliable and consistent choice from two photographs of electrical items; for example, a cassette player and a lighted bubble tube, in order to be given a switch that they operate to make the equipment work.

96. Overall the teaching of mathematics is good as lessons are characterised by teachers' use of good activities that match pupils' needs and therefore they are able to work with interest and understanding. Teaching is consistently good or very good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and satisfactory or good at Key Stages 3 and 4. A class of five and six year olds were able to achieve very well in a numeracy lesson because of very high quality teaching that had many very good features. A very good and lively introduction engaged all pupils immediately as the teacher maintained a good pace through an oral warm-up session and sharing of the lesson objectives with the class. Effective strategies were used for grouping pupils and activities were very well chosen to ensure that they met pupils' needs. Very good relationships and use of praise maintained a busy and purposeful environment in which all pupils were able to succeed. They were able to share their success with others during a very good conclusion to the lesson during which all pupils were given the opportunity to describe the best thing they had done. They were able to do this because of the high quality input by the whole of the adult team who provided support, guidance and encouragement throughout.

97. Good quality teaching was seen in the secondary department as Year 10 and 11 pupils explored the concepts of full / empty / most / least / equal. Groups were well chosen and the variety of simple resources that were provided met the needs of pupils with a wide range of achievement levels. Appropriate activities and good relationships encouraged all pupils to become engaged so that they had a positive attitude and response to the tasks. As a result they were well motivated and good learning took place as pupils showed that they could estimate reasonably accurately the number of cups of water needed to fill bottles and knew the meaning of 'full', 'empty' and 'equal, or the same'. The teacher used practical testing, targeted questioning and a simple worksheet well to assess pupils' understanding of their work.

98. The management of mathematics is satisfactory and a hard working subject co-ordinator has produced detailed schemes of work for each group of pupils in each key stage. However, there is not a comprehensive overview of the subject for each key stage that shows how planning ensures a breadth of subject curriculum and a smooth transition from one key stage to another. The schemes also lack sufficiently close references to National Curriculum programmes of study and attainment targets, or to those levels that are used to assess the achievements of pupils who are working below level 1 of the National Curriculum. They show the intended learning outcomes for pupils at the end of each module of work and teachers use these general statements to assess pupils' achievements at that time. However, not all class teachers break down these overall outcomes into smaller units of learning by identifying the anticipated learning outcomes for each pupil in individual lessons. Therefore they are unable to monitor pupils' progress through ongoing assessment and recording of small steps of learning as pupils develop new skills, knowledge and understanding.

99. Although satisfactory, the full impact of numeracy throughout the school is limited by a number of factors; for example, some of the statements made in school documentation are not reflected in practice, such as the comment to the effect that an element of mathematics will be taught to all pupils each day. Analysis of individual class timetables shows that this is not the case. In addition, lessons in the secondary department only last for half an hour and this does not provide sufficient time for extension activities to be provided for higher attaining pupils. The overall effectiveness of the school's strategy for teaching numeracy skills is also limited by the lack of opportunity for the mathematics co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and to develop consistent and rigorous methods of assessment and recording of pupil progress.

SCIENCE

100. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are good in lessons and result from good quality teaching and the detailed planning of individual lessons. The good progress made in lessons is not reflected in pupils' work over a greater period of time such as a term, year or key stage. Over the longer duration, the progress pupils are making is satisfactory. This is because medium term planning documents do not provide sufficient information to guide the teaching of individual pupils or act as a base from which the small steps pupils are making in their learning can be recognised, recorded and used to help plan future lessons.

101. In individual lessons teaching is good. Teachers challenge pupils well and effectively develop the skills of observation and comparison, as well as knowledge and understanding of science topics. The relationship between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils is very good. Learning support assistants are particularly well deployed, as are resources, such as Molly Dolly in a lesson on the mouth and teeth for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The result is that lesson tasks are well matched to the needs and abilities of pupils and all pupils make good progress, irrespective of the severity of their learning difficulties. Lessons routinely involve pupils being active in their learning. Pupils enjoy and benefit from learning by doing and by finding out. In the best lessons they are excited about their learning, as they were when younger pupils were in the dark room learning about different types and colours of light. Invariably, pupils make a serious intellectual effort to learn and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties a considerable physical effort also.

102. By the time they are 7 years of age, in living processes, the highest attaining pupils can locate and name parts of their body, recognise differences in hair and eye colour and

know the importance of food and drink to a healthy body. They match young animals to adults and know that babies grow into adults. They sort into living and non-living categories and are beginning to understand that animals, fish and birds move because of special parts, such as fins, wings and legs. They gain an equivalent grounding in sound, materials, the environment, and electricity and light. However, pupils' records of work completed over the duration of the key stage do not reflect the good progress they are making in lessons. By the time they are 11 years of age, the highest attaining pupils know much more about living things, for example why the heart beats faster. They have learned the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates and name some of the major bones of the human skeleton. They link this work well with their study of forces, and realise that muscles apply force and, by contracting, cause limbs to move. They study the weather, know that temperature is a measure of hot and cold and describe, using appropriate words and symbols, the water cycle. Their work in forces includes exploring magnetism and they know what might be attracted and what might not. They know vibrations create that sound and can describe sounds by pitch, decibel and timbre. By the time they are 14 years of age, they will have learned about all of the aspects of the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study. They are good at using technical words to explain their learning and know what makes a fair test. They have learned that science is a subject that is based on tests and experimentation and realise the importance of collecting data as a first step to reaching a conclusion. By the time they are 16 years of age, they are well prepared to take the modules in science of the Steps to Challenge 2001 award. Because of the good quality of teaching, over all the key stages the lowest attaining pupils make equivalent progress to that achieved by those whose attainment is highest, but do so at a lower level of understanding and without fully grasping the meaning of many of the technical words of the subject.

103. Science is well managed, by a newly appointed teacher. She is becoming an effective leader of the subject who is very capable of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning so that the good standards pupils are achieving in lessons and the good progress they are making can be reflected in their records over the longer duration. Resource support is generally good. However, the absence of a specialist teaching room makes it difficult to fully cover all aspects of the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards of achievement in art and design are satisfactory across the school. Pupil's at all key stages across the school show satisfactory gains in a range of art skills. Whilst provision for art and design is satisfactory overall there are some weaknesses in the assessment and recording of pupils attainments and in the link between teachers' planning and the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

105. At Key Stage 1 pupils can use paint and large brushes to create simple images of familiar objects. More able pupils can use glue and tissue paper to make simple collages in outlines drawn by staff and apply glitter with accuracy to create stars for a wall display of day and night linked to the theme for the term. Less able pupils respond to different coloured papers and gaze for extended periods at the effect of coloured paints on their hands.

106. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to build further on their previous achievements. They are able to indicate when creative work is finished to their satisfaction. Pupils can tear and manipulate materials for a collage and attach their materials accurately

to a backing sheet. Higher attaining pupils are able to effectively choose and combine colours and textures to create a simple camouflage netting.

107. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils continue to develop greater accuracy in their art skills. Less able pupils are encouraged to experience the texture and temperature of clay and can, with adult support, cut out clay shapes. Pupils show by smiling and eye contact that they recognise different textures. More able pupils show increasing accuracy in their art skills, for example in cutting accurately and in higher levels of concentration.

108. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils are pupils have become more accurate in their drawing and painting skills. This combines with increasingly developed work and observational skills. They are able to paint in the style of a famous artist. Higher attaining pupils show very good levels of creativity in their work.

109. Teaching in art and design is good overall. Of the four lessons seen, two were very good, one was good and one was satisfactory. The very good teaching is evident when lessons are well planned, providing a clear structure and sequence of planned activities. Teachers make very good use of source materials to stimulate pupils' creativity; for example, in a continuing lesson in the style of Georgia O'Keefe pupils were shown and then discussed examples of her work and the lesson was characterised by a freedom for pupils to experiment with their work. Behaviour management is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. This is supported by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

110. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. Because of the excellent relationships pupils cooperate very well, sustain their attention over extended periods of time and enjoy their work. Pupils show very good levels of concentration, and are able to move between a number of related activities, which helps maintain a good pace to the lessons. Art makes a sound contribution to the personal development of pupils through extending their confidence and creative skills. In the best lessons it is clear that pupils are confident as learners. In all art and design lessons pupils are encouraged to work independently.

111. The co-ordinator for art and design is very experienced and well qualified in both art and design and special education. Considerable hard work has been undertaken to develop the curriculum by producing long and medium term plans for the subject. However, the lack of a clear link to the National Curriculum programmes of study for art and design results in a planned curriculum that is too often a range of experiences rather than a progression of skills. This situation is reinforced by an absence in teachers' records of clear assessments of what children have learnt, can understand and do. There is a need for the school to devise an approach to recording and assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

112. The provision of resources for art and design is good. Many resources have to be duplicated in classrooms due to a lack of central storage space. The lack of a specialist base to teach art and design, identified in the last inspection report, remains an unresolved issue, especially for secondary pupils.

113. The quality and range of art display across the school is very good both in classrooms and in the school hall and corridors. The school has worked hard to ensure that displays show a good range of pupils' work from all key stages. The work is very well mounted and pupils take a clear pride in the displays of their work. Good links are made between subjects in displays; for example, a highly effective monochrome display in the main corridor combines examples of pupils' art and design with examples of ties designed

in a technology lesson and black and white photographs of the pupils being taught both subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making in lessons are good in resistant materials and food skills. Over time, they are good in food skills. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making in resistant materials over Key Stages 1 to 4 are satisfactory.

115. In resistant materials, the emphasis for pupils up to 7 years of age is to learn about materials by squeezing and feeling those, such as clay. The development of making skills is supported by improving cutting skills and by an increasing knowledge of how materials can be joined, for example through the use of glue, sticky tape, loop and hook fastening and mouldable adhesive. By the age of 11 years, pupils have learned to use a variety of tools including drills, glue-guns, safe saws and to combine materials together for a purpose; for example, in designing and making a lighthouse they used plastic, card and sticky tape for the windows and glue and staples for joining the materials. By the time they are 16 years of age, they have gained experience of many tools, including hammers and screwdrivers to join wood, plastic and metal with nails and screws and planes to gain a smooth finish. Their designing skills are enhanced through their use of the 'Clip Art' software. By the end of the key stage, their designs in resistant materials are more complex and adventurous and they carry these skills to textiles.

116. In food skills, lessons are well planned and provide pupils with well-structured challenges, which make a good match with their abilities and are appropriate to their age; for example, by the age of 7 years, pupils make toppings for pizzas and by the age of 11 years they prepare light meals using a grill or a microwave. By the time they are 16 years of age, the highest attaining pupils can plan and make a three-course meal with due regard to cost and healthy eating.

117. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work sensibly and safely together. The pleasant and friendly atmosphere of lessons allows them to be confident as learners. The contribution made by learning support assistants is a significant element in the success of the lessons. They behave well, and make a significant intellectual effort to learn their work and at the same time please their teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties especially make a considerable physical effort to complete their lesson tasks, as was the case in a lesson in food skills that required pupils to use special switches to start and stop food mixers.

118. The co-ordinator of the resistant materials element of design and technology has been away from school for some time. As a result there has been little recent development in this aspect of the subject. Food skills is well led and managed. The teaching facilities for food skills are good. The lack of an appropriate specialist teaching facility for resistant materials limits the schools ability to present a curriculum that fully reflects the Programmes of Study, especially for pupils at Key Stage 3.

HUMANITIES

119. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment, as insufficient evidence is available either from pupils' work or from teachers' records. In lessons seen, all of which were in history, progress was, overall, good.

120. Pupils in Key Stage 1 begin to learn about their immediate environment, and explore the school and talking about journeys which they frequently make, for example, from home to school, or to the shops. In history, they begin to develop a sense of old and new, and to understand that there are different generations in a family. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have developed a sense of direction and can find their way around the school. More able pupils know about common features such as roads and buildings. A few can make a simple plan of a building. In history, some pupils have developed a concept of yesterday, today and tomorrow, and relate these ideas to their families. Pupils begin to associate specific activities with the days in the week on which they occur on the timetable, and more able pupils know the days of the week and can sequence events as past, present and future. Pupils in Key Stage 3 explore different environments, such as the jungle, sea and space. They learn about different periods in history, such as the Tudors, and learn something of how people lived at that time. This is further developed in Key Stage 4 as they learn about the Victorian age, looking at artefacts from those days and identifying features in the lives of families. More able pupils make some comparisons with present day life.

121. In the small number of lessons seen during the inspection teaching was, overall, good and, therefore, learning was good. The best teaching is characterised by the use of a variety of activities which both gain pupils' attention and help to develop their understanding. Good use is made of different resources; for example, in a Key Stage 3 lesson about the Tudors and hygiene, the use of present day soaps, shampoos and washing liquids, was contrasted with the Tudor use of herbs. The provision of examples of all these items greatly enhanced the pupils' understanding of the topic. Pupils in Key Stage 4 were helped to understand the difference between rich and poor children in Victorian times, by the teacher's use of photographs and prints of the period. Teaching is well supported by the use of a variety of resources, for example, very good use is made of display to support pupils' learning, with examples of pupils' own work and published resources. Pupils enjoy these lessons, and take part enthusiastically, which helps them to make good progress. Teachers use good questioning strategies, ensuring that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute at appropriate levels. Both teachers and learning support assistants provide good support for individual and group work, allowing pupils as much independence as possible. Where teaching is less successful, teachers spend too long talking to the children even when they are involved in activities, and the children become restless and lose concentration. Lessons are not clearly planned to meet the needs of individual pupils, so that not all make the same amount of progress.

122. Teachers make very good use of visits to the local environment and to places of historical interest, which helps to develop pupils' understanding; for example, at Key Stage 2 the teacher was making use of visits to the stables to enhance pupils' understanding of key features of the journey such as different types of road and buildings. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 had visited several places in the area, as part of an introduction to landscape, enabling them to understand the meaning of, for example, field, hill, lake and woodland. This was further enhanced by an exciting project on camouflage, which drew pupils' attention to colour and shade in the landscape. Pupils in Key Stage 3 had visited Hever Castle as part of their work on the Tudors and, with varying degrees of support, had written sentences in words or symbols to label the photographs on display.

123. The co-ordinator for history and geography has developed schemes of work, which are based on the National Curriculum and the Equals programme. These now need to be updated in line with Curriculum 2000, taking into account advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on the curriculum pupils with learning difficulties. This is in the subject development plan. Revision of the format of the schemes of work in order to make it of greater use as a planning tool for colleagues could also help the development of these subjects. Assessment in humanities is at an early stage of development. At present teachers evaluate lessons and modules of work, but this is done inconsistently so that evaluations either focus on the progress made by groups rather than individuals, or contain a summary of what pupils have experienced rather than what they have achieved. This is an area for further development. At present, the co-ordinator has limited time available for monitoring the subject, but it is planned for this aspect of the work to be developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory. The school is developing a good bank of resources and has made a significant investment in appropriate hardware. Staff expertise is developing through on-going training through a nationally funded initiative. This expertise is being shared with staff who have not yet accessed training. The school is well placed to improve further in this area.

125. Younger pupils use ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use the computer to practice counting skills. Pupils use a touch screen to operate the computer; other pupils can confidently use the mouse to activate the pointer. Pupils clearly enjoy what they are doing although some need support to ensure that work is completed appropriately. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use a wide range of equipment. They are confident in using voice boxes and musical keyboards and in using them show an understanding of cause and effect. Pupils are beginning to use a tape recorder to listen to stories, following the speech on the tape in a book. Pupils use the computer to work on games based activities and to word process their work. Some pupils are able to type into the computer, sentences they have written and in one lesson a pupil was keen to show and to read work typed in and printed out.

126. Older pupils are developing their use of computers. Pupils in Key Stage 3 use the computer to illustrate work they have done on the Tempest using symbols and pictures taken with a digital camera. Pupils with additional needs are beginning to use a range of switches to participate in lessons and to activate a range of other equipment. In one lesson observed pupils used switches to operate a fan, which support staff then used to blow bubbles. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect. Other pupils respond to the effects of changing lights, sounds and colours which they can control using touch.

127. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory. Teachers plan appropriate activities for pupils and use a range of resources, which is well matched to the needs of their pupils. Expectations of pupils are appropriate and support staff provide sensitive and effective support to pupils, which helps them to develop both skills and confidence. Pupils concentrate well on the activities. Baseline assessments have been undertaken in line with the school's current procedures but planning for lessons does not always identify clearly what pupils are to learn. Recording of the progress of individual pupils is inconsistent. In the best practice teachers have a system for recording small steps of progress that informs both teachers and support staff.

128. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. Currently there is a temporary arrangement in place where two members of staff manage the subject between them. The curriculum ensures pupils have an appropriate range of opportunities and experiences including the use of control technology. The school is developing its Internet links although this does not yet involve pupils. Pupils who have additional needs have a need assessment for the use of switches and this is a recent area for development. Arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and the curriculum are not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure that ICT is delivered effectively in all classes.

MUSIC

130. Achievement in music is good overall. Pupils make good progress against the learning objectives which are set for them in planning. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn about pitch. Many of them can echo a phrase and respond by singing a high or a low note. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 can clap a rhythm. They play percussion instruments in parts to make sounds which represent the sun, moon and stars. They follow hand signals which tell them when to play their instruments and when to stop. Pupils enjoy taking turns to lead the group and can give clear directions to their classmates. Older pupils enjoy listening to Tudor music. They greet one another to the tune of Greensleeves. Together they listen quietly and with great concentration to a piece of music on the subject of the story of the Tempest. Many of the pupils can identify which characters in the story are represented by individual melodies. Older pupils enjoy singing Music Hall songs. They can sing together and individual pupils are confident in performing solos. They perform the actions for songs and provide an echoing chorus. Pupils have studied music from around the world. As part of their lesson they learn songs from Africa and the music of North American Indians. They have watched performances by Irish dancers and a production to celebrate Dwali.

131. Pupils participate in a range of musical performances. The whole school produces a Christmas concert where pupils perform to chosen pieces of music. Older pupils join with students from other school for a performance, which takes place annually in a local theatre.

132. Teaching in music is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is well used to develop pupil's skills and interest in music. Work is planned on the basis of the scheme of work. Sensible arrangements are made to combine classes of similar age groups of pupils, which allows effective use of the expertise of visiting specialist staff. There are good relationships between pupils and staff and this contributes significantly to pupils' enthusiasm, which is demonstrated in all lessons by the enjoyment that they show. Some pupils have access to music therapy. Information technology is used to enable some pupils to make independent contributions to lessons for example in playing short pieces of music to accompany a story.

133. Resources are currently satisfactory but the subject co-ordinator is developing these to ensure that curriculum is well resourced with a range of good quality resources. Teachers record pupils' achievement using the learning objectives in the scheme of work. However this does not give sufficient information to track individual progress. There is currently no system in place to undertake subject monitoring.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Appropriately chosen activities mean that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although they make good, and sometimes very

good, progress when taught by the subject specialist. Pupils achieve well during swimming sessions taken by an instructor at the local leisure centre, and those Key Stage 2 pupils who have weekly lessons in a local primary school as part of their integration programme also achieve well.

135. Some children enter the primary department with good gross motor skills, as they are able to pedal and steer carts. By the age of seven, pupils demonstrate a range of achievements but generally they have increased their mobility, control and co-ordination. Some bounce a ball and throw and catch to themselves. They stop a rolling ball with their feet or hands and hit a stationary ball with a bat or stick. Pupils continue to develop awareness of themselves and the space around them as they move through Key Stage 2. Therefore, by the end of the key stage some move in a directed way; for example, walk or run, to a specified place in the hall and they avoid bumping into others whilst doing this. Others show increased co-ordination and control of their movements as they throw and catch balls with varying degrees of success and perform movements such as standing on one leg and walking along a bench.

136. As pupils move through the secondary department they continue to develop their skills in activities as varied as ball games, swimming and horse riding. By the age of fourteen they ride horses with increased confidence and improved posture, and demonstrate increasing understanding of ball games as they follow instructions in simple games such as a form of short cricket. Some swim with emergent strokes and swim through submerged vertical hoops, whilst others are still developing water confidence or are at the early stages of learning how to propel themselves through the water. Some pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 use a bat to hit a ball bowled to them whilst others still need it to be placed on a batting tee. Dance activities form an important aspect of the physical education curriculum. By the age of sixteen some pupils can learn a relatively complex dance routine and have the confidence to perform it in a schools' festival at a local theatre, whilst others still need significant guidance and support to develop even a short routine.

137. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties follow a physical education curriculum that is well matched to their needs. Pupils in all key stages have experiences that develop awareness and encourage an interest in their surroundings. Therefore, as they move through the school they increase their pleasure in shared experiences and develop their understanding of anticipation through an extending awareness of their environment and events. As a result their mobility skills are encouraged as they seek to explore their surroundings through well-chosen multi-sensory activities that stimulate their interest.

138. Teaching is good overall. There were examples of very good teaching in the secondary department and of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. On these occasions pupils achieve very well. A group of fifteen-year-olds made very good progress in developing striking and fielding skills within a small game situation because the teacher had planned the session very well. A good use of time and very effective pupil management meant that the teacher could provide pupils with a number of activities that extended their learning as the lesson progressed. As a result, pupils of all skill levels were able to improve their batting and fielding techniques because the activities for each group had been well chosen to challenge them without being unrealistically high. Pupils' skills were improved through very effective direct teaching that focused on developing individual techniques and effective learning support assistants who provided ongoing support, praise and encouragement.

139. However, not all teaching is of such high quality and the progress of both higher and lower attaining pupils does suffer at times because of some unsatisfactory features of

lessons. At these times there is not sufficient direct teaching through individual coaching of pupils to develop their basic skills, even though the lessons are characterised by activities that tend to focus on the needs of these lower attaining pupils. At the same time, more skilful pupils are not provided with suitable activities that extend the degree of challenge.

140. The school makes good use of local facilities with regular trips to the leisure centre for swimming and basketball, and students also use the local ten-pin bowling alley. The school provides other good opportunities that encourage pupils' social development as pupils compete with other schools in activities such as swimming galas, athletics tournaments and football competitions. In addition, the school gives its pupils the very valuable experience of residential visits that enable them to pursue outdoor activities such as canoeing. The physical education co-ordinator is a subject specialist but does not have opportunities to monitor the classroom practice of colleagues to ensure that the subject is taught effectively. In addition, current assessment procedures do not identify sufficiently well what pupils have learnt by the end of each lesson in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory overall. Only two very short lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. In addition, pupils' records do not include any information relating to achievements or experiences of religious education. In spite of the fact that all classes have brief references to religious education in their termly plans, only three class timetables include a direct reference to religious education. This situation is unsatisfactory.

142. In the two lessons seen, teachers had sensitively related teaching of social skills to stories from the bible. Pupils at Key Stage 2 understand the need for rules and could relate these to the Ten Commandments within the Bible. The teacher made good use of open-ended questions to assess pupils understanding and pupils were able to relate the need for rules to possible consequences; for example, pupils understood that they should not run in the school corridors as they might hurt someone if they ran into them.

143. Pupils at Key Stage 3 were able to identify their friends within their class group and the teacher sensitively introduced the parable of the Good Samaritan to reinforce the concept of friendship. The effective use of an overhead projector to tell the parable maintained a high level of pupil attention and supported a satisfactory level of teaching. However, the lack of available time to discuss the parable and its messages reinforces the need for the school to timetable religious education more effectively.

144. The very recent appointment of a curriculum co-ordinator has made a significant improvement to provision for religious education. The co-ordinator has effectively reviewed the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education and devised a very good long-term plan that relates directly to the agreed syllabus. There is an urgent need to devise an approach to recording and assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

145. Pupils make good progress at all key stages in their personal, social and health education. Provision is ongoing and central to the work of the school. The individual educational programmes for all pupils contain appropriate targets for personal, social and

health education. Pupils' achievement at all key stages are good. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils are able to act as helpers, can wash their hands and indicate that they have a best friend. In relation to their social skills, they are able to interact appropriately with familiar adults. Lower attaining pupils are able to make simple choices by between two objects by eye pointing. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can undress unaided when preparing for swimming at the local swimming pool and begin to have more confident and increased social interactions with others. Less able pupils make good progress in their toileting programmes and begin to use the toilet independently. During Key Stage 3 pupils learn more advanced rules of friendship, for example to be friendly without "smothering". Pupils also learn to show an appreciation of the work of others. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can take care of their own belongings and take verbal messages to other adults around the school. Lower attaining pupils are able to indicate the need to go to the toilet by selecting a picture or symbol. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 are able to move confidently around the school building and grounds, joining teaching groups in the post-16 class for modular work. Less able pupils are able to select preferences by eye-pointing and smile greetings to familiar staff and pupils.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Where it is best teachers plan to meet the individual needs of the pupils, effectively deploy additional staffing and have high expectations of pupils. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils result in high levels of care and consideration for others both in lessons and around the school.

147. The current structure for delivering the personal, social and health education at the school is both complicated and confusing. The long-term plans for the subject are not related to either the National Curriculum guidelines or the headings in the school's own system for reporting to parents. Staff have worked exceptionally hard recently to assess all pupils against the national "P" Level Statements in personal, social and health education published by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. The school needs to devise a clear structure for curriculum delivery with a supporting system to record and assess pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

148. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education offers a satisfactory level of support to colleagues, although there is a recognised need to extend this support into formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education has overall responsibility for feeding, drinking and lunchtime procedures within the school hall. These are a strength of personal, social and health education provision at the school and provide all pupils with very effective individual learning targets as part of their lunchtime routines. Resources for the delivery of the personal, social and health are good.