

INSPECTION REPORT

CARLTON DIGBY SCHOOL

Mapperley

LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122953

Headteacher: Glenys Clifton

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 196387

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 special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Digby Avenue Mapperley Nottingham
Postcode:	NG3 6DS
Telephone number:	0115 9568289
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. P Artis
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage English French Religious education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language	
20165	Alan Lemon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Humanities Special educational needs	
30065	Jenny Andrews	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Carlton Digby is an all age special school for pupils aged 3 to 19 serving the Gedling district of Nottingham. However, a significant number of parents who live outside the area choose the school for their children. With 63 pupils on roll, it is of average size for a school of this type. There are twice as many boys as girls. Over one third of pupils are in the sixth form. Most pupils are white with a small number who are of Caribbean or Indian heritage, two of whom speak Urdu as their main language. Twenty-five pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is high. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school is low with most pupils having severe or profound learning needs. An increasing number have complex and behavioural needs. A small number of pupils join the school for sixth form education. On leaving school, most pupils move on to further education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Very good teaching has resulted in very good achievement for pupils and students of all ages and abilities. Pupils and students have access to a very wide range of relevant learning opportunities. All receive high quality care. Parents hold the school in high esteem. Leadership is strong and management is effective. This is a small school, the cost of educating each pupil is very high for a school of this type. Nevertheless, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is very good. This allows pupils and students of all ages and abilities to achieve very well.
- Leadership provides very clear educational direction for the work of the school.
- Pupils and students enjoy attending school. They are very well behaved and accept each other's differences. This creates a good climate for learning.
- Ways to help pupils communicate, such as signing and symbols, are used consistently by all staff so pupils can take a full part in school life and make their needs understood.
- Teachers, support staff and health personnel work very closely together for the benefit of the pupils. Their relationships with pupils are very good, as are relationships between pupils.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is demonstrated in the way all pupils are valued and included.
- Pupils and students are offered a very wide range of learning opportunities. Links with the community, international links and courses in the expressive arts are particularly strong.
- The support and guidance given to pupils and students is very good. This contributes significantly to their well being and learning.
- Links with parents and carers are very good and contribute to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Many areas of the accommodation are unsuitable for the current population.
- Though good, the achievements of pupils in Years 1 to 11 in mathematics are not as good as in English. More use could be made of numeracy in other subjects.
- Management of the school is good, but there is a need to improve some of the systems to monitor the school's effectiveness.

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 very good improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Other than in the accommodation, all key issues have been successfully addressed. The curriculum, staff deployment and resources are monitored well. Schemes of work which allow for progression in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire are in place in all subjects. The behaviour of pupils with complex needs is now managed very effectively. Behaviour is now recorded and analysed in order to bring about improvement. Pupils have very good opportunities to take responsibility and use their initiative as they grow older. Other significant improvements have occurred particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. In addition, pupils have more meaningful learning opportunities and greater emphasis is placed on personal development. Staff are deployed more effectively. Resources, including those for information and communication technology, have been enhanced, all of which have a marked impact on the quality of learning. Though some improvements have been made to the accommodation, many aspects are still unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good A
reading	A	A	A	A	Good B
writing	A	A	A	A	Satisfactory C
mathematics	A	B	B	A	Unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	A	A	Poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

Taking account of ability, all pupils achieve very well. The achievement of young children in the foundation stage is very good in all areas of learning. Achievement in Years 1 to 6, the primary department, and in Years 7 to 11, the secondary department, is very good in English, information and communication technology, humanities, religious education, and PSHE. Achievement in mathematics, design and technology, music and physical education is good for pupils in both these age groups. Pupils achieve well in science; those in Years 10 and 11 who attend college achieve very well. Students in Years 12 and 13, the sixth form, achieve very well in all the subjects they take other than art where achievement is good. Achievement for pupils in the primary department is very good in art and good in the secondary department. The achievements of pupils and students taking part in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in the expressive arts are outstanding. The school has set suitable targets for pupils of all abilities to maintain these standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy attending school and eagerly join in all activities on offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in and out of school. Pupils with challenging behaviours make very good progress in controlling their behaviour because of the way it is managed.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils care for each other and are tolerant of each other's differences.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils attend school whenever they are physically able. Punctuality is dependent on the school transport.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very strong in all age groups. There are no weak subjects. Work planned is pitched at a suitable level for pupils of all abilities to succeed. All staff use signs and symbols, as well as the spoken word, extremely effectively to make sure pupils and students understand and can communicate. The teaching of English and literacy is very good. Numeracy is taught well in mathematics lessons, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge in other subjects. Pupils of all ages and abilities make very good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire because of very good teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils and students have the opportunity to take part in a very wide range of learning activities in and out of school. Very good links have been formed with the community.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Staff make sure pupils understand new vocabulary and instructions. Signing is used consistently throughout the school so pupils understand what is happening. Parents who need have the help of a translator and are very well informed so they can help their child at home.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils and students of all abilities and races are valued. Achievement is celebrated; daily routines and the personal and social education programme give pupils respect and tolerance towards others. Visits and visitors give pupils a very good awareness of the rich cultural heritage of the school's population.
How well the school cares	Very good. Staff are totally committed to the well being of those in their

for its pupils	care. Teachers, support staff and health professionals work together particularly well for the benefit of all pupils. Parents hold the school in high esteem. Links with parents are very good and contribute to pupils' learning.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has supported staff through very trying times. She is ably supported by a very competent deputy and two senior teachers. However, some systems need tightening.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. All legal requirements are in place. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but need to take a more active role in monitoring the school's effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Very good systems are used effectively to measure the impact of teaching on learning. However, there is room for improvement in the way the performance of different groups within the school is monitored. The principles of best value are applied well in that staff are constantly challenging themselves to do better and managers take account of the views of parents and governors.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funds are used well. Staff are deployed well. Very good use is made of inadequate accommodation.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. Teachers and other staff are very skilled, hard working and dedicated, contributing significantly to pupils' learning. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for the current population. Staff have had to be extremely adaptable and imaginative to cope with the shortfalls. Resources are satisfactory.

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 hard work and dedication of the staff. • The small groups. • The work of health professionals. • The support given to families. • The happy, caring atmosphere. • Their children are happy and enjoy school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given.

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concern, teachers provide a variety of homework that is suitable to the age and ability of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. All pupils and students have statements of special educational needs for severe, profound and multiple or complex needs and as such their attainment is understandably very low in relation to age related national averages. Most pupils are working towards level one in the National Curriculum in all subjects. Nevertheless, the achievement pupils of all ages and abilities is, overall, very good because of skilled teaching, very good learning opportunities and very good relationships which allow pupils to feel secure and good about themselves. All make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection in all age groups. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds

2. Though young children in the foundation stage all use wheelchairs and have very limited abilities, all achieve very well. They make very good progress in communication, in their awareness of number, their understanding of the world around them and in their creative development. Though all have very limited movement, they increase their range of movements, holding their head up for longer periods and, where appropriate, standing in their frames for a greater length of time. Children make remarkable progress in their personal and social development, increasing their awareness of what is happening around them, relating to others, taking an interest, and in some cases assisting with their personal care, for example, trying to brush their hair with the help of an adult.

3. In the primary and secondary departments and in the sixth form there is a mix of abilities with pupils who have profound and multiple needs, those with complex and behavioural needs, and some with severe or moderate needs. Progress for many pupils is in very small steps, building on previous learning, reinforcing and slowly developing new skills. Regardless of ability all pupils achieve very well. Pupils in Year 11 and those in the sixth form now achieve a far wider range of challenging nationally recognised awards than at the time of the last inspection.

4. In English, most pupils have an awareness of language as a means of communication. Those with more profound needs make and sustain eye contact. Some pupils vocalise, other uses gestures, symbols or signs to make their needs known. Older and more able pupils answer questions, talk to their friends and engage visitors in conversation. Pupils listen very well and endeavour to follow instructions. Pupils of all ages enjoy stories. Some look at books with adults, pointing to the pictures. Most delight in following stories in the special books they have compiled as a group. A few pupils in the secondary department and sixth form read simple texts and pick out the titles of their favourite programmes in television listings. Some pupils in the primary department and older pupils with more severe needs hold a pencil or crayon and make marks on paper. More able pupils and some older pupils write their name and copy what adults have written. A few pupils in the secondary department and the sixth form write simple sentences and fill in forms with help.

5. Pupils in the primary and secondary departments achieve well in mathematics. The achievement of those in the sixth form, where more focused time is allocated, is very good. Pupils demonstrate a range of understanding. Those with more complex and profound needs experience feeling shapes and hear adults counting with them. More able pupils count by themselves and do simple sums. Some are aware of the passage of time. Older and more able pupils recognise some coins and handle money when out shopping, for example, use

these when buying ingredients for food technology. Whilst teachers use tutor time for pupils to improve mathematics by, for example, counting the number of pupils in the class, and a few examples were seen in other subjects, overall pupils do not use their knowledge of numeracy as well as they could in other subjects.

6. Achievement in science is at least good in all age groups. Pupils extend their awareness of living things, materials and their properties and physical processes through their investigations and experiences. The achievement of more able pupils who are taught at college by a specialist teacher is very good.

7. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now very good. With adult help, pupils with complex or profound needs use different types of switches to control their environment, switching lights on and off, changing light patterns and sounds and making equipment move. Some use 'Big Macs', machines which record to help them communicate. A few older, more able pupils who use wheelchairs manoeuvre their chairs with increasing skill. When working with computers, those with more severe needs use a 'touch screen', others use a mouse. Older and more able pupils log on, giving their password. Whilst very good use is made of new technology for students to record their work using special symbols, opportunities are missed for older, more able pupils to use word processors to illustrate, draft and improve the presentation of their work.

8. Achievement in religious education is very good in all age groups. Pupils gain an awareness and understanding of major faiths through experiences such as visiting places of worship and celebrating festivals. Pupils of all ages have an increased awareness of the life of Jesus and the stories he told. Older and more able pupils consider faith in action and how religion affects peoples' lives.

9. Pupils' achievements in other subjects is at least good. Achievement in humanities is very good in all age groups. French is taught to pupils in the secondary department. Achievement is very good because pupils have benefited from the services of a native speaking French assistant and have visited France to put their learning into practice. Achievement in art is very good in the primary department. The achievement of older, more able pupils in GCSE expressive arts is outstanding. Pupils in this group have reached very high standards for their ability in drama, art and music.

10. Achievement in personal, social and health education is very good for all ages and abilities. During daily routines such as morning greetings and lunchtimes pupils endeavour to echo the examples staff set. Pupils of all abilities make choices, either by pointing with their eyes, exchanging pictures, signing or vocalising. All are successfully developing relationships. Older and more able pupils take increased responsibility for their personal care. All pupils meet with members of the community and those who are able learn how they can contribute, for example, by improving the environment through Trailblazers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Parents are pleased with behaviour at the school and state that the school helps their children become more mature and responsible.

12. Parents report their children enjoy coming to school. This is evident in the smiles and squeals of delight as they are greeted individually by staff each morning. Pupils respond especially well to the very effective atmosphere created by enthusiastic teachers and support staff. Pupils derive pleasure from the imaginative and varied activities provided for them.

They endeavour to take part in all activities and to persevere, even though some find the tasks physically very demanding. Levels of concentration are high for pupils with such severe and complex needs.

13. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is very good. Those with more challenging behaviours are rarely allowed to disrupt others and any incidents that do occur are quickly and sensitively dealt with. Such pupils make very good improvement in controlling their behaviour because staff implement their individual programmes consistently. Pupils are very well behaved at break and lunchtimes. Those who are able chat sensibly to other pupils and adults on their table making lunchtime a pleasant social occasion. During the inspection a Jubilee lunch was held in the school hall with a number of visitors attending. There was an excellent community atmosphere and pupils behaved impeccably. When moving around the school, at break time or between lessons, pupils do so cautiously, conscious that wheelchair users and others who are unsteady or their feet may be negotiating the narrow, winding corridors from the opposite direction.

14. Pupils are proud of their school and this is reflected by their behaviour when they are out in the community. They clearly understand they are representing the school. Pupils observed visiting college or working with pupils in other schools were polite and courteous. Members of the public travelling to Spain on the same coach as pupils going to Barcelona were so impressed by very good behaviour they took the trouble to write to the school commenting on what they had experienced.

15. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills, communication, mobility and general wellbeing. An excellent team of welfare and lunchtime assistants, physiotherapy and language therapists and medical staff helps pupils gain greater independence. Older more able pupils are helped to take responsibility for their personal hygiene.

16. Many pupils are aware that others have different skin tones or more severe needs and readily accept these. Pupils care for each other. They are concerned if someone is distressed and readily applaud when one of their group is successful. Pupils are proud when improvement in their work or behaviour is acknowledged and are growing in assurance. Their improved self-esteem gives them the confidence to make further contributions in lessons. Older pupils and students in the sixth form are remarkably realistic when they review their performance at the end of each lesson. They are honest about the amount of help they have received and are gaining a good insight into what they do well.

17. Increased opportunities to work in groups helps pupils form relationships and contributes to their personal development. Older pupils and students in the sixth form benefit from the numerous opportunities to help them become more independent and accept greater responsibility. For example, on trips out of school, pupils are responsible for the cameras and take photographs to provide a record. Pupils and students are encouraged to take responsibility for the organisation and running of out of school activities such as discos. Older pupils and students who are members of the recently introduced school council undertake their responsibilities conscientiously, consulting others in their class as to developments within the school. The significant progress made by pupils and student helps them to better cope when moving on from school.

18. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. The school population is changing with far more pupils with complex needs, many of whom have associated medical conditions. Pupils come to school when they are well and able to do so. Lessons generally start promptly though some at the start of the day are sometimes affected by the staggered arrival of transport.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Previously, teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 87 percent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 13 percent of lessons. On this occasion all teaching was at least satisfactory. In addition, there has been very good improvement in the percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching. Very good teaching was observed in all age groups and in a number of subjects. A major strength of teaching is the use of 'total communication'. All staff use signs, symbols, speech synthesisers and the written and spoken word to make sure all pupils, including those with profound and complex needs and those for whom English is not their first language, understand what is happening. They ensure pupils acquire the ability to indicate their likes and dislikes, make choices and make their basic needs understood. Pupils with more severe communication needs are making remarkable progress in using a picture exchange system for making choices and indicating preferences in food and drink.

20. All teachers plan their lessons conscientiously taking account of pupils' individual needs and interests and of targets that have been set in pupil's individual education plans. Classroom support staff and health professionals are kept fully informed of what is planned so their contributions are meaningful and significantly aid pupils' learning. All staff work exceptionally well together creating very effective teams. Classroom support staff are used productively for individual and small group work to accelerate learning. All provide a very good example of how to behave appropriately, modelling expected behaviours such as taking turns, sitting patiently, not snatching at objects and saying or signing 'please' and 'thank you' as required. Alongside other professionals, teachers have compiled high quality portfolios for each pupil documenting their needs, likes and dislikes. These are readily available to anyone working in the classroom ensuring a consistent approach and respect for each pupil. This is particularly so for pupils with more profound needs where a quiet explanation about what is happening to them prevents them from being startled.

21. Staff know their pupils very well. Recognising the severe, profound and complex needs of their pupils, teachers plan activities which will stimulate all the senses whilst being careful not to over stimulate particular pupils. Numerous lessons were seen using this approach including geography lessons where pupils went on a 'world tour' feeling fabrics such as silk when they were in India, smelling spices, listening to Indian music and tasting foods. Similarly in science, pupils were encouraged to use all their senses, feeling electrical appliances and plugs which brought a flutter of recognition to a pupil with visual impairment. Teachers use resources imaginatively, for example, pupils with profound needs in the secondary department increased their awareness of number through counting shells alongside a Caribbean counting song. Pupils in the primary department were enthralled and make very good progress in their understanding of the story of the Three Little Pigs when their teacher used a 'wolf' puppet to blow the house down, accompanied by musical sound effects. They began to anticipate repetitive phrases such as "huffed and puffed and blew the house down" and were gleeful when the wolf ended up in the stew. Older more able pupils made good gains in their understanding of tens and units and number by counting supermarket vouchers into piles of tens.

22. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve very well because teachers have very high expectations of what they will achieve. Regardless of ability, teachers expect high levels of participation. They insist each pupil makes eye contact and makes a contribution to each discussion be it signed or vocal. Staff are not afraid to wait, recognising that some pupils take longer than others to form their response. More able pupils are expected to log on to the computer by themselves, spelling their own password. Pupils who are able are challenged to

explain their reasoning. This was so in a mathematics lesson when pupils were expected to reason which container held most liquid and why. Pupils recognised and indicated which was the largest and explained why it would hold most. On commenting that an activity was too difficult, students in the sixth form persevered and made very good progress in letter formation because their teacher insisted they were capable of the task.

23. Staff use all activities and daily routines very effectively as learning opportunities. This is particularly evident in early morning routines when pupils are greeted individually as they arrive. They are expected to make eye contact or vocalise their greeting. Similarly, when calling the register teachers wait for all pupils to make some response giving suitable praise to increase pupils' confidence and self esteem. In some classrooms, teachers use a different piece of music very effectively at the start of each day to prepare pupils for the forthcoming activities. Form time at the start of each day is used well to prepare pupils for their day. The timetable for the day is sequenced so pupils who are anxious and those with autistic tendencies who need structure become familiar with the routine. Every opportunity is taken to use language and number in counting how many pupils are present and reading the name of the day. During lessons, very good attention is given to developing pupils' literacy. All staff highlight new vocabulary such as 'fins' and 'scales' when investigating fish in science. This allows pupils to extend their awareness of words. More able pupils are expected to read worksheets and to use their best writing when recording their work. Pupils are expected to improve their speaking and listening in all subjects for example, when reporting on the work of charities in religious education, and in history when preparing questions about World War II for interviews with elderly residents in the home next to the school. Though some good examples were seen of pupils using numeracy, for instance, to count in fives and tens to 50 when thinking about the Jubilee in assembly, and in form time, opportunities to extend pupils' awareness and understanding of numeracy were missed in some science, design and technology, and physical education lessons.

24. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when the management of pupils with complex needs was a key issue. Many pupils have emotional and behavioural needs. Where necessary pupils have a support plan to help them improve their behaviour and, where appropriate, face their difficulties. Pupils are encouraged to try and suitably praised for their efforts. A quick sign, for example drawing the hand quickly down in front of the face, makes one particular pupil recognise she must be 'sensible' and so respond appropriately. Staff follow strategies in pupils' plans consistently so positive behaviour is reinforced and pupils learn what is acceptable. This was seen on a number of occasions when pupils with problems became restless or displayed inappropriate behaviour. Staff immediately let pupils know when behaviour was not acceptable. On occasions when the behaviour persisted, the teacher or member of support staff quietly turned the pupil's chair away from the group for a few minutes. This was successful in calming the pupil and in allowing others to continue with their work without distraction.

25. Staff who work with different age groups readily adapt their style to meet the needs of the pupils with whom they are working. This was especially evident with classroom assistants and the specialist information and communication technology teacher and the design and technology teacher. When working with older pupils and students in the sixth form, they treat them as young adults. Pupils and students respond particularly well to the trust placed in them, showing increasing maturity in their relationships and in their attitude to work. In lessons with younger pupils staff focus on learning through play as was seen in a 'control technology' lesson when pupils were expected to use different types of switches to control the movements of toy animals. Pupils had fun using switches to control the movement of a toy dinosaur, putting it safely to bed in its cave.

26. Staff make sure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, though this is sometimes a struggle in rooms that are small and unsuitable for pupils in wheelchairs. At the start of each lesson they check pupils are in the correct sitting position or using their standing frames as appropriate. Throughout the course of the lesson staff quickly glance to make sure that pupils are not uncomfortable and change positions where necessary. Pupils learn more readily because they are not distracted by pain or discomfort. Staff are conscious that some groups have very few girls or pupils from ethnic minority groups and make an additional effort to include them by providing activities that reflect their culture or gender. Pupils who are in wheelchairs are expected to join in all activities, including dance, and take their turn with tasks such as washing up and vacuuming in home management. Staff know their pupils very well and know what upsets them. This was the case with a pupil who has a phobia about computers. Sensitive to his difficulty, yet determined he took a full part in the lesson the teacher provided a 'remote mouse' so the pupil could work at his desk well away from the computer screen.

27. In lessons where teaching is less effective, though still satisfactory, some lessons lose pace so pupils' concentration lapses occasionally. In a couple of lessons, the teacher focused too long on one pupil at the expense of others in the group. Most teachers use their voice very well to build anticipation. However, in a few lessons teachers maintained the same pitch and so opportunities to increase pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment were missed.

28. In lessons where teaching was very good or outstanding the teachers' enthusiasm was infectious and inspired pupils to be totally involved. This was especially so in an English lesson for secondary age pupils with profound needs. Pupils in this group gained an excellent awareness of myths and legends through experiencing the travels of Odysseus on his journey home, visiting Hades and Calypso. The lesson was conducted in the 'soft play' room with musical and light effects to create storms, calm and the battle with the Cyclops. Pupils were spellbound by all that was happening around them, they made choices of food and the route for the journey and concentrated for far longer than would be expected of pupils with such needs. At each stage the teacher recorded the progress of the journey in the class book, reading this back to the fascinated pupils at the end of the lesson.

29. All lessons end with a suitable review of the learning that has taken place. In lessons with more able pupils, pupils are expected to be realistic about what they have learned and how much help they have needed. As a result pupils are surprisingly honest about their achievements and are gaining in maturity. In lessons with pupils with greater needs and little communication lessons are reviewed, drawing pupils' attention to something they had done well. This was especially successful when staff used songs such as the 'Thank you' song. Pupils visibly glowed with pride as they were thanked for 'good choosing', 'good eye contact' and 'joining in'. Some parents expressed concern at the amount of homework pupils are given. Teachers give a variety of homework that is appropriate to pupils' abilities and needs.

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

30. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in improving the curriculum. Detailed schemes of work are now in place for all National Curriculum subjects. These documents support planning and ensure that there is continuity of learning from one age group to the next.

31. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities is very good in all departments. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils and its variety and depth is a strength of the school. The curriculum is now broad and balanced, an area identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Learning opportunities for young children in the early years are also very good. However, reports to parents and targets set for children are expressed in terms of National Curriculum subjects instead of Early Learning Goals. A suitable amount of time has been allocated for teaching each subject. However, to achieve this the school has identified that daily tutor time will include some time spent on mathematics, English and personal, social and health education but practice across the school varies in the use made of this time. Guidelines for staff and monitoring procedures are insufficient to ensure that tutor time is used effectively. This is an area for development.

32. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented throughout the school. The promotion of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects is very good. Communication skills are especially well developed in the classroom by the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), symbols and signing. These approaches strongly support pupils' learning in all subjects. Though there are some examples of good practice, the promotion of numeracy skills in other subjects is at an earlier stage of development, because literacy and communication have been the priority.

33. Provision for careers education and guidance is very good. There is an effective work experience programme for students in the sixth form when they have the opportunity to take part in experiences that are either school based or within the community. The careers programme now includes pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The subject manager has created a well organised Careers library with useful information for parents, staff and pupils. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, and the sixth form take part in a careers week each year. The careers curriculum is successful in preparing pupils and students for the next stage of their education.

34. The school has good links with a number of education establishments. For example, some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following a science course at a local college. There are social links with a local primary school with pupils watching the productions such as 'Its Our Park'. A very successful arts link has been established with other special schools. Older pupils in the secondary department visit their local secondary school for lunch and to socialise each week on their return from swimming. In addition, two pupils attend a local secondary school to take part in drama and practical activities on a part-time basis. However, despite many efforts by the school, links with mainstream primary and secondary schools remain an area for development.

35. The school makes very good provision for meeting the wide range of pupils' special educational needs. All pupils, including pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with more complex needs, have full access to the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has developed a successful parallel curriculum including, for example, music therapy and hydrotherapy for pupils who need additional provision to supplement the National Curriculum. Very good use is made of signing, symbols and switch technology to give all pupils access to all areas of learning and to help them learn more effectively.

36. Personal, social and health education provision is very good. A scheme of work has been produced for each department that provides helpful guidance for teachers. This has been introduced since the last inspection. The scheme provides a broad, balanced developmental framework and includes modules on sex education, personal health and awareness of the use and misuse of drugs. The school is the first Nottinghamshire school for pupils with severe and profound needs to take part in Drugs Awareness Resistance

Education (DARE). Sex education is planned and taught through science and personal, social and health education lessons and teachers' records show that pupils make good progress in developing their understanding in this area. In each department, modules are also included to help pupils develop cultural awareness. Monitoring of pupils' progress in personal, social and health education is good. The development of independence, social skills, and behaviour are planned and support what is taught in personal, social and health education lessons. A range of challenging nationally recognised awards is available for older secondary age pupils and students in the sixth form.

37. Provision for extra curricular activities is very good. Staff regularly take pupils out for the evening to, for example, the opera or ballet. Older pupils have the opportunity to go to the pictures or the bowling alley. Pupils regularly take part in residential experiences and a group has recently returned from Barcelona. The curriculum is enriched by a very wide range of educational visits to museums, adventure centres, and to places of historical, geographic and scientific interest. Good links have been made with the community surrounding the school.

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. There is now a whole school approach to improving pupils' personal development, and in providing far more opportunities for pupils to become independent and take responsibility.

39. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered very successfully. Worship in class and in the main hall encourages pupils to develop a reverence for prayer. Pupils close their eyes and bow their heads as they offer their own prayers, thinking of something to thank their god for, then thinking of something which has made them happy or sad, whilst reflecting quietly to the best of their ability. Teachers plan for pupils to be surprised and excited by their learning, however severe or complex their needs. This was seen clearly when young children acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world were encouraged to investigate a trout. They wrinkled their noses at the smell and gingerly touched the scales, chuckling at the experience. More able older pupils were equally enthralled in a mathematics lesson about time, focusing on a number of clocks and waiting in eager anticipation for the alarms to sound. Staff endeavour to make learning meaningful and to create a sense of wonder. This was particularly effective when pupils used the stable at a nearby outdoor centre to recreate the Christmas story. Pupils sat wide eyed amid the scent of hay, in the cold, as the story of the nativity unfolded. Similarly pupils of all ages and abilities experienced 'special feelings' when they took part in a pilgrimage to Southwell Minister where they lit candles, dressed as members of the choir and were given communion. Pupils are given numerous opportunities each day to reflect on what they have done and to celebrate achievement. Such reflection is particularly effective when pupils are able to think about how they have overcome a problem such as not finding their way back to class on time.

40. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Staff treat pupils with respect and preserve their dignity at all times and expect pupils to do the same. Pupils are expected to know the difference between right and wrong, with the Code of Conduct prominently displayed in all classrooms. Staff encourage pupils to consider the impact of their actions on others. This was so when one pupil with behavioural needs found concentration difficult and was upsetting other pupils. The teacher immediately made reference to previous work 'love one another'. This caused the pupil to reflect on his actions and return to the task in hand, leaving others to get on with their work. Special assemblies and work in classes highlight the plight of others such as Tanzanian street children. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 extend their awareness of poverty as they consider Christian Charity in religious education, researching information about charities such as the Salvation Army and CAFOD, (Catholic Aid for Overseas Development). Pupils of all ages make generous donations to a number of

national and local charities. However limited pupils' abilities, they are given opportunities to consider global issues such as conservation and moral issues including war. Pupils taking part in a drama at Redditch Theatre gained an outstanding awareness of 'cloning'. Older pupils preparing questions about World War II to use in interview with elderly residents in a nearby home were visibly moved as they realised some of these people lost close friends and family through war.

41. Pupils' social development is promoted very successfully through school routines including arrival at school and lunchtimes. More able pupils are expected to take responsibility, such as returning the register to the office and helping others. Staff successfully promote the development of self esteem and greater independent learning, however limited pupils' abilities. All pupils are encouraged to recognise and accept differences in others. As a result, racial harmony pervades and pupils are tolerant of each other's idiosyncrasies. Staff provide numerous opportunities for pupils to improve their social skills by working as part of a group, as when taking part in the Trailblazer project to improve the school grounds, recognising the qualities and skills in other team members. Pupils improve their independence by work in home management, cleaning and cooking. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form take part in work experience, sometimes in the school but mostly off site, learning to cope with new situations and building new relationships. Pupils taking part in college and mainstream school links are expected to take responsibility for collecting their own meals at lunchtime and socialising with others. Staff give very good support to pupils, enabling them to live as contributing members of a wider society. This is successfully aided by residential experiences, where pupils learn to live and work together as part of a community. Pupils who are members of the school council have the opportunity to experience democracy in action. A significant contribution to pupils' social development in raising their confidence and self esteem is the way all celebrate the achievement of others, culminating in the annual Leavers Award ceremony held each November.

42. Pupils' cultural development is promoted equally successfully. The school is committed to providing challenging, enriching opportunities for pupils and their families. Pupils of all ages and abilities are made aware of well-known authors, artists and musicians through the subjects they study. World Book Day is celebrated by visits from such as a Caribbean poet. Regular 'themed days' allow pupils to experience the art, dance, music, food and traditions of countries such as Japan, Italy, and Germany. Visitors extend pupils' awareness through African art workshops and Caribbean dance and music, and of classical music following a visit by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, regular visits are made to the theatre, the ballet, museums and art galleries. An interest in local history is successfully fostered through visits to Goose Fair and to Sherwood Forest to re-enact the stories of Robin Hood. National pride is successfully fostered by celebrating the Jubilee, holding a street party for local residents and a celebration Jubilee lunch where pupils sang and signed 'There'll always be an England' with gusto. Staff celebrate the rich cultural mix of the school by observing Diwali, Ramadan, Eid, Shabbat and the Chinese New Year as well as celebrating all the festivals in the Christian calendar. Staff have established very successful links with schools abroad with pupils visiting America, France and Barcelona. These efforts have been recently recognised when the school was awarded the prestigious International School Award in 2001.

SIXTH FORM

43. Learning opportunities for students in the sixth form are very good. The programme is broad, balanced and relevant to their age and needs. Links with colleges are good. For example, some students attend a catering course at a local college for one day a week. There are opportunities for work experience and students take part in a range of mini-enterprise activities, for example, working with a local supermarket to design and make

biscuits. There is a range of courses available in the sixth form so all students can leave school with a nationally recognised award.

44. Students make very good progress in the sixth form. The teaching is very good and supported by detailed lesson plans with each student having specific targets for each lesson. Students are given opportunities to develop independence, autonomy and to make their own decisions by, for example, organising their own working groups. Management of student behaviour is excellent. Students are treated as young adults and, when appropriate, are given opportunities to solve their own problems and to make decisions. For example, one student who did not want to get her hands dirty gardening recorded what others were doing using a digital camera.

45. Teachers make good use of assessment within each lesson and are skilful in involving students in the process of critically reviewing their own performance. Progress over time is recorded in their records of achievement and for purposes of external accreditation. The work presented for external awards is selected to demonstrate achievement towards targets over a period of time. Effective use is made of digital images, for example, a picture of a student's hand exploring textures of different materials showed exactly what had been achieved. Student files are well organised, dated and include relevant comments from staff. They clearly demonstrate achievement and are examples of good practice that could inform developments in the rest of the school.

46. Students take part in a number of activities designed to develop a broader awareness and understanding of the contribution they can make to the community. For example, through the Trailblazer Project, students are working to improve an area of the school grounds. This has included designing the new area and doing the necessary work to implement the changes. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school is using and adapting 'Project Respect' materials developed jointly by education, police and health to develop self-esteem and a positive self-image. In home management, students learn to work independently on practical tasks, for example, washing up and cleaning their shoes.

47. As at the time of the last inspection, the accommodation for the sixth form is unsatisfactory. Staff work hard to limit its impact on students' learning. Students now have access to the computer suite and practical bases in the main building.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. All staff give very high priority to the physical and emotional well being of the pupils and students in their care. Teaching and support staff know pupils very well. Much time and effort has gone into producing excellent, detailed pupil profiles 'Wait for Me', which give staff and visitors working with individuals an outline of the physical needs of each pupil in addition to their likes and dislikes, how they should be approached and what might upset them. This allows pupils, however complex and profound their needs might be, to feel safe, secure and valued. Extensive systems and detailed records of academic and personal needs allow staff to monitor pupils' personal development very effectively. Teachers work very closely with highly skilled support staff and other professionals such as physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, an occupational therapist and a music therapist to help pupils take full advantage of all the school offers. The multi-disciplinary approach plays a major part in the personal development of all pupils. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in improving standards of care for all pupils. This view is supported by parents who confirm teachers work hard to make sure all pupils are helped to achieve to the best of their ability.

49. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The behaviour policy emphasises positive reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour. Pupils' behaviour programmes are regularly reviewed. This, alongside the rotation of staff between classes, ensures consistent practice. Very good daily routines, such as procedures in the dining hall, allow pupils to develop their social skills and become less dependent on others. For example, lunchtime support assistants help younger and less able pupils to progress towards eating independently, whilst there is the expectation that most senior pupils will collect their own lunches and clear away afterwards. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Staff follow up unexplained absences and will contact parents if pupils fail to arrive when expected. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance in ensuring their children gain the best possible benefit from educational opportunities.

50. Very good procedures are in place for child protection and there is good practice for the promotion of the health, safety and well being of pupils. The school benefits from having full time nursing staff on site who provide very good support in child protection matters and first aid duties as well as performing duties such as the administration of medication. Buildings are safe and clean, and the grounds secure. Staff are very health and safety conscious and do their utmost to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils be it in lessons such as science, when being lifted in and out of wheelchairs, or on visits out of school. The school buys the service of safety experts from the local authority who carry out regular checks. However, managers recognise it could be better served by having its own trained health and safety representative to perform more regular safety checks to ensure safety issues are resolved more quickly.

51. Teachers, classroom assistants and all others working in the school demonstrate a genuine concern for pupils' care, support and guidance. The dignity of pupils is given the highest priority at all times. Pupils feel confident they are able to discuss any problems they have with any adult in the school. Staff throughout the school treat pupils with respect and are excellent models of how to behave appropriately. All legal requirements concerning statements of special educational needs are appropriately met. Pupil annual reviews are very comprehensive and their progress towards targets in individual education plans is reported and updated termly. During the inspection there were numerous examples of staff working well with other professionals and very good relationships witnessed with the school nurses and physiotherapists. The close liaison and teamwork between education and health professionals is a strength of the school.

52. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Each pupil has an individual education plan that clearly indicates targets for each subject. The plan is reviewed at the end of each term and new targets set. Targets are linked to National Curriculum and 'P' levels. This information is used to write reports for annual reviews that state clearly what pupils can do and also indicates the next steps to be taken.

53. The use of assessment information to plan future work is very good. At the end of each lesson time is given to assessing pupils' progress in that lesson. Pupils are closely involved in this process and, where they are able, make an assessment of their own performance. A common recording format is used. Teachers keep a record of this information and have detailed daily evidence of pupils' progress towards their targets which is used to help plan future lessons. The use of pupils' work as evidence of progress over time is not as well developed. Work is not systematically dated nor are assessment comments by teachers always included. This is an area for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in improving links with parents. These are now very good. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They consider they are very well informed regarding the progress their children make, that the school works very closely with them and that they are very comfortable in approaching the school with any problems. The effective links between home and school contribute very positively to pupils' learning.

55. The school is conscious of the difficulties many parents have given the special needs of their children and the constraint this places on their time. Some parents have the opportunity to talk to staff, including nursing and physiotherapy personnel, at the start or end of the day when bringing or taking their children to and from school. However, many parents live some distance away and their children use specially provided transport. Nevertheless, all parents are kept very well informed by detailed home school diaries for younger pupils and for older pupils who have more severe learning difficulties.

56. The school uses many forms of communication to keep parents very well informed and able to support their child's learning at home. The school prospectus, the annual governors' report to parents, the 'Welcome' booklet and the parents' handbook are all of a high standard and provide helpful guidance as well as including contributions from staff and pupils. The parents' handbook was produced as a result of responses to one of the parental surveys that are regularly carried out by the school. Regular newsletters and letters home from individual teachers, with information on such things as school trips, keep parents informed of day-to-day activities. In addition, staff regularly contact parents by telephone if circumstances require urgent action. Pupil's individual education programmes are shared with parents and the reports for legally required annual reviews are of a high standard, providing detailed information of what pupils have achieved in all subjects, the progress made and future targets. In order to keep parents informed of educational developments and circumstances affecting the special needs of their children, regular workshops are held such as a welfare rights workshop that is particularly important due to continually changing legislation.

57. Many parents take advantage of the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school by attending school productions, assemblies, fun days, helping on school trips and with swimming lessons. The school and parents also benefit from a very strong friends' association that has been very successful in both organising events that provide opportunities for them to meet informally as well as raising considerable funds that support the school by providing much needed resources. Parents who do not speak English as their first language are very well supported and helped to understand what is happening by a very talented translator who works at the school, and through monthly coffee mornings for Asian mothers where they are able to voice any concerns.

58. A significant number of parents feel staff set insufficient homework. Inspection findings confirm that, for a school of this type, pupils are asked to do an appropriate amount of work outside school. This is particularly so given the wide range of out of school activities including theatre visits, residential visits and trips abroad undertaken. However, the homework policy is currently under review and it is the intention that parents are reminded of the different forms homework can take and of the homework pupils are being asked to do.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. As at the time of the last inspection, the headteacher provides enthusiastic and effective leadership for the work of the school. She has a passion for education which she has successfully fostered in staff. She challenges colleagues and parents, as well as pupils, to consider "What I have learned today?" and "How can I improve?" In addition, she has

provided very good support for staff and kept morale high over a period where the school has had to cope with the serious illness and deaths of staff and pupils. Whilst successful as a leader, some aspects of her management need minor attention. For example, the analysis of pupils' achievement. Alongside the governors, the headteacher has made some very good appointments. She is not prepared to compromise pupils by making inappropriate appointments and is prepared to run with high calibre teachers on temporary contracts who know the pupils well rather than appoint an unsuitable candidate.

60. The headteacher cares ardently about the school and its pupils. Her educational vision is supported by the deputy's energy, drive and expertise. His appointment since the last inspection has had a significant impact on school improvement. He complements the skills of the headteacher well. In partnership with other senior managers he has contributed to improvements in the management of pupils with challenging behaviours and in improving the quality of teaching and learning. In addition much has been achieved in developing the curriculum since his arrival. He and the two senior teachers are very good practitioners and very good examples for their colleagues. All members of the senior management team are committed to the school aim of everyone achieving to the best of their ability, and provide inspiration for other staff as they move the school forward. Managers are in post for all subjects except art and physical education, posts for which suitable candidates have yet to be found. Subject management ranges from satisfactory to very good, being good overall. All co-ordinators are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and what needs to be done to improve. They meet with the headteacher each year to review their subject and prioritise planned developments. Effective systems have been introduced to monitor the curriculum, staff deployment, staff development and resources; an issue raised by the previous inspection. Classroom observations by the head and senior teachers have led to significant improvement in teaching and learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors the provision carefully to make sure all additional needs are met.

61. The governing body has a good mix of new and longer serving members. By choice, all are members of both the finance and general purposes committees. As at the time of the last inspection, all are very supportive of the school, attending social functions and visiting regularly. They use their skills effectively to help the school, for example, expertise in health and safety, when discussing building issues and industrial relations. Governors have a very good overview of the school. They have a shared vision with the headteacher and staff about the future of the school and know what needs to be done to maintain present standards. Though they discuss achievement and what is happening in similar schools, governors recognise that whilst they are familiar with the workings of the school, they need to do more to monitor its effectiveness. Governors have a genuine desire to improve and have taken part in an audit to identify areas for development with an officer of the local education authority.

62. Governors and senior managers know the school's strengths and areas for development. The senior management team analyses data such as pupil support plans by ethnic origin in order to provide appropriate support, and are now looking to analyse achievement by gender and ethnicity and in terms of improvement. They are about to begin setting benchmarks against which to judge progress in order to set even more challenging targets. Other performance indicators used to measure the school's performance include the reduction of outbursts in inappropriate behaviour, the number of letters recognised in THRASS work and achievement in swimming. Following all events in school, including parental consultation evenings, governors and parents are consulted and requested to complete a sheet indicating what they liked about the occasion and what could be improved. This is used when planning further activities.

63. The staff are a hard working and dedicated team. This is exemplified by the number of staff that accompany and support pupils in a wide range of out of school activities, for

instance on residential visits to Spain and to an outdoor activities centre in Derbyshire. Good use is made of visiting experts, for example, a day of dance workshops was organised and led by a retired physical education teacher. All staff, including teachers, support staff and health professionals are knowledgeable about the needs of individual pupils and work well as a team to meet these needs. Since the previous inspection there has been a good improvement in the number of staff and in their expertise. This is constantly being enhanced and extended by a thorough process of induction, training, and monitoring of performance. Staff expertise is recognised and used by the local education authority for example in THRASS, the teaching of handwriting, reading and spelling skills, and in training staff how to lift and handle non-ambulant pupils correctly.

64. Staff have had to be imaginative and resourceful to overcome the restrictions caused by the many unsatisfactory features of the accommodation. This was commented on in the previous report and although design and technology, food technology and computer areas have been created, they are too small to accommodate a group of pupils in wheelchairs. A lack of adequate storage facilities in classrooms has resulted in corridors being used to house cupboards for resources. The narrow corridors in many parts of the school restrict the independent mobility of pupils in wheelchairs. Access to the hydrotherapy pool is inconvenient as it is through a small sensory room, this often interrupts the work taking place there. The hall continues to be a thoroughfare and there are numerous interruptions during lessons. However, there are plans to build a corridor around the hall to relieve this. The sixth form facilities, housed in a wood constructed annexe, are, as at the time of the last inspection, still inadequate. The outdoor play area is small and some equipment, for example a roundabout and climbing frame, are dangerous and inappropriate for the needs of the pupils. There are limitations in developing the buildings and outdoor facilities due to the lack of size of the site.

65. The resources required for teaching all subjects are satisfactory overall but there are few outdoor toys and only limited outdoor play facilities for young children. Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement in the range and quantity of resources, for example the number of computers. The school makes very good use of facilities in the community, for example the use of a science room at a local college for lessons with pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is in response to the findings of the previous inspection regarding the lack of specialist science facilities for older pupils.

66. The school makes good use of its resources and, despite the restrictions imposed, of the limited accommodation. Staff strive hard and make very good use of the space available. Over one third of the school's population are now over the age of 16 and, as provision in the local education authority for this age group is scarce, there is pressure to increase numbers. The school is very near the threshold of viable provision for these students, unless the sixth form accommodation can be radically improved to give the room and range of facilities appropriate to their needs as young adults. It is a measure of the good spirit of staff and those who support it that fund-raising is very active and successfully pursued, raising additional sums for essential developments. Currently, a priority is creating an outdoor play space with the range of equipment to contribute to the youngest pupils' all round development. Much of the cost has already been accumulated, not least by an inspired, successful application for a grant from the School Grounds of the Future scheme. There are other examples where the school has been imaginative in getting good value, for instance, by employing a well-qualified and experienced university student, requiring a placement as part of his course, as the information and communication technology technician. This is having a substantial effect on the school developing very good resources in this subject, as well as contributing to increasing the expertise of staff. Similarly the decision to appoint a 'cover teacher' rather than paying into an insurance fund had proved very successful. In addition to having a member of staff who knows pupils well to call upon

at times of staff absence, the teacher is used effectively when there are no absences to make smaller groups, thus giving pupils more individual attention and aiding progress.

67. Financial planning is good. The annual budget is generous when compared to similar schools. It is carefully apportioned and reflects the priorities of the school, particularly in the high level of spending on teachers and classroom support staff. Staff are knowledgeable and skilled, their high quality teamwork leads to pupils achieving very well, demonstrating clearly the good value the school gains from its budgeting. The school receives a range of additional grants, the expenditure of which is carefully planned and accounted for. Money from the New Opportunities Fund, for example, is paying for training teachers in the use of information and communication technology. However, due to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining a suitable member of staff, funds attached to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant are only partly spent. The school plans a small surplus of funds, amounting to approximately three per cent each year from the annual budget as a contingency and has allowed this to accumulate over several years. The intention is to spend this on improvements and, in this respect, the school has anticipated needing to replace its old central heating boiler shortly.

68. The budget is well administered and accounted for. The office administrator uses a computerised financial system to control the ordering, invoicing and recording of all transactions, which are linked to the local education authority's financial systems. Proper financial procedures are adhered to in all transactions. The head teacher and governors are kept regularly informed on the state of the budget.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. Whilst maintaining the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- with the help of the Local Education Authority, ensure the buildings are made suitable for pupils and students aged 3 to 19 with severe, profound and complex needs, many of whom use wheelchairs.

(paragraphs 13, 26, 63, 66, 102, 107, 111, 121, 134)

- further improve pupils' achievements in mathematics by :
 - raising the profile of mathematics
 - allocating more time to the teaching of mathematics on the timetable
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their awareness and knowledge of numeracy in other subjects.

(paragraphs 5, 23, 95, 96)

- further improve the management of the school by :
 - analysing pupils' performance by gender, ethnicity and those in public care;
 - establishing benchmarks against which to measure improvement;
 - increase the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's effectiveness

(paragraphs 59, 61, 62)

All the above issues have been identified in the school development plan.

In addition to the above key issues, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

- Extending links with mainstream schools (paragraph 34)
- Improving the value of pupils' portfolios by annotating their work (paragraphs 53, 96)
- Reporting learning experiences for young children in terms of early learning goals. (paragraphs 31, 71)
- Establishing a policy for the use and monitoring of tutor time. (paragraphs 31, 149)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	30	27	12	0	0	0
Percentage	6	41	37	16	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	63
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8.8	School data	0.54

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	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	50
Any other minority ethnic group	63

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	1
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.89
Average class size	9

Education support staff: YR– Y13

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	604

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	846,666
Total expenditure	839,053
Expenditure per pupil	13,319
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,201
Balance carried forward to next year	83,614

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results

Standard Assessment Test – teacher assessment

At the end of Year 2

2 pupils eligible, both working towards National Curriculum Level 1 in reading, writing, mathematics and science

At the end of Year 6

2 pupils eligible, both working towards National Curriculum Level 1 in English, mathematics and science

At the end of Year 9

7 pupils eligible, 5 working towards National Curriculum Level 1 in English mathematics and science

2 pupils have achieved Level 1 in all three subjects.

Nationally recognised awards by the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form

General Certificate of Secondary Education - 3 pupils in the expressive arts

AEB 'on demand' tests

3 students Level 1 in numeracy and literacy

1 student Level 1 in literacy, L2 numeracy

1 student Level 2 in numeracy and literacy

OCR - Accreditation for Life and Living Skills.

	2000/01 introductory level	Level1
World of work	1	8
leisure	0	0
Environment	11	8
Home management	17	4
ICT	11	0
community	11	8

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	63
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.	81	13	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	74	23	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	38	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	15	0	4
The teaching is good.	87	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	87	13	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	6	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	14	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	87	13	0	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. The provision for young children was not reported on at the time of the last inspection, so it is not possible to make comparisons.

71. Children are admitted to the school from the age of three. At the time of the inspection there were three children of this age, all of a similar ability and all non-ambulant. Young children are placed in Primary 1 and educated alongside non-ambulant pupils in Years 1 to 6. All three are making at least very good progress in all areas of learning and achieving very well. Procedures to settle children are very good. Parents report they are very well informed and are very happy with the provision. Provision for children in this age group is very good. Staff are familiar with the areas of learning for young children. However, though individual plans are sometimes in areas of learning, because this is a mixed age class, weekly planning and reporting to parents are in terms of National Curriculum subjects. This is an area for attention. Staff have created an environment which stimulates and fascinates children. For example a 'fish tank' with collage fish and pond weed suspended from the ceiling amidst bubbles made from old compact disks reflecting the light. Teaching for young children is consistently at least very good. The teacher, support staff and health professionals work very well together with all staff using every opportunity to extend children's understanding of signs, symbols and the spoken language.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Children are delighted to be in school. They are co-operative and smile in anticipation of what is to come. With help they make choices. All accept care routines. More able children, with adult help, contribute towards their personal care, 'helping' the member of staff to wash their face or brush their hair. Children share activities with others in the group and express their likes and dislikes. They begin to have an awareness and respect for the beliefs of others through visits to a church and taking part in celebrations such as Christmas, Diwali and Easter.

73. Teaching in this area of learning is excellent. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's awareness and to show respect for each other. Children are encouraged to make choices in everything they do be it personal care, drinks or as part of their lessons. Classroom routines and daily care routines allow children to feel safe and secure. Staff wait patiently for a child to grasp an object or turn their head, then give praise. As a result children beam and visibly grow. Staff know the children very well. Though children have very limited communication, staff recognise when children are unhappy, afraid or overtired and immediately remedy the situation.

Communication, language and literacy

74. All three children enjoy interaction with adults. They listen and respond to familiar sounds. Though not yet discriminating between sounds, children endeavour to imitate sounds. One more able child is making rapid progress in exchanging pictures for items of food. Children enjoy listening to stories such as the Three Little Pigs and sharing books. They particularly enjoy their special 'sensory' stories where they investigate and experience items central to the story. They make contributions by operating 'Big Mac' with appropriate words and phrases. Children focus on objects and follow them with their eyes. All three respond to touch, actively manipulate materials and grasp and release objects with help. In one lesson, one more able child grasped a pencil and made a mark on a sheet of paper.

75. Teaching in this aspect is excellent. All staff use every opportunity to communicate, during lessons, at breaktimes and during personal care. Staff support the spoken word by using symbols and signing, encouraging children to sign in return. All are totally focused on the children and expect that all children will make some response, be it eye contact or sound and wait patiently for children to do so. In addition to appropriate symbols, all displays around the classroom have a written label so children become familiar with the shape of letters and words. Activities are planned to inspire and excite children. In order to improve communication with a more able child, the teacher deliberately avoided eye contact so, for the first time, she tapped her teacher on the arm because she felt she was not getting the attention she deserved.

Mathematical development

76. Children are aware of, and sometimes join in, number rhymes. More able children have an awareness of the terms 'big' and 'little'. With help, they place shapes in a container with one child pushing the shapes towards adult. All react to the environment. Children become aware of numbers through listening to adults count and when, for example, celebrating birthdays.

77. Teaching in this area is very good. Staff provide children with special objects at the start of the lesson, so they become familiar with what they are doing. Staff talk continuously using signs and symbols and including mathematical vocabulary. This was so when taking pets for a walk using word such as 'over', 'under' 'at the side' in order to increase children's awareness of mathematical vocabulary. Staff use every opportunity to count, such as in hydrotherapy, in class routines and when out in the yard.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. With help, children use switches to control the world around them. One more able child recognises that when she operates a switch something happens, for example a bulb lights up. They experience changes in the seasons. Children gain an awareness of 'live' or 'not alive', as they watch a fish swim in tank, with more able children following it with their eyes, then investigate a dead trout. Children have planted seeds to improve the environment in specially produced Jubilee pots. An awareness of other cultures is gained through listening to music and tasting foods as on America Day and Italy Day. Children have met with other children from a school they are linked with in Lincolnshire and visited a Victorian schoolroom. All particularly enjoyed a geography trail finding items as points of reference around the school.

79. Teaching in this area is very good. Resources are imaginative and readily to hand so there is no break in lessons. Staff use specialist vocabulary so children become aware of words such as 'fins' and 'scales'. Staff have high expectations of children's contributions and wait patiently as they locate body parts such as mouth and eye on a fish and on themselves whilst singing a familiar song.

Physical development

80. All three children have a very limited range of movements. Nevertheless, all persevere and make very good progress because of classroom activities and additional therapies such as hydrotherapy, rebound therapy and regular work with physiotherapists. Children increase the length of time they hold their heads up and the length of time they stand in their frames. They raise and turn their heads when they hear a familiar voice and lean forward when interested. Children are extending their range of movements at a remarkable rate because

staff plan activities which make children reach, as when 'toy arches' and 'mobiles' are placed slightly further away. In addition to increasing their range of movements, this makes them look and improves their co-ordination. Though small movements often present problems, children persevere when working with small objects. One child is able to grasp, but others need a helping hand. When working with clay or salt dough, children endeavour to make a very good attempt at, for example, using a cutter to produce their animal and decorate their fish.

81. Teaching in this area is excellent. Joint planning between the teacher, support staff and therapists ensures a consistent approach and level of challenge. All staff check children are comfortable and so receptive to learning. Very good use is made of the limited outdoor accommodation and toys for use outside.

Creative development

82. Children experience a very wide range of materials and different media. More able children explore paint independently. With help they paint, for example, fir cones and print. They create snow scenes, scrunching paper, using thick white paint and sprinkling with glitter. Children have produced stained glass effect shapes for the classroom window. They help make pizza, animal biscuits and an animal mobile using salt dough. Children listen to music and smile when they like what they hear. All take part in productions, for example, as a fairy in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

83. Teaching in this area is very good. Staff know when to step back from helping, thus allowing children to explore. Children are expected to do as much as they are physically able. Children are encouraged to make choices such as colour and size of paper and colour of paint. Music is used effectively to create a desired atmosphere.

ENGLISH

84. Achievement is very good in all age groups for pupils of all abilities, including those who do not have English as their main language. Older pupils in the secondary department and students in the sixth form achieve nationally recognised awards.

85. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening because of the consistent use of language and signing by all members of staff, including health professionals. Regardless of disability, all pupils are expected to make eye contact and give a response when spoken to directly. Pupils gain confidence to do this because staff are patient and respectful with them. All pupils, even those with the most complex and profound needs, persevere to produce a sound or fix their gaze, beaming triumphantly when they succeed. Through constant practice, pupils increase their vocabulary and knowledge of signs and symbols at a very good rate because staff explain all that is happening. As they get older, more able pupils follow instructions, for example in physical education, with the most able taking messages to other members of staff. Pupils of all ages with complex communication needs are making very good progress in using PECS, a picture exchange system, to make choices and to make their needs such as food or drink known to others. Pupils who are verbal in the secondary department make very good progress in taking turns and in speaking to an audience, for example when debating and reporting on the work of different charities in religious education. As they grow in confidence they eagerly engage visitors in conversation. All pupils have the opportunity to perform in front of an audience during annual productions, like *BFG*, the big Friendly Giant, when more able pupils memorise and deliver their lines with dramatic effect. Pupils improve their skills in speaking and listening through work in French and music.

86. Pupils in all age groups make very good gains in sharing books and reading because staff are confident and have adapted the national strategy well to meet their needs. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the pupils they teach and the system THRASS (Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills) which is used successfully throughout the school. Younger and less able pupils are aware of symbols and words. Some understand that print carries meaning. Pupils in the primary department are interested in stories. They listen avidly and join in with familiar phrases. Some pupils recognise their photograph whilst others recognise their name. More able pupils recognise up to 20 words, eagerly demonstrating their knowledge of THRASS cards such as 'mouse'. Many able pupils in the secondary department read simple texts, with some answering questions on what they have read. The most able oldest pupils in this age group use different sources such as books, newspapers, pamphlets and the Internet to find information in English lessons and in other subjects. Pupils with more severe and profound needs 'read' symbols and special books with the help of adults. Students in the sixth form continue to improve their reading. Some recognise signs in public places such as 'toilet' and 'exit'. They look at magazines, books and newspapers at break times. The most able students recognise programme titles such as 'Eastenders' and 'Holby City' in television listings. Students with more complex needs recognise a few symbols and make choices, for example, of drinks, offering the correct symbol for fruit juice in exchange for a drink.

87. Though very few pupils in the primary department have the ability to write some make marks on paper and hold a pencil correctly. The most able pupils write their first name. Following a visit to a restaurant, with the help of adults, they compose and write a 'thank you letter'. As a group, pupils 'write' stories using symbols and different materials to sequence the action. For example, in 'The Bear Behind' they used different fabrics and materials to suggest comfortable beds, cold surfaces and luxurious carpets. In the secondary department, pupils write their news and stories, some using symbols, others writing over or underneath what they have dictated to adults. Many form their letters correctly with some using capital letters. The most able pupils copy without prompting, with some providing the first letter for each word. More able pupils write short stories that have a beginning, middle and end and put together their autobiography, speculating what they hope their future will hold. After listening to poems by William Blake, Lord Byron, Christina Rossetti and William Wordsworth, they compile poetry anthologies of their thoughts about winter or beauty. During a visit to London, pupils kept a detailed, illustrated diary of all their activities including their comments following a visit to 'Cats'. Pupils with more severe and profound needs 'write' stories using symbols with the help of adults. They have compiled amusing, illustrated biographies of their teachers and famous people like the Queen. Students in the sixth form continue to improve their handwriting and fill in forms and write letters with help. Pupils who are able write to the same standard in other subjects.

88. Teaching is very good, with excellent teaching observed in the primary and secondary departments. All teachers plan their lessons meticulously providing imaginative, stimulating yet challenging activities for all abilities. Work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and needs taking account of individual targets. All teachers are very confident using THRASS and use this very effectively to help pupils improve. This was the case when secondary age pupils used the song to successfully spell the names of Romeo and Juliet. Teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils will achieve, expecting and receiving high levels of concentration from even those with the most profound needs. Resources are readily to hand so pupils maintain interest. Most staff use their voice effectively to create anticipation when telling stories such as 'This is the bear' or when encouraging pupils to make their contribution. Where teaching is less effective, though never less than good, teachers adopt a more measured tone and so fail to create a sense of wonder and excitement.

89. Where teaching is excellent, not a moment is wasted and every available opportunity

is used to extend pupils' awareness and understanding. The enthusiasm of teachers inspires their pupils. Such lessons are planned to activate all senses. This is especially so when lessons are conducted in the 'soft play' or 'sensory' rooms. Pupils are totally engrossed in their lessons when, for example, learning about myths and legends, looking in wonder at slides of a stormy sea whilst feeling water spraying on their faces and hearing the crash of thunder. Though teachers use new technology very effectively to produce symbols for communication and digitally produced photographs as records of pupils' achievements, there is room for improvement in providing opportunities for more able pupils to use word processing to draft, improve and present their writing.

90. Subject management is very good. The very enthusiastic co-ordinator provides excellent support for her colleagues. She is very knowledgeable, and alongside the head and deputy, has observed in classrooms and has been able to help her colleagues improve their practice. The subject is very well resourced including a well-organised library and high quality sensory books for pupils with more severe and profound needs. Excellent use is made of resources in the locality and of visiting speakers. Pupils and students partake in numerous visits to the theatre in Nottingham and in London to see a range of productions such as Macbeth and the Hobbit. World book day is celebrated each year and visits from writers such as an African poet inspire pupils. The teaching of English makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

91. There has been very good improvement in the teaching and provision for English since the last inspection. Marked improvement has been made in the quality of teaching with all staff now using communication aids consistently in all age groups. The national strategy has been successfully adopted and is contributing to standards. Significant improvement in recording pupils' achievements and progress has allowed staff to match and plan new work more effectively thus improving pupils' rate of progress.

MATHEMATICS

92. Pupils' achievements are good in the primary and secondary departments and very good in the sixth form. Pupils in the secondary department and the sixth form gain nationally recognised awards. Overall the provision is good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively in both primary and secondary departments. The impact of this is beginning to be seen in pupils' skills in mental calculation. All classes use a timetable made of words and symbols. This helps pupils learn the names of the days of the week and develop their understanding of the order of events each day and during the week.

93. In the primary department, some pupils count to at least 12 and recognise numbers from 1 to 10. They know how many adults and pupils there are in the group. Other pupils join in or will show an interest in number songs and rhymes. In the secondary department more able pupils have been introduced to multiplication. Some recognise odd and even numbers and have an understanding of place value. They order numbers to 100 and count in 2s, 5s and 10s to 100. Some pupils use large numbers, for example, sorting 91 tokens into piles of 10 and saying there are 9 tens and one left over. Pupils name regular two and three-dimensional shapes and have an understanding of specific mathematical vocabulary, for example 'face' and 'tessellate'. They construct three-dimensional shapes, for example a pyramid or cuboid, from templates. Pupils undertake simple data collection activities independently and organise their findings in the form of a simple graph or bar chart. They recognise and name coins and use these in practical situations for example when shopping or going to a local fair. Pupils with more severe needs match symbols to objects, for example, matching a picture or symbol of a loaf of bread to the real thing. Those with more profound needs are encouraged to respond to sounds, for example an alarm clock ringing in a lesson on time. More able students in the sixth form add two two-digit numbers using a

number chart, order numbers, including three-digit numbers, and are extending their understanding of place value. They make a plan of a garden area that they are designing. When measuring liquids, they suggest and use suitable units of measurement, for example litres and millilitres. Others choose a favourite television programme and find the time of day it occurs. Students with more severe learning difficulties have an awareness of the passage of time, and, with the help of symbols and special objects, are helped to understand the ordering and pattern of each day.

94. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and have taken account of the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson structure is used very well to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers understand the special educational needs of their pupils well and provide well for the wide range of pupils' abilities. Good and very good teaching is exemplified by detailed planning linked to pupils' individual education plans. The very good use of carefully considered questions allows all pupils in the class to be fully involved. The management of pupils is good. They are very well supported by classroom assistants and given appropriate activities with plenty of opportunities for practical work. Very effective teaching methods include using ideas that are of interest to the pupils, for example pupils really enjoyed an activity based on a well known television game and showed how well they could all deal with a range of problems and questions with the answer 50. Pupils concentrate well and work hard in their lessons. They are able to work independently and in small groups and to support each other.

95. Teachers record pupils' attainment, in relation to targets set, with pupils at the end of each lesson. Many pupils are able to say what they have learned and their capacity for self-assessment is impressive. Teachers make very good use of resources including individual white boards, hundred squares, number lines and a range of school produced resources, for example, 'sensory number books' to interest the pupils and engage their attention. In two lessons where teaching was less effective, the activities were too long and, although satisfactory learning was taking place, pupils lost interest and concentration. In some lessons pupils have limited opportunities to record their own work. This reduces opportunities for independent learning and for the development of writing skills. Though teachers plan for pupils to use their knowledge of numeracy in other subjects, some opportunities are overlooked

96. Leadership and management of mathematics is good. The co-ordinator has developed the role well. Teachers base their planning on the detailed scheme of work which meets the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. All pupils have termly targets for the subject, now linked to nationally recognised levels. Teaching, and its impact on learning, is monitored regularly by the co-ordinator with teachers receiving helpful written and verbal feedback. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' work is marked and dated but this is not done systematically across the school and does not always include an assessment comment by the teacher. A suitable action plan is in place. Teaching time is allocated to mathematics in tutor time each day but there is inconsistency between classes in the use of this time, resulting in some pupils not receiving their recommended allocation of time. Whilst staff have all received training in the national strategy, managers recognise the need for staff training in the use of numeracy skills in other subjects.

97. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. This is reflected in pupils' learning and in their achievements. Teachers now provide more challenging work for more able pupils. The subject manager monitors classroom practice. This has contributed to improved standards.

SCIENCE

98. Pupils' achievement in science is good in the primary department and Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress because of specialist teaching in using the science facilities at a local college. This course leads to pupils attaining nationally recognised awards.

99. Pupils in the primary department experience the movements of a fish and compare the movement of goldfish swimming in a bowl to the appearance of a dead trout. Some are beginning to understand that animals that eat meat have sharper teeth than those that eat grass. More able pupils point to their teeth and are developing an awareness of which foods are good and bad for their teeth. The most able pupils sort objects when asked if they are rough or smooth. They experience the feel of ice and water to understand the different properties of water. Pupils have planted runner bean seeds with the assistance of staff, to allow them to observe the growth of a plant as part of a 'Food and farming' project. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 study the parts of a flowering plant and the conditions needed for healthy plant growth. Some realise seeds can be dispersed. Pupils are developing the understanding of the five senses by smelling and touching different materials and objects. Pupils with communication difficulties express their likes and dislikes such as smell of the lemon scented soap by facial expression. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to identify the difference between a fossil and a piece of rock and say how a fossil has been created. They mix plaster of Paris and water to pour into a mould to make models of fossils and conduct an investigation into replicating the flight of a pterodactyl using cardboard, a paper clip and some blu-tac. The pupils understand that how the model flies is dependent upon where the weight is placed on the paper clip.

100. Teaching is good in the primary and Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. When teaching is of a very high quality the use of well-organised activities and skilful classroom practice are combined to produce an environment that promotes very effective learning for pupils of all abilities. The very good use of a variety of sensory stimuli ensures that pupils with more severe and profound needs are engaged in activities. All pupils receive good support from the teacher and classroom assistants and staff make sure that those with additional needs are given extra help where necessary. This was the case with a visually impaired pupil who was helped and encouraged to feel the difference between a piece of electrical cable and a plug. Pupils achieve well and show good levels of concentration because they are all fully engaged in their learning.

101. The content of the curriculum is good and this is organised into relevant learning experiences that are appropriate for the wide range of pupils' ages and abilities. This is very thoroughly monitored and reviewed using a detailed auditing procedure devised by a well-informed subject manager.

102. Management of the subject is good. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievements since the last inspection. The curriculum is now well established and resources have improved. The weaknesses in the accommodation, identified in the previous inspection report, have been overcome by older pupils using the local college for their lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

103. All pupils in the primary department, whatever their special educational needs, are achieving very well. Thereafter, pupils' and students' achievement is good. The achievement of older, more able pupils working towards GCSE in the expressive arts is of an especially high standard and is related further in the report.

104. The youngest pupils who have more severe and complex learning difficulties are not at the stage to acquire the knowledge and skills associated with art in the National Curriculum. However, they experience different materials, textures and colours and are encouraged very effectively by teachers and support assistants to look at, touch and hold these. This is a very good beginning for attaining the awareness, interest and physical skills that can lead to creative development. Pupils are responding very positively in the activities planned for them, for example, showing a definite interest by making eye contact and following the movement of objects. In one lesson a girl was happily involved and independently handling furry fabric, choosing pieces and exploring the texture. In another instance, pupils enjoyed running their fingers and hands through coloured pasta shells and rice. They were aware of the different colours and tolerated the wetness and stickiness of these materials on their hands. More able pupils without such profound learning difficulties are improving their manipulation skills by holding pencils and drawing lines, for example, following the outline of a circle. This, of course, makes a good contribution towards writing skills. The most able pupils work with materials creatively such as working with red, white and blue tissue to make a collage of the Union Jack.

105. In the secondary department, more able pupils possess a variety of knowledge and skills that allow them to use a range of material and processes to make images. They apply paint carefully to paper using controlled vertical brush strokes. In a self-portrait topic, pupils cut from paper the shapes of facial features like the eyes and nose. Their collage compositions show awareness of the relationships of facial features and their correct proportions. They have developed their self-portrait ideas in clay, modelling and joining each feature and from making closer observations added details of skin colour and hair. By the end of Year 11, pupils are aware there are primary and secondary colours and a few know orange is made from mixing red and yellow. They experiment by blending and running washes of watercolour, achieving effects from dripping and splashing different colours. More able pupils respond to similar effects found in Japanese watercolour paintings. Their art work and that of students beyond the age of 16 contributes towards a certificate of achievement and, for a few pupils, in conjunction with a neighbouring school, a GCSE course in expressive arts. Students in the sixth form have made their own printing blocks, combining a variety of textures from which they have produced regular repeating prints in alternating colours.

106. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good for pupils in the primary department, for those with more complex needs and the expressive arts course. In these classes, teaching is very well planned and resources chosen thoughtfully. The art curriculum is interpreted skilfully, reflecting the latest guidance on pupils with learning difficulties. Lessons pursue clear and relevant objectives, in particular, placing emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. The very close relationship staff have with their pupils creates the best conditions for learning and, as a consequence, pupils make rapid progress in improving their interest, attention and involvement in activities. The very good knowledge teachers and assistants have of each pupil's progress means they are quick to detect new learning and they re-enforce this with praise and encouragement. Wider opportunities for learning are also incorporated very effectively. For example, during one lesson a pupil consolidated her awareness and skill in operating an electronic switch to make a sound, which was part of her increasing the level of communication with others.

107. Most other lessons are planned and approached effectively especially with good choices of activities being made. These are well-informed with regard to promoting pupils' communication and personal development. Pupils' responses are very positive. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to explore materials and experiment with techniques. One pupil who was non-communicative in another lesson was very animated when it came to using watercolours in his art lesson. However, where pupils are at the point of developing

knowledge and skills in art, the level of teachers' expertise falls short of providing the breadth of study and challenge to raise standards to as high as they could be. The opportunity for some pupils to pursue and gain a GCSE in expressive arts in partnership with pupils at another school goes some of the way towards resolving this. However, the art room used by older pupils and students is too small to provide sufficient scope in the school to raise standards further.

108. Improvement in art since the last inspection is satisfactory, in particular, pupils are achieving more and the good teaching has been maintained. The subject co-ordinator left the school recently and has not yet been replaced.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils' achievements are good. Pupils in the primary department enjoy helping to mix play dough and cutting out different animal shapes. With adult help, they have designed and made mobiles of animals using string, wood and pictures. In food technology pupils mix the ingredients to make shortbread biscuits and use cutters to make animal shapes. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 cut out pictures of kitchen equipment such as a cooker and a fridge from magazines to design a kitchen area by gluing the pictures onto paper. Pupils use balsa wood and foam to construct model beds and settees for various rooms in a house. With staff help, pupils have produced simple jigsaws from pictures of famous landmarks, for example the Eiffel Tower. With assistance they have designed and made a 'Jack in a Box' and a 'Feely Box' and constructed a wheeled toy from cardboard. In food studies, they improve their communication as they use symbols to sequence making toast. The oldest pupils in the secondary department are making planters from strips of wood though most require support when sawing and sanding. More able pupils display more independence when sawing and they say that pine is being used to make the planter. In sixth form food studies, less able pupils recognise various items of food, for example lettuce, tomatoes and spring rolls and are able to match them with the relevant communication symbol. With the help of adults, they prepare food. Pupils enjoy tasting the different flavours of the prepared food. More able pupils plan and prepare a variety of simple dishes, for example, a vegetarian dish.

110. The co-ordinator, who teaches the subject to all pupils, has had more experience with secondary age pupils and consequently there is better structure to the lessons and learning experiences for these pupils in comparison to those in the primary department. Across the age range pupils are presented with opportunities to design and make objects using different materials. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate what they have made. Teaching is satisfactory in the primary classes and good overall in other age groups. Teaching is most successful when all the pupils are expected to communicate their ideas and preferences. This is achieved because of the close co-operation between teachers and support staff that results in a consistency in the level of pupil involvement and performance. In these lessons pupils are enthusiastic and remain focused on the activity as was seen when older pupils were learning to use a tenon saw. When the teaching is satisfactory, for example, in a lesson for younger pupils making model animals, the introduction was too long and pupils began to lose interest. Whilst occasional reference is made to shape and number, some opportunities are missed to improve pupils' numeracy by highlighting positional language such as 'behind' 'above' comparing sizes, counting and identifying shapes.

111. Since the previous inspection the appointment of a specialist co-ordinator has resulted in good improvement in planning and in making sure there is continuity in the skills pupils acquire. In order to monitor this and to track the achievement of individual pupils the co-ordinator has devised a thorough system of assessment. Although designated rooms have been created for design and technology and food technology since the last inspection, these areas are too small and are not conducive to the needs of senior pupils in wheelchairs.

HUMANITIES

112. Overall, pupils throughout the school are achieving very well in history and geography lessons. While only a small number of lesson observations was possible, together with the evidence from their previous work and the record of teachers' assessments there is a sufficiency to judge that the provision for humanities is very good and pupils, over time, are making very good progress. The school won an International School Award in 2001 for its work on global awareness and has active links with schools in Britain and overseas.

113. Recently, all pupils experienced the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, especially through the stimulating displays and events organised within the school. Pupils in the primary department and those with complex learning needs are beginning to take notice of what is around them, responding well to bright colours. More able younger pupils recognise their family members from photographs. Through visiting historical sites and museums pupils see that there are places and objects, such as old bicycles and cars that are from the past. They see that dressing specially is related to celebrations. A more able pupil in Year 6 indicated he liked the Roman shop exhibit at the museum. More able pupils are aware of the passage of time and put the months of the year in their sequence. In their awareness of geography, most pupils recognise a photograph of their own house and on trips in the locality pick out landmarks like the leisure centre. More able pupils recognise a map and know what is land and sea. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties experience moving around the school by different routes and enjoy rhymes re-enforcing the knowledge of 'going around' 'going through' and 'going over' on their journeys. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have experienced 'themes from the past'. They know that over many years Britain had different kings and queens and one was Henry VIII. Pupils have explored the Victorian era and experienced visiting a Victorian classroom. Through a number of special curriculum days paying particular attention, for example, to Ghana pupils have become aware of different countries throughout the world, as well as their cultures and customs. For example, 'Banana Day' gave focus to fair trading in bananas and was broadened sufficiently for lower attaining pupils to experience yellow and the environment of a tropical greenhouse. By the end of the secondary department, more able pupils, studying World War II know it took place between 1939 and 1945. They explain rationing in Britain at this time, knowing it was caused by food shortages. These pupils collected first hand evidence from interviewing local people who were alive during the war and who served in the armed forces. The gravity of the hard realities expressed in these people's memories struck pupils and they responded with sensitivity and realisation. Pupils with complex learning needs engage in sensory explorations involving the sounds, smells and textures from different parts of the world showing their likes and dislikes.

114. While a limited amount of teaching was observed this was, overall, very good. Teachers have very good expertise in working with the range of pupils' special educational needs and link this successfully with their knowledge of history and geography to produce very interesting and challenging work. Lessons are planned thoroughly, for example, giving very good attention to promoting pupils' communication skills. Expectations of all abilities are high with the result that the youngest pupils with complex learning needs learned to use a switch to make a sound in response to the teacher. More able pupils in Years 10 and 11 were expected to consider eye contact and make positive responses as part of questioning elderly people about the war. Lessons are prepared very well with a good variety of interesting resources. Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively together and all use the lesson planning skilfully to focus on learning opportunities. At times, support assistants take a very effective lead in the work with pupils, for example, in one lesson through sustained encouragement and praise pupils with complex learning needs were totally involved and participating in exploring materials, reaching for and holding objects. The very good progress involved in this was immediately observed and noted.

115. Subject management is very good. The range of learning opportunities for all pupils is very good, in particular the cross-curricular provision, for which the school has received praise, and the many links with schools at home and abroad. This is a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection, in particular in relation to learning resources, which had been unsatisfactory. The improvement in the use of information and communication technology is satisfactory but is a priority for further development, which is underway in terms of increasing teachers' expertise. The teaching of humanities make a significant contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development in their awareness of their heritage and of other cultures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. Pupils throughout the school are achieving very well in using information and communication technology. As a consequence, they are developing very effectively their awareness and interaction with their environment and with others. In addition, pupils of all ages and abilities are improving their physical skills and, most particularly, their communication skills.

117. At the earliest stage pupils who are unable to communicate using speech get to know and use simple switches, by hand or head movements if required. They learn to create an effect, for example, by activating a voice message or music and eventually acquire sufficient skill to allow them interact with others and to begin making choices. The youngest pupils in the primary department become attracted by animated images appearing and moving on a computer screen. Though it is challenging for them to make responses, they increase their attention and come to understand they can control the images by operating a simple electronic switch or touching the screen. The depth of their awareness increases and they progress to successfully match images such as a pig to a farm. For a number of pupils with complex learning needs this remains a key method of communicating. One pupil, able to move only his head, operates a small switch this way to select from one of three quickly changing cues on a computer screen and another has progressed in this way to operating a tape recorder and compact disk player.

118. Pupils who are further ahead in their general understanding and manipulation skills make fast progress. By Year 9, pupils are beginning to acquire a basic knowledge of information and communication technology equipment and their operation. They know about television, video and compact disk players as well as computers and make choices about preferring to hear music or watch a programme. Pupils are familiar with digital cameras and are aware of the use of digital imagery with computers. Many create simple text, finding the letters for words on the keyboard. More able pupils access and search the Internet. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form know to log-on before using a computer and, with support, key in their user names and passwords. A few pupils independently track the location of a particular file or programme through the series of necessary steps from the desk-top screen. They all have, with various degrees of support, assembled multi-media files of personal information. By the end of the secondary department, most pupils control the mouse and make a single click for their selection. They find the light touch needed for double-clicking hard to achieve. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their personal files and interact with them enthusiastically. A boy with complex learning needs was highly motivated and pointed energetically to his favourite food item symbolised on the computer screen. Most pupils recognise and operate the on-screen symbols for 'turning the page' or activating a sound recording. More able students in the sixth form recognise the layout and purpose of a spreadsheet. They locate the right cells using a mouse and key in the correct information to produce a chart showing the scores and order of teams from a series of football matches.

119. The quality of teaching and learning, carried out mostly by the subject co-ordinator in the computer suite, is very good. Overall, across the school, teachers use information and communication technology well to support learning, in particular, teaching pupils with complex needs the use of switches to control events and to make or indicate preferences. During a reading of 'The Three Little Pigs' a pupil switched on a fan on cue to give the effect of the wolf blowing down the house. In one religious education lesson, two Year 11 pupils searched the Internet for information on charities.

120. The co-ordinator is confident in using the technology and this is supplemented very-effectively by an experienced technician. Lessons are planned and paced very well, reflecting a very good knowledge of all of the pupils' special educational needs, learning opportunities relevant to these and how information and communication technology contributes best to their learning. This is fully illustrated in the uses many pupils make of their multi-media 'passports'. In these, most pupils have digital photographs or video excerpts of familiar people as well as important objects like their favourite food or pet. They interact with these extremely well, leading to them increasing their interest and attention, making very good efforts in speaking and listening and engaging in the early stages of writing in sentences. The teacher takes great care explaining the work to pupils and ensuring ease of access to equipment, for example, one student, who dislikes being near a computer screen, uses a remote keyboard and mouse to work, for him, at a safe distance thus not disrupting his learning. Pupils are managed very well and while the potential for disruption from some is high, this in practice is insignificant. There are many opportunities for pupils to have positive social experiences by working together or sharing with others what they have done. This is part of the continual close assessment and recording of pupils' skills in manipulating equipment and computer commands. Pupils focus best on using a keyboard or mouse effectively when given individual attention and classroom assistants play a valuable role in support of this.

121. Improvement in the provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection is very good and has resulted in pupils achieving much higher standards than before. The subject is managed very well and a number of significant developments has ensued as a consequence. The employment of an experienced technician, the introduction of nationally recognised courses and on-going training for all staff are important steps forward. Teaching has improved considerably and this reflects the increased expertise in the school as well as better resources, particularly networked computers and the creation of a computer suite. However, while there is scope to get more from the space in the information and communication technology room, and this is planned, the room is too small to accommodate comfortably the largest groups containing pupils in wheelchairs. It slightly hinders the access of pupils with complex learning needs rather than preventing them learning and their opportunities have improved since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

122. Pupils' achievements in French are very good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils greet each other by saying or signing 'bonjour', with a more able pupil adding 'mes amies' without prompt. Pupils are aware of the vocabulary for different parts of their body, following their teacher's actions as they sing a French version of 'Heads and shoulders'. With prompts, they remember some of the French vocabulary for basic foods and recall visiting a café in Boulogne where more able vocal pupils ordered breakfast. More able pupils compare French and English breakfast foods. Pupils are aware of the French flag and wave it with enthusiasm as they sing their songs. Alongside their teacher they make a very good attempt at counting to five. At the end of the lesson all pupils sign or say "au revoir". Pupils in Years 10 and 11 further extend their vocabulary by being introduced to the words for additional items of food and drink and count beyond five. They improve their pronunciation as they make requests for items of food and drink. They experience eating typical French food such as 'croque monsieur'. Pupils in both age groups know the French use different money. A more able pupil who has developed an interest in French is achieving exceptionally well because, in addition to lessons with his own age group, he takes part in lessons with older pupils. Prior to a recent visit to Barcelona, pupils in both age groups were taught Spanish greetings and the vocabulary for items of food and drink. These they reportedly used with confidence, and greet the headteacher with 'hola' when they meet her around school.

123. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Until recently pupils benefited from the help of a native French speaking assistant. This contributed significantly to their progress. Teachers prepare their lessons very well, planning challenging activities and providing a range of resources to capture and maintain pupils' interest. All lessons are planned so pupils listen, 'read' and speak the language. This contributes significantly to their skills in speaking and listening. When new vocabulary is introduced, teachers and support staff expect pupils to rehearse the words and signs so they improve their pronunciation and signing. On occasions opportunities are missed in both age groups for staff to use the target language as when giving instructions such as 'écoutez', listen, or 'regardez', look. Where teaching is very good, there is a sense of urgency and learning is fun, with lots of games and songs such as a French version of 'Simon says'. Lessons are one hour long. Though pupils enjoy their lessons some tire and find concentration difficult so, despite the efforts of staff to maintain pupils' interest, their learning slows.

124. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has maintained the provision since the last inspection. The planned programme suitably takes account of pupils' special needs whilst providing opportunities for older pupils to achieve nationally recognised awards. There has been satisfactory improvement in resources since the last inspection. Many commercially produced resources are unsuitable for pupils of this ability. Nevertheless teachers have worked hard to produce high quality, imaginative resources. Pupils' awareness of modern European languages and culture is enriched by visits to France and Spain. The teaching of French makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.

MUSIC

125. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson. Judgements have been made following an analysis of school documentation, pupils' work, and by talking to staff.

126. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in music and achieve well. They respond positively to different rhythms and tap out simple rhythm keeping time. Many match a sound heard to an instrument when given a choice of two. More able pupils differentiate between two contrasting pieces of music. Pupils' work shows they have experience of a wide range of instruments and learn that instruments make different sounds. Some are aware that sounds can be long or short, loud or soft. Teachers' records show that more able pupils copy a melody, pitch a note and respond to cues to hold a note. They follow a rhythm on a steel drum and compose their own tunes using a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. A few pupils make a simple group composition and remember their own part. Pupils of all abilities perform, for example in the annual school productions such as 'BFG'.

127. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. Lesson planning is detailed with clear learning outcomes for each pupil. Activities are well matched to pupils' interests and needs, for example, pupils were very interested in investigating a large box and choosing a musical instrument to handle and play. They listen attentively to contrasting organ and piano music showing obvious interest.

128. The contribution that music to other subjects is well developed in all age groups. There are examples of very good practice; for example in a literacy lesson, the inclusion of music from 'Night on a Bare Mountain' helped create the atmosphere of a storm. In the same lesson, playing Celtic music as a background, while pupils were being hoisted into their chairs was very effective. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to experience a range of music, for example a dance workshop on Caribbean Dance enabled pupils to listen to music from a different cultural heritage and made a good contribution to their personal development.

129. The subject manager, who is a part-time teacher, has been seconded out of school for a year. Nevertheless, co-ordination is effective. Music is taught by class teachers. In addition, a part-time music therapist works with individual pupils and some small groups, allowing them to explore their feelings and respond to music. The contribution of the therapist is a strength of the music provision. A detailed programme is in place that includes opportunities for pupils to learn basic skills, to listen, to perform and to compose. Resources for music are good and include a wide range of instruments and a good stock of CDs and tapes. Accommodation is satisfactory and storage has been improved since the last inspection.

130. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in pupils' achievements, in the provision of a planned programme, in resources and in opportunities for older pupils to gain nationally recognised awards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. All pupils achieve well and make good progress. A wide range of activities and teaching methods is used very effectively to assist the pupils in their physical and motor development. In addition to the whole class physical education lessons, groups of pupils from across the classes take part in regular motor learning, hydrotherapy and rebound therapy sessions. In these activities pupils receive individual attention from a member of staff and this is very successful in raising the pupils' body awareness. For example, In hydrotherapy, staff sing songs to emphasise the different parts of the body pupils are exercising.

132. During the inspection no class lessons were seen in the primary department but from lesson plans and teachers' records it can be seen that pupils receive a range of relevant and challenging learning experiences. For example, planning for a gymnastics lesson shows that

pupils are to crawl on their knees, walk backwards and perform a forward roll with assistance from a member of staff. In the secondary department and the sixth form, pupils and students participate in a good range of games, dance and adventurous activities. Very good use is made of facilities in the locality and further afield. Good examples of this are when pupils in the sixth form spent a day at a water sports festival at the National Watersports Centre in Nottingham, and when a group of secondary age pupils took part in orienteering and walking activities during a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre in Derbyshire. Pupils in this age group respond well in a dance workshop based on the theme of the Jubilee celebrations. They copy and create original movements to reflect the music from the 1950's to the present day. One particularly good example was when pupils pretended to be balancing on a surfboard to the music of the Beachboys. In games lessons, pupils in the secondary department are developing good hand and eye co-ordination. They show good levels of accuracy when throwing a boccia ball into a target and are learning to strike a ball in a game of clock cricket.

133. In the lessons and group sessions observed the teaching is good. The strength of the teaching is evident in the well-organised staff approach. Teachers, physiotherapists and support assistants are fully aware of the learning objectives for each pupil and have high expectations of pupils' performance in all the activities. In response pupils are well motivated and apply maximum effort and concentration to all the challenges. Whilst some staff provide opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of numeracy, for example when counting, on occasions these are overlooked.

134. At present there is no subject manager, but the school has advertised a teaching post to include this role. Pupils' achievements and teaching have improved since the last inspection. However, there has been no improvement in the facilities and accommodation. The hall is still being used as a thoroughfare and the outdoor play area and equipment are unsatisfactory though there are plans to build a corridor to alleviate the problem in the hall. The school has received confirmation that, in addition to the funds it has already raised, it has been successful in its grant application to develop a new outdoor play area as part of the Department for Education and Skills pilot scheme 'Grounds for the future'.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Though only a small number of lessons was seen during the inspection, evidence in photographs, displays, teacher records and pupils' Records of Achievement shows that achievement in religious education is very good in all age groups.

136. Pupils in the primary department know they are special and are aware that all religions celebrate special occasions such as Christmas, Diwali and the Passover. They have visited places of worship for example, a Christian Church and a Sikh Gurdwara and taken part in festivals, making divas for their Diwali celebrations. Pupils are helped to experience significant events, for example, after taking part in the story of the Nativity in a stable they are aware of the cold and the smell of hay with more able pupils knowing that we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Most pupils are aware they 'belong' to a family and to the school, and are able to understand feelings such as security and love because of the attention shown to them.

137. Pupils increase their awareness of religious festivals and the importance of religion in their during their time in the secondary department. They visit Southwell Minister, lighting a candle, dressing as a member of the choir and receiving Holy Communion. More able pupils locate Christian symbols such as a cross, a fish and the Bible. They are aware other religions have special symbols and books and name the Jewish Star of David and Muslim stars and moons. Pupils think about 'What makes a good day?' and 'Who helped you when

you had a problem?’ with more able pupils recalling, for example, when someone helped them back to their class when they were late finishing lunch. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have an awareness of the major world faiths and an increased awareness of faith in action. They have a basic understanding of the needs of others and of Christian charity through the work of the Salvation Army, CAFOD and Oxfam. The most able pupils in Years 10 and 11 use their knowledge of literacy very well to research the Internet, leaflets and books for information about charitable organisations. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive nationally recognised awards for their work.

138. Both lessons observed were in the secondary department. The quality of teaching and learning was good in one lesson and very good in the second. Both lessons were very well planned with a very good range of resources and activities that were relevant to pupils’ understanding. Where teaching was good, the teacher was working with a less able group. She made sure all took part and focussed on objects when requested. As a result, pupils were able to identify and indicate a Bible and a cross. Through drama, she helped them have an awareness of the needs of homeless people. Pupils were able to indicate their likes and dislikes of items to donate to the poor through their teacher’s skilled use of gesture, symbols and signs. However, towards the end this lesson lost a little pace and some pupils’ concentration lapsed. Where teaching was very good, the teacher provided very challenging work for a group of more able pupils. Through very good questioning she promoted a very mature discussion about how charity work allows people to put their beliefs into action. When one pupil with complex behavioural difficulties found concentration difficult and was upsetting other pupils she suitably made reference to previous work ‘love one another’, this caused the pupil to reflect on his actions and return to the task in hand, leaving others to get on with their work. The very high, yet sensitive, expectations of the teacher encouraged pupils to use their literacy skills to find information and have the confidence to report their findings back to the rest of the class.

139. Subject management is very good. The co-ordinator has made sure that, whilst following the requirements of the Nottingham Locally Agreed Syllabus, the planned programme is relevant and meaningful to pupils with severe, profound and complex learning needs. She provides good support for her colleagues. She is fully aware of the strengths of the subject and how the already very good provision can be improved further. Resources are very well organised and easily accessible. Termly checks ensure all are in good condition and anything missing or broken is replaced. Planning and assessment are in line with school policy. The teaching of religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

140. Though no judgements were made regarding standards and teaching at the time of the last inspection, the introduction of a planned programme and the appointment of a subject manager have done much to raise the profile of the subject and improve pupils’ achievements.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

141. The work of students working towards GCSE in expressive arts is outstanding.

142. Students develop a very wide range of skills, and knowledge of different techniques in their artwork. They have studied and worked in the style of a number of artists. Through personal research, they know Jackson Pollock died in a car crash in America and report “He flicked black and white paint on a big canvas and painted ‘Chance’”. Students know the names of a number of sculptors such as Henry Moore and Rodin and describe how they observed a sculpture at work, then visited the Castle Gallery to see the work of Jane Hamlyn. Students extend their specialist vocabulary very well, being familiar with ‘tint’ and ‘line’. More

able students use terms such as 'carving', 'modelling' and 'casting'. Students have produced high quality work using plasterboard. They use sculpture as a stimulus for their dance, commenting that one sculpture "reminds me of the moon" and suggesting other students "Move around like planets". In their production 'War', the standard of dance is high with students interpreting music very well, travelling in different directions at different speeds, sometimes high, sometimes low, achieving a full stretch when appropriate. Students improve the quality of their movements at a remarkable rate because staff give them chance to think how they could improve their movements, then to rehearse to achieve the best they can before giving a final performance. In music, students learn to appreciate the work of composers such as Vivaldi and give reasons why they like a particular piece of music. They know Grainger was a pianist and also a conductor. Students acquire a knowledge of instruments beyond the Western world through, for example, attempting to make sounds using a didgeridoo.

143. Students extend their range of writing, for example, when, as part of their work on the Four Seasons, they write their thoughts neatly and develop a presentation use a computer to produce a presentation. Students improve their reading and research skills as they read reference books and news sheets to find information for their projects. Students listen to each other and take account of the views of others. Teamwork is strong and students are very aware of others, whether giving opinions about artists or music, working on an art project or as part of a dance.

144. Achievement is very high because all staff have very high expectations. They provide numerous opportunities for students discuss their feelings and listen to others. Staff value students' opinions and are not afraid to wait whilst students search for the word they want when articulating their thoughts. As in all other lessons, signing and symbols are used very effectively to help those who have communication needs. Staff give very good praise and support and make sure every pupil is able to access all activities. In addition to gaining new skills, all staff expect pupils to use their knowledge of numeracy and literacy. As a result, students count as they choreograph their dance. They discuss their preferred style of art, explain techniques and give reasons why, for example, they chose to include dolphins in their work. New technology is used very effectively to support teaching, for example through the use of digital cameras and digital imaging.

145. Staff from the three participating schools work extremely well together, planning and providing opportunities to extend students' knowledge and understanding of the arts. Work in this aspect makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATION

146. Personal and social education is an integral part of all lessons and activities throughout the school day. In addition, pupils are taught at least one lesson each week. Achievement is very good for all ages and abilities. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

147. More able pupils of all ages are successful in improving self-help skills. They know it is important to keep clean and healthy and know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before food. Most establish very successful relationships with adults and with other pupils. Those with more severe and profound needs demonstrate an increased awareness of their surroundings and people who are significant in their lives. Pupils in the primary department are aware of basic hygiene and the need to keep safe. They become aware of their bodies through action songs. As a result of appropriate praise and encouragement, they grow in confidence. Older pupils develop their skills, increasing their awareness of the community, for example when recording visits to other schools and discussing the need for uniform. More

able students in the sixth form gain insight into personal qualities, recognising friendliness, helpfulness and generosity. Others recognise when their classmates have a particular skill such as football. Pupils and students of all abilities take part in a wide range of activities to develop personal skills preparing them for life, for example, taking part in residential visits, preparing a meal for friends or developing a class code of conduct.

148. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Appropriate social skills are encouraged and developed in all daily routines. In personal, social and health education lessons, the planning is detailed and thoughtful and is well matched to the wide range of pupils' needs in each class. Lesson objectives are linked to pupil's individual education plans. The very good use of carefully considered questions allows all pupils in class to be fully involved. Classroom assistants are used very effectively to support pupils, for example, in a lesson when older pupils were exploring personal skills and qualities. In tutor time, staff use every opportunity to improve pupils' personal development through the activities prepared, skilful questioning and the expectation the pupils will socialise, working as part of a group. The management of pupil behaviour is very good. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to take responsibility, for example taking dinner money to the office and returning the register.

149. Subject management is good. There is now detailed scheme of work covering all departments which is an improvement since the last inspection. The programme includes a focus on healthy eating as part of the Healthy Schools initiative. The co-ordinator has established a School Council with pupil representatives from all classes meeting to discuss school issues. The development of independence, social skills, and behaviour are planned and support what is taught in personal, social and health education lessons. Other aspects of personal, social and health education, for example, individual pupil feeding programmes, are co-ordinated by the school nurse through the senior management team. Monitoring of the subject is good in the designated lessons. The monitoring of personal, social and health education taught outside the lessons, for example, in tutor time is less well developed.