

INSPECTION

WOOD BANK PRIMARY SPECIAL SCHOOL

Dene View, Luddenden, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107590

Headteacher: Mrs J Ingham

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th June 2001

Inspection number: 196423

Short inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary Special
School category: Community Special
Age range of pupils: 2 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dene View
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Crane
Date of previous inspection: 24th February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wood Bank is a primary special school in Luddenden near Halifax. Pupils travel to school from across the Calderdale borough. There are 41 pupils on roll between two and eleven years of age, including six who are in the Foundation Stage age range. There are approximately twice as many boys as girls. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and have a wide range of severe and complex learning difficulties, including 27 per cent with autistic spectrum disorders. The percentage of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (29 per cent) has increased significantly since the previous inspection. Approximately 25 per cent of pupils attend a mainstream school for at least one lesson each week and two do so for about half of their time at school. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is above average. About ten per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language and this is above average. Attainment on entry is very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school, which meets the needs of all the pupils very well. Pupils make good progress in relation to their individual targets. The teaching is good overall with some very good features and no significant weaknesses. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. The staff share a very strong common sense of purpose and work very well together as a team. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their individual targets, particularly in English, mathematics and personal and social education.
- The pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their personal development are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and no significant weaknesses. All staff make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The headteacher and key staff provide very effective leadership and management.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development, and the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- The procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information by teachers in their planning are very good.

What could be improved

- The withdrawal of pupils from the classroom, for important therapies and sessions in the sensory room, is sometimes not considered carefully enough in terms of what the pupils are missing as a consequence.
- There are inconsistencies in the marking of registers.

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 was previously inspected in February 1997 and improvement has been good. Appropriate and effective action has been taken in relation to the six action points. Good guidelines for teachers' planning are in place and in use for all subjects. Senior staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, rigorously and systematically monitor the curriculum. There have been some helpful opportunities for subject co-ordinators to observe other teachers' lessons and the school improvement plan contains proposals to extend these. The governors have clear procedures for financial control and evaluation of spending. The accommodation has been improved in accordance with the previous report's recommendations and remains a high priority with additional building work taking place shortly after this inspection. The school has a clearly defined role in the local education authority's special educational needs provision. In addition, the quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

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

The pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well in accordance with the six nationally recommended areas of learning and the pupils from five to eleven years of age are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on communication, literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. All pupils have several small-step targets in all subjects and evidence from lessons, pupils' completed work and teachers' records shows that progress is always at least satisfactory and on occasions it is excellent.

The youngest children in the school quickly come to accept school routines and make good progress in relation to their individual targets particularly in communication and personal and social skills. Older, more able pupils make good progress in reading and writing and number work, and in other subjects such as science and information and communication technology. Pupils with particular difficulties such as severe hearing impairment and autistic spectrum disorders make good progress and at times excellent progress, in communication and personal independence skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy and enthusiastic at school. They try hard at their work and play well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in most lessons, at lunch and at play. A small number of pupils are uncooperative in some lessons, but the staff manage all inappropriate behaviour very well, so that the learning of other pupils is not disrupted.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are very good. Many pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity, responsibility and independence in relation to their learning difficulties.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is well above average for schools of this type. Punctuality is good overall but there is some variation due to the distances some pupils travel. There are inconsistencies in the marking of registers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and no significant weaknesses. There are no significant differences between classes or year groups. Fifteen lessons were observed and the teaching was satisfactory or better in all of them. The teaching was very good or better in 47 per cent of the lessons and it was good or better in 87 per cent. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

Significant strengths of the teaching are the quality and detail of the teachers' plans. These are very well matched to the individual pupils' needs and pay due regard to the nationally recommended early learning goals for children in the nursery and reception age range and the National Curriculum programmes of study for the pupils aged between five and eleven. There are very good relationships between all classroom staff and the pupils. A very strong emphasis is placed on teaching the key skills of communication and different strategies such as speaking and listening, signing and pictorial cues are used with considerable success. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, with teachers using a lesson structure closely based on the national primary initiatives. Information and communication technology is playing an increasingly effective role in the pupils' learning. The withdrawal of pupils from the classroom, for important therapies and sessions in the sensory room, is sometimes not considered carefully enough in terms of what the pupils are missing as a consequence. The needs of pupils with particular learning difficulties, especially those with autistic spectrum disorders and profound and multiple learning difficulties are met very well. Pupils are keen to learn and often show considerable concentration, perseverance and determination.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. A broad and balanced range of learning opportunities is provided for all pupils, that meets individual needs, interests and abilities well. There are very good arrangements for pupils to attend sessions in mainstream schools and for the integration of pupils with differing learning difficulties and needs within the school itself.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has good systems for supporting the small number of pupils with English as an additional language and communicating with their families. All staff are aware of the procedures.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and it is good for their spiritual and cultural development. In particular, there are very good strategies for teaching right from wrong and encouraging the pupils to be aware of the needs and feelings of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. The procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information in teachers' planning are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership. The deputy headteacher and other staff provide very high quality support. There is a very strong sense of teamwork and common sense of purpose in the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The school governors have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities and meet all statutory requirements. However, several governors are relatively new members of the governing body and there are significant vacancies in relation to local authority governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carefully analyses pupils' progress and compares their performance with that of pupils in similar schools. Senior staff systematically monitor and evaluate the school's progress against the priorities in the school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The school makes good use of the available funding, including specific grants, staffing accommodation and learning resources. The use of modern technology is very good in the classrooms and is rapidly improving in relation to financial control and analysis of pupils' progress.

The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded, all think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are comfortable approaching the school with suggestions or problems; • they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on; • the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best; • the school works closely with them; • the school is well led and managed; • their child likes school; • their child is making good progress in school. <p>Of those parents who responded, over 90 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the teaching is good; • the school is helping their child become mature and responsible; • behaviour in the school is good. 	<p>No concerns or problems were raised by a significant number of parents.</p>

The inspection team shares the parents' positive views of the school. The school has an effective partnership with parents in spite of the considerable distances that some pupils live from the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their individual targets, particularly in English, mathematics and personal and social education.

1. Because of their learning difficulties, the pupils start their education with very low attainment and remain at that level throughout their time at the school. Nevertheless, all pupils at Wood Bank make at least satisfactory progress in relation to the targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Most of the pupils make good progress in many areas of their work and personal development and some make very good or excellent progress. This is because all pupils have wide-ranging, individualised targets, which are very well matched to their needs and abilities, are achievable in a realistic period of time and underpin the teachers' planning and all classroom activities. These targets cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and personal and social education. Progress is slower when tasks for more able pupils are not challenging enough or when pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are supported by staff who are not fully aware of their individual physical needs. Such circumstances are very much the exception rather than the rule in this school.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in the personal skills necessary to learn in a classroom setting. For example, they quickly understand classroom routines and, by repeating the same activities at the same time every day and frequently singing the same songs and rhymes, begin to develop anticipation and prediction skills. The children make very good progress in speaking and listening. For some of them this improvement may be measured in terms of looking at and following objects held in front of them or moving pictures on a computer screen. For others, it may be the relatively rapid acquisition of recognisable speech including short phrases and sentences. The children's attention and enthusiasm for school, seen in the part of the lesson called 'together time', clearly contribute to their progress. The more able children, in both the class with nursery and Reception age children and the class for the youngest pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, make good progress in early reading, writing and number skills and activities such as painting and sticking.
3. By the time they leave school, the wide range of ability in the school population is even more apparent than it is when they start. The most able pupils will have made good progress in basic literacy skills such as reading key words, writing their own name, the date and, perhaps, short sentences independently, and numeracy skills, such as counting to 10 or beyond correctly and consistently and matching and sorting. Some Year 6 pupils complete the optional National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds and in some aspects of science, for example, achieve a Level 2 score (the level expected of a seven-year-old in mainstream school).
4. Less able pupils make at least good progress and sometimes show dramatic progress, in relation to the targets in their IEPs, but remain at a lower level than their peers. For example, during the school term of this inspection, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders made significant gains in choice and decision-making, in taking the register independently to the school office and in jumping with both feet together. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have made similar gains over a school year. For example, individuals have made significant progress in drinking from a one-handled cup with little or no adult help, using a button switch to operate a computer or devices in the sensory room, or in making their needs or feelings known more clearly through increased vocalisation and gesture.

The pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their personal development are very good.

5. Pupils are happy and enthusiastic at school. Children in the Foundation Stage are sometimes distressed when they first start school but they soon settle into the routines and enjoy the activities. Because the activities are well-matched to their needs, they are interested in what is going on at school and want to learn. This interest and involvement in lessons, at lunch and at play are maintained throughout the school and are common to pupils with different learning difficulties. Pupils generally try hard and some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show considerable determination and perseverance, for example, when trying to operate a switch in the sensory room.
6. Pupils behave very well in most lessons, at lunch and at play. Pupils readily do what they are asked to do and move from activity to activity and room to room in an orderly and sensible manner. A small number of pupils are uncooperative in some lessons and there were a few instances of materials being grabbed from others or thrown onto the floor. Such incidents are uncommon and the staff manage all inappropriate behaviour very well, so that the learning of other pupils is not disrupted. At its best, this is achieved through the use of such strategies as ignoring, side-tracking and diverting without rewarding the unacceptable behaviour.
7. Relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are very good. Many pupils are keen to communicate and adults greatly encourage and value the pupils' contributions to classroom discussion and playground conversations. Many pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity, responsibility and independence in relation to their learning difficulties. They are very interested in visitors and are welcoming and try to help, for example by explaining the routines and rules at lunchtime.

The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and no significant weaknesses. All staff make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

8. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and no significant weaknesses. Fifteen lessons were observed and the teaching was satisfactory or better in all of them. The teaching was very good or better in 47 per cent of the lessons and it was good or better in 87 per cent.
9. Very good lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage, in the classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and in literacy and science in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class. There are no significant differences between classes or year groups because all teachers plan well for pupils of differing abilities and ages, and because relationships between adults and pupils are good throughout the school. The staff work very well together and support staff contribute significantly to the pupils' progress. A significant feature of the teaching is the rapidly improving use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote and develop pupils' key skills. The use of digital cameras and computer programs to create screensaver images of pupils carrying out tasks is clearly increasing their interest and

involvement in their work and increasing their understanding of basic concepts such as ordering events.

10. The school gives very high priority to signing and the use of symbols and objects to support pupils' communication. The current approach results in the use of signing, and other specialised communication techniques, that is good overall, within a range from excellent to satisfactory. Some staff are extremely competent and habitual signers and this has enabled particular pupils to make very good progress both in their learning and in their behaviour. For example, because of the use of consistent signing at an appropriate level of complexity, pupils with severe hearing impairment understand adults' questions and instructions very well and acquire new knowledge and skills at a good rate. Some pupils who do not necessarily need to sign in other situations become good at signing themselves because they want to communicate better with their friends. The use of signing in situations such as assemblies enables these pupils to participate fully in the life of the school. However, not all pupils need such complex and sophisticated signing and may be confused if presented with more information than the signs for key words. Generally all staff are aware of these issues and different methods of communication are used well with different groups of pupils. For example, exchanges between adults and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders often feature the use of picture cards and a quiet voice, which they often respond to more positively than direct eye contact. Some staff do not have sufficient signing vocabulary and others find it difficult to sign whilst doing other things with the pupils. This is a common problem in schools of this type, but at this school the emphasis on communication and finding the best combination of strategies for different pupils is very strong.
11. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good throughout the school. The school has adopted the essential elements of the national strategies in these key skills modifying some aspects appropriately to meet the specific needs of some pupils, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The three-part lesson structure recommended in these strategies is also used in other subjects. For example, lessons in science and design and technology featured good whole class discussions at the start and end, with the former referring to previous learning and today's objectives and the latter evaluating what had been learnt in the lesson and what would be happening next time.
12. Teaching in the youngest class with children in the Foundation Stage age range is planned very well in accordance with the nationally recommended early learning goals and areas of learning. Individual programmes are drawn up within this framework to meet individual needs. For example, at the start of a school year, the main priority for some children is simply to get them to accept being at school and away from mum. For other children, the teaching is based from the outset on the development of their learning in language and number in exactly the same way as in a mainstream nursery. In the other classes, learning activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils paying due regard to the pupils' National Curriculum entitlements and their individual needs. The use of visual timetables and pictorial cues greatly enhances the learning of the pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

The headteacher and key staff provide very effective leadership and management.

13. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school was last inspected in February 1997 and the report found the quality of education to be very good, a very good climate for learning and very good management and efficiency. This inspection finds that all these strong features have been maintained and in some areas of the school's work there have been clear improvements. This is largely due to the strong and very effective leadership provided by the present headteacher, appointed in 1999. All staff have a very strong shared sense of purpose and there is a very high level of teamwork. There is a clear educational direction to the work of the school and the school's aims and values are evident in day-to-day practice. This is a school which is characterised by openness to other professionals, parents and other visitors, and a strong commitment to, and good capacity for, further improvement.

14. Appropriate and effective action has been taken in relation to the six key issues in the previous report. Good guidelines for teachers' planning are in place and in use for all subjects. The school bases its learning opportunities on materials specifically produced for pupils with special educational needs (Equals) but there is also considerable reference to and use of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and curriculum guidance and a range of other materials produced by local education authorities and others. Senior staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, rigorously and systematically monitor the curriculum through examination of the teachers' planning and pupils' work and staff discussions. The headteacher carries out frequent, formal observations of teaching. There have been some opportunities for subject co-ordinators to observe other teachers' lessons particularly in terms of communication strategies and the use of ICT in the classroom. The school improvement plan contains proposals to extend these opportunities to other subjects and to include all teachers with key responsibilities. The governors have clear procedures for financial control and evaluation of spending. The accommodation has been improved in accordance with the previous report's recommendations, particularly the playground surfaces and outdoor equipment, and it remains a high priority, with additional building work taking place shortly after this inspection. The school has a clearly defined role in the local education authority's special educational needs provision.

15. There have been other developments and improvements since the previous inspection. For example, the quality of teaching has improved. The provision for different groups of pupils has been extended and developed, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders. The school is considered a centre of expertise in the area and provides support for teachers and other staff elsewhere in the authority. Many other practitioners visit the school for this specific reason. The use of communication strategies has been extended and generalised around the school and the teaching of the key skills of literacy and numeracy has been very successfully restructured in accordance with national initiatives in primary schools and the needs of the pupils. There have been wide-ranging developments in ICT making very good use of national funding. A learning support assistant who is competent and knowledgeable in this particular area of the curriculum is employed as an ICT technician and other staff, for example the music co-ordinator, have good knowledge and skills in the use of specialised equipment. This results in very good use of modern technology in the classrooms and the sensory room, including computers and a wide range of other devices. The use of ICT outside the classroom

such as in financial control and the analysis of pupils' progress is rapidly improving. Very good administration ensures smooth running of the school.

16. The school governors have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities and meet all statutory requirements. They have played a significant part in the maintenance and, wherever possible, improvement of the very good practice previously reported. The current governing body demonstrates great commitment and support for the school and an acute awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, several governors are relatively new members of the governing body and there are significant vacancies in relation to local authority governors.

The provision for the pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development, and the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.

17. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and it is good for their spiritual and cultural development. A broad and balanced range of learning opportunities is provided for all pupils that meets their individual needs, interests and abilities well. There are very good strategies for teaching right from wrong and encouraging the pupils to be aware of the needs and feelings of others. Control and discipline of challenging behaviours are based on principals of rewarding and building on desired behaviours rather than over-emphasising the occasional disruptive, uncooperative or aggressive incidents. Pupils' social and cultural development has been promoted through involvement in activities completed with occasional visitors to the school and regular supporters of its work. For example, every pupil in the school contributed to the Millennium Banner inspired and led by a visiting artist. All pupils were involved in the creation of two large Batik hangings and one of these is on display in the school and the other was sent to Dunblane. A local secondary school community project and police funding provided the school with its sensory garden.
18. There are very good arrangements for pupils to attend sessions in mainstream schools and for the integration of pupils with differing learning difficulties and needs within the school itself. Whilst these arrangements incorporate genuine educational inclusion whenever possible, in all cases this makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development. At the time of this inspection, about a quarter of the pupils were attending a mainstream school for at least one lesson a week and two were doing so for about half of their time at school. A substantial amount of this inclusion activity takes place at the neighbouring primary school and Wood Bank pupils attend lessons in a wide range of subjects. Some of the mainstream pupils visit Wood Bank on a weekly basis and join in with lessons in subjects such as art and design, design and technology and music. Some Wood Bank pupils attend sessions at other primary schools close to their homes.
19. Health and safety issues are the top priority in the school. There are very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. All staff are aware of these procedures and who is responsible for child protection and first aid. The specific needs of pupils with physical disabilities and medical conditions are met very well and the standards of care are excellent. Staff seek and follow the advice of specialists such as the school nurse, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Staff have been trained in emergency first aid, such as resuscitation techniques, and safe manual handling techniques for themselves and the pupils.

The main corridor through the school is always kept clear of equipment and other obstacles and this allows pupils to move from room to room with maximum independence and enable rapid evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency. Risk assessments are carried out before educational visits and very high adult-pupil ratios provided when visiting locations presenting specific hazards, such as Hardcastle Crags or Chester Zoo. The care-taking and cleaning staff, kitchen staff and mid-day assistants all contribute to the cleanliness of the environment and safety of pupils.

The procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information by teachers in their planning are very good.

20. The school has very good, extensive procedures in place to assess and record what pupils know, understand and can do in all areas of the curriculum. These procedures result in very good IEPs for all pupils, which contain very high quality learning objectives in all subjects of the curriculum. These targets are reviewed by teachers at least every half-term and parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress through the annual education reviews and a range of other strategies such as home-school diaries. These arrangements are very effective overall and in many ways they go beyond any national or local requirements or recommendations. However, inspectors noted some records that were not clearly dated and, very occasionally, some rather vague evaluations and unnecessary repetitions of targets, that had been recorded as achieved.
21. The school has adopted a nationally accredited system of baseline assessment (Equals), specifically designed for use with pupils with special educational needs, and uses this information to compare the performance of the pupils with those in similar schools. The recent introduction of the use of a small-step assessment system (Pivats) is providing more data to support the school in the setting of statutory and other targets. The school collects evidence of pupils' significant achievements, mostly in the form of photographs and certificates, in Record of Achievement folders. This provides a very parent-friendly record of the pupils' major experiences and gains whilst at school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The withdrawal of pupils from the classroom, for important therapies and sessions in the sensory room, is sometimes not considered carefully enough in terms of what the pupils are missing as a consequence.

22. Pupils are withdrawn from the main lesson activities in the classrooms quite often, and this occurs for a wide variety of reasons such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, to see the school nurse or to go to the sensory room. All of these activities are important and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress. It is likely that these withdrawal arrangements will become more widespread when the new extension to the building is completed, as this will include an area specifically designed for occupational therapy and physiotherapy. It is not clear why some of these activities take place outside the classroom rather than the specialist staff supporting the pupils alongside their peers. In some cases the same pupil misses a substantial part of the same lesson, for example in science, at the same time every week.

23. At other times pupils leave the class to participate in activities in the sensory room which are better matched to their needs than those going on in the classroom. However, sometimes staff do not maximise the links between what is going on in these different locations. For example, when some pupils were withdrawn from a numeracy lesson, there was not enough focus on developing skills related to mathematical development in the choice of activities in the sensory room.

There are inconsistencies in the marking of registers.

24. During the inspection some inconsistencies were noted in the marking of registers. In a very small number of cases pupils were not recorded as present or absent by the teachers and registers were not sent to, or collected by, the office for nearly an hour. It may be that this was largely due to the late arrival of several pupils one morning, causing some teachers considerable concern about the effect this had on their lesson plans and classroom routines. In schools of this type, with small numbers of pupils and a high staff to pupil ratio, staff invariably know who is present and who is absent. Nevertheless, it is essential, for safety reasons, that registration is carried out efficiently very early in the school day, and this is particularly the case in a school with a high level of pupil movement between groups and rooms and to other schools for inclusion activities.
25. Teachers mark registers in accordance with the school policy. This includes the use of a code for some absences, invariably due to illness, that is not included in the list in the back of the registers. However, the use of this different code is not explained by an amendment in the registers. Although the school collects and analyses detailed information about attendance, the policy for the marking of registers needs reviewing to provide a clear procedure for recording the different reasons for pupil absences.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The senior management team and school governors should now:

1. Improve the arrangements for the withdrawal of pupils from lessons for therapies by:
 - carrying out a thorough review of why withdrawal is necessary and when it will take place if it is;
 - when withdrawal is deemed necessary for therapies provided by specialists, reviewing the class timetables so that, for example by alternating lessons fortnightly, individuals do not miss out significantly in one particular subject;
 - when withdrawal is necessary to other school facilities, such as the sensory room and planned soft-play room, maximising the links between the activities in the classrooms and these other areas.

2. Improve the marking of registers by:
 - making sure that all registers are completed very early in the day and returned to the office;
 - making use of different codes for different absences, as printed in the registers or modified in accordance with agreed school policy;
 - revising school policy to incorporate these changes.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	47	40	13	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	41
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	9.8	School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	31
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table includes pupils of compulsory school age only

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.4
Average class size	6.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	346

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	473,439
Total expenditure	12,459
Expenditure per pupil	12,418
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,620
Balance carried forward to next year	36,190

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 27%

Number of questionnaires sent out	41
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	36	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	9	9	0	55
The teaching is good.	82	9	9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	91	9	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	18	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	9	0	0	36