

INSPECTION REPORT

LINDEN LODGE SCHOOL

Wimbledon Park

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 101093

Headteacher: Roger Legate

Reporting inspector: Rita Kirkwood
10421

Dates of inspection: 26th February – 1st March 2001

Inspection number: 196542

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 (Visual Impairment)

School category: Community special

Age range of pupils: 4 to 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 61 Princes Way
Wimbledon Park
London

Postcode: SW19 6JB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs U Richley

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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9219	Anne Ferguson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils and students How well the school works in partnership with parents
21397	Ingrid Bradbury	Team inspector	English Foundation stage curriculum Special educational needs	
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	Art Modern foreign language Music English as an additional language	
11624	Linda Rhead	Team inspector	History Post-16 curriculum	The school's results and pupils' achievements
15021	Norman Watling	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	How well pupils and students are taught
20119	Tony Bell	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students are
13101	Michael Kell	Team inspector	Geography Physical education Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Linden Lodge School is a community special day and weekly boarding school for boys and girls aged four to nineteen. The school is situated in pleasant grounds in Wimbledon. Pupils all have visual impairments and a wide range of additional disabilities. There has been an increase in the complexity of pupils' special educational needs since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection, there were 82 pupils on roll; 49 boys and 33 girls. Eighty one of the pupils had statements of special educational needs. Approximately half the pupils board for part or all of each school week. About 40 per cent of pupils come from different ethnic backgrounds and over a third have English as an additional language. Eighteen of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils currently come from 27 local authority areas, mostly in the London area. The local education authority advisory service for the visually impaired is based in the school grounds and managed by the headteacher. The school has developed additional outreach services for pupils with visual impairment attending other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which provides good value for money. It is a happy, thriving community, in which both pupils and staff share a sense of purpose and in which relationships are very good. Leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team are very good. Pupils' positive attitudes to school, their willingness to work hard and good teaching result in pupils making good progress in their learning.

What the school does well

- The quality of provision and standards of achievement in mobility, art, music, physical education and vocational courses are high.
- Teaching is good overall, with some excellent features. The induction and training of new teachers is very good.
- Effective leadership, very good financial management and the efficient use of resources provide a clear educational direction for the school and good value for money.
- Provision for the personal, social, health and moral development of pupils is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of pupils are very good and contribute to their very good behaviour and attitudes.
- The residential department makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils and students.

What could be improved

- Access for pupils with physical disabilities.
- The co-ordination of subjects across the school and the consistency in using assessment and monitoring to plan a curriculum that supports the learning of all pupils.
- The challenge for higher attaining pupils in the secondary department.
- Opportunities for non-verbal pupils to interact with their speaking peers.

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

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the governing body.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection, which was in April 1997, is good. The quality of teaching has greatly improved and is now good, with some excellent features, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils learn well and their achievements are good. The opportunities for external accreditation have greatly increased and are now good. The difficulties caused by a shortage of mobility staff have been resolved and pupils make very good progress. The curriculum is now broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Teachers' knowledge of braille has improved, although there is still no co-ordinated approach to braille teaching. Schemes of work are in place, although co-ordination is not

effective across the school in all subjects. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development has improved. Pupils and students have access to an independent counsellor. Residential provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. There are good arrangements for promoting the health and welfare of pupils. Leadership and management by the senior management team is very good and the school is successful in meeting its targets. The governing body meets statutory requirements. The school makes very efficient use of resources and has secure budgeting procedures. The school now provides good value for money.

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 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening	B	B	B	
reading	C	C	C	
writing	C	C	C	
mathematics	B	C	C	
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

* IEPs are the individual education plans for pupils

The school is successful in meeting its targets. The standards of work seen are appropriate for the level of ability of the pupils and students. Pupils' learning is good overall, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2. There is some very good learning at all key stages. Pupils achieve well overall and particularly well in art and music. They are successful in gaining grades in a range of external examinations, including General Certificate of Secondary Education, Certificate of Educational Achievement, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network and the Secondary Certificate in Language learning in French.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and students have a very good attitude to the school. They enjoy their learning and join in activities with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils and students are considerate and willingly assist each other, both in lessons and at other times. They respect the beliefs and values of other people and enjoy taking responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils and students is very good throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and with staff are based on mutual respect and a genuine liking of each other.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality during the school day is good. Authorised absence is often related to medical reasons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16. Teaching is good or better in over two thirds of lessons, with nearly a third being very good or excellent. Learning Support Assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. In lessons where teaching is excellent, the teacher ensures each pupil achieves their very best with an apparently effortless attention to detail. This is the result of thorough planning and a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and how they learn best. The teaching of lower attaining pupils is sometimes better than of higher attaining pupils, as planning is more focused to their individual needs. The challenge for some higher attaining pupils is sometimes insufficient, due to teachers not using information from assessment to plan suitable activities. This is reflected in the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen. Teaching of English and science is good. In mathematics, teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and for lower attaining pupils across the school. Otherwise it is satisfactory. Teaching of literacy and numeracy are well supported by the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. The teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is also good, both in lessons and within the residential area. Teaching of art in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16 is very good. Music is taught by a subject specialist and is very good across the school. This is a strength. Teaching is good in history, physical education, religious education, geography and design and technology. It is satisfactory in French and ICT. The lack of effective subject co-ordination across the school weakens teaching in some subjects. There is no whole school approach to the teaching of phonics or braille. The school meets the needs of most pupils very effectively. However, there are limited opportunities for lower attaining non-verbal pupils to spend time with higher attaining speaking pupils. The learning of a few pupils with physical disabilities is adversely affected by the lack of access to the first floor teaching rooms.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils. The residential department makes a significant contribution to the personal development of pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. This is supported by the consistent use of language by staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. For their personal, moral and social development it is very good and good for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision to care for the pupils. However, the use of assessment to guide teachers' planning is inconsistent.

The school has effective links with parents. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior management team. The role of subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed to support the further development of the curriculum.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities and provides very effective support to the school. Financial support and monitoring are very effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school effectively monitors and evaluates its performance and takes appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses resources well to support the learning of pupils.

The school is very effective in applying the principle of best value.

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 high level of residential care. • The provision of external accreditation for all pupils. • Mobility provision. • The pleasant atmosphere in the school. • The way the school deals with difficult behaviour. • Changes in the school since the present headteacher has been in post. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Sex education. • Extra-curricular activities for day pupils.

The inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents. The school has implemented a revised programme of sex education in response to parents' concerns expressed last term. The senior management team is addressing the inconsistent practice relating to homework. Some parents expressed a view that standards in music were not sufficiently high. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in music throughout the school are, on the contrary, very high indeed. The range of extra-curricular activities is greater for pupils who board, but there are opportunities for all pupils to join in activities on a number of occasions. The inspection evidence did not support a concern raised by a few parents that lower attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Overall, these pupils achieve well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Pupils' visual impairments and, in many cases, additional special educational needs, make it inappropriate to judge attainments in relation to age-related national expectations or averages. However, the report does include examples of what pupils know, understand and can do.

1. Notwithstanding the increasing complexity of pupils' needs, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection. There are no pupils under five years of age in the school.
2. All last year's leavers followed some accredited courses. Five pupils took GCSE examinations in 2000, gaining between two and four subjects at grades A* to G. Three students at post-16 achieved Associated Examination Board certificates in basic skills in Health, Hygiene and Safety. In the Certificate of Educational Achievement, three students passed in English, six in art, five in food studies and five in numeracy. Five students passed the Award Scheme Accreditation Development Network (ASDAN) bronze award. Four students passed the Secondary Certificate in Language Learning in French. These results reflect the increasing complexity of pupils' needs, but also the school's success in widening the range of accreditation open to students.
3. In English, in relation to pupils' prior attainment, achievements in speaking and listening are good at all key stages and post-16. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. In Key Stage 1, pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of the consistent use of English by staff when they interact with individual pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use large print, braille and Moon to read and to write short sentences, checking their spelling and punctuation. They make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils respond well to skilled questioning. They interpret events in Macbeth and anticipate characters' likely responses to those events, for example, the killing of Macduff's wife and children. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils contribute to class discussion and work independently to compose written descriptions of characters from 'An Inspector Calls'. Lower attaining students over 16 continue to develop their literacy skills using print, symbols, Moon and braille. Higher attaining students over 16 contribute to discussions about the media and research and write an essay independently, using a word processor.
4. In mathematics, pupils' achievements in relation to their prior attainments are good in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils are given many opportunities to develop their understanding of number, for example, clapping three, counting three, selecting three objects and then sticking the three chosen objects in a tactile circle. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand which number is the last and the last but one. They develop their knowledge of fractions and understand the concept of half. In Key Stages 3 and 4, standards achieved by higher attaining pupils are satisfactory. However, these pupils are not given sufficient challenge, therefore they do not achieve as well as they could. Lower attaining pupils achieve standards which are good in relation to their abilities. Some students enter General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in mathematics in Year 12.
5. In science, pupils' achievements are good. In Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 achievements are very good. They are good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory for higher attaining students in post-16. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of familiar experiences through carefully planned and structured opportunities. They investigate sweet and salty flavours by smell and taste and choose their preferences. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sort and identify a range of solid materials. They know that solid objects do not have a space inside. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils have investigated the process of photosynthesis. They name the apparatus they have used and the chemicals they need to carry out their investigations. Pupils make good progress. Lower attaining pupils also make good progress. They are given well-structured learning opportunities and they identify and name their

favourite fruits. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the states of matter and of the molecular nature of matter. Higher attaining post-16 students work towards GCSE or Certificate of Achievement examinations. Lower attaining students understand the basic principles of a plant's life cycle.

6. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory. All pupils in Key Stage 4 and post-16 follow courses leading to external accreditation. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good and very good in Key Stage 4. They are good in art at Key Stages 1 and 2, but very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16. Achievements in geography are good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and the subject is not taught at Key Stage 4. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 3. However, achievements of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3, as seen in a scrutiny of pupils' work, are unsatisfactory. In history, standards are very good in Key Stage 2 and for lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3. However, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils' progress in French is satisfactory. Achievement in music is very good throughout the school. Achievements in physical education and religious education are good at all key stages.
7. Pupils make very good progress in mobility and show good independence skills around the school. Most pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress. Boys and girls are given equal access to learning opportunities, except for access to first floor specialist teaching rooms on the first floor. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls.
8. Students over the age of sixteen have been following accredited vocational educational courses for the past four years. They make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour, which were strengths of the school during the last inspection, continue to improve.
10. Pupils enjoy their time at Linden Lodge: "Absolutely love it" said one. When asked, they identify a wide range of good points, including the School Council. Younger pupils, in particular, like boarding and enjoy the activities on offer, such as horse riding or camping at Woodlarks. Most pupils enjoy their lessons. The very high levels of concentration seen demonstrated this. Examples include a Year 9 pupil using a computer, Year 10 pupils in English and the very good attempts by all in a junior class during the 'Good Morning' session. The positive attitudes of pupils reflect those of staff.
11. Pupils behave very well in and out of lessons. Property is respected and pupils are trustworthy and courteous to visitors and each other, for example offering an inspector drinks and toast at breakfast time. Parents mentioned, and pupils confirmed, that there is some name-calling and occasional fighting during free time but that staff "sort it out" effectively and "mostly children are nice to each other". Pupils respect the differences of others, such as their various dietary needs, for example by choosing a vegetarian menu in a food technology lesson.
12. A wide range of responsibilities is assigned to day and residential pupils, from taking registers back to the school office to self-catering in the independence flat. These, together with the very good relationships throughout the school community and the strong links with mainstream schools and colleges, promote pupils' development into responsible, social individuals with a very high level of independence who, as one parent said "can move with confidence to the next stage of their life".
13. Attendance is satisfactory, unauthorised absence is very low. It was considered good in the previous report due to a slightly higher attendance rate and lower national expectations. Much of the absence of pupils from school is medically related. There is some lateness in the mornings related to the distance some children travel and, in the week of inspection, the fact that drivers were still accommodating to the consequences of local park closures due to foot and mouth disease precautions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good or better in over two thirds of lessons seen and very good or excellent in nearly a third. Teaching is good in English and science and in mathematics overall. In music it is very good. In art, design and technology, physical education, religious education, history, geography and personal, social and health education (PSHE) it is good. In information and communication technology (ICT) and French, teaching is satisfactory. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. There is no co-ordinated approach to the teaching and use of braille and Moon across the school or a whole school approach to the use of phonics.
15. The effectiveness of teachers' planning is very good at Key Stage 2, good at Key Stage 1 and post-16 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Where it is good there are clear learning objectives based on accurate assessment of individual needs and planning is linked to pupils' and students' individual education plans (EPs). Lessons are often well organised and prepared. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and a very good knowledge of pupils' abilities and needs. Overall they use this knowledge effectively when designing tasks and activities suitable for individual pupils. However, in some subjects, particularly in lessons for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 4, the tasks and the pace of lessons do not offer sufficient challenge. The recording of pupils' and students' achievement is effective and generally used well to assess progress. However, this is not as effective at Key Stage 4. All staff have very good relationships with pupils and generally have a high expectation of behaviour, work and effort. This expectation, together with the skilful management of any inappropriate behaviour, and the very good use of praise and encouragement, lead to the very good behaviour of pupils across the school. This makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. There is good liaison between teachers and learning support assistants, who accept responsibility very well and work effectively with groups and individuals. They make an important and good contribution to the quality of lessons and to the good progress pupils make.
16. Where the quality of teaching is good or better, teachers convey their own enthusiasm to pupils and students. This motivates and challenges them and makes learning fun. Teachers gain the trust and confidence of pupils which, in turn, increases their self-esteem. Very good attention is paid to improving independence skills. There are many examples of this, particularly in art, design and technology, English, music and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
17. In the few lessons in which teaching is not satisfactory, the pace of lessons is slow and pupils lose interest. Tasks are inappropriate for pupils' needs. The same task is given to different classes, regardless of the differing attainment of pupils. Learning objectives are vague and not focused upon in lessons. An example is a Key Stage 3 history lesson for higher attaining pupils.
18. On-going assessment and its immediate use in lessons is good overall, but only satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Homework is set appropriately for both residential and day pupils and students. Residential pupils have the opportunity to complete it during "prep periods" and day pupils and students have it set for return the following week.

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

19. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum was a key issue in the previous inspection. It is now relevant to the needs of all pupils and provision is good across all key stages. It successfully incorporates the aims of the school and has been effectively developed by the senior management team, governors and staff. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and areas of the curriculum, with the schemes of work taking due note of National Curriculum guidelines. These are being reviewed by the school in the light of Curriculum 2000.

20. The school fulfils statutory requirements, providing a good range of relevant learning experiences, including all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, sex education and personal, social and health education. The school has also adapted both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of its pupils and students. This is particularly effective for the lower attaining pupils. Numeracy and literacy strategies have been appropriately modified to ensure that the courses are appropriate for these pupils. Additionally, pupils in Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to study French and there is a good range of externally accredited examination courses available to meet the range of needs of older pupils and post-16 students. These include Basic Skills, Certificates of Achievement, the City and Guilds in vocational education, the Certificate in Language Learning (French) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education.
21. There is good planned use of specialist facilities such as the light and sound rooms and the swimming pool. There is good liaison with the school's medical and therapy services, resulting in minimal disruption to pupils' and students' learning. Music makes a particularly strong contribution to the curriculum. Many pupils play instruments, some to a high standard. The learning resources centre contributes well to the school curriculum by transcribing books into braille and Moon and providing a range of accessible learning resources. It is also used as a national resource for children and young people with visual impairment.
22. There are well planned social and leisure activities for both day and residential pupils, which demonstrate the school's commitment to extend learning opportunities and the experiences of all pupils and students. Residential activities, such as a trip to Ireland and camping, provide a good extension to school activities. Younger pupils go horse riding, older pupils have visited World War I battlefields. Some pupils go fly fishing, golfing, scuba diving and fly from Gatwick to see Father Christmas. Visits within London and the local area provide useful opportunities to develop social and life skills.
23. Individual education plans (IEPs) are good for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and for lower attaining pupils across the school. They reflect pupils' statements of special educational needs and are matched to subject targets. IEPs are in place for all pupils and students and include development of mobility skills. This element is integral to lessons and activities both in and outside school. For example, primary pupils working on computers sometimes go to the library, rather than use a class based computer, in order to practise their mobility skills. All staff who work with a pupil contribute to the targets set each term for individual pupils. These targets are then used to produce IEPs for school and residence, which are reviewed on a regular basis. Targets reflect the individual's personal, social and general educational needs and also provide a direct link with subjects. The quality and use of IEPs is satisfactory for higher attaining pupils and students in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16, although some do not have the precise targets evident in plans for other pupils.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good. All staff take responsibility to ensure that individual needs are met. The teachers plan the work to meet pupils' needs and communicate well with learning support assistants assigned to individual pupils. The planning for lessons supports all the staff involved and focuses well on the pupils' targets. This is contrary to the views expressed by parents. The inspection team found that there is good provision throughout the school for lower attaining pupils. However, access to the upper floor of the main school building is not possible for all pupils, particularly those in wheelchairs. This denies them access to specialist teaching rooms such as food technology and science. This is a weakness. However, teachers make a concerted effort to make sure that these pupils have access to the subject within the classroom. There is a good special educational needs policy which clearly states the resources available to pupils and identifies the sources of additional help. Almost all pupils and students have the opportunity to have maximum access to the curriculum. Careful time-tabling makes sure that relevant programmes of work and activities are accessible to most, while the level and deployment of learning support assistants in lessons or on visits ensures that all individuals have the opportunity to derive the fullest benefit possible from the experiences offered.

25. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Lessons are considerably enhanced by the formal and informal personal and social experiences offered. Targets for personal and social development are worked towards in lessons and activities, in school, in residence or off-site. Health and sex education are built into this programme and staff ensure that teaching in these areas is sensitive to individual needs. The arrangements for class groupings limits the opportunities for non-verbal pupils to interact with their speaking peers.
26. The mobility programme is very good, and teaching and learning within it are very good. Each pupil, where appropriate, has a comprehensive assessment and there are good recording procedures, including video taped baseline assessments. Training is available for all staff to enable them to work with individual pupils as they develop mobility techniques and increase their levels of independence. There is evidence of mobility training throughout the school day.
27. The school has good links with the careers' services that support pupils and students. Representatives make valuable contributions to transition and annual reviews. Through the quality of the links that are established with other services, particularly social and health services, careers' officers maintain good contact with the pupils, students and their families. All staff, including residential care staff, play a useful part in the process that prepares students and their families for the demands of post school life.
28. Occupational, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists work closely with staff to support pupils. They make a contribution to the independence the majority of the pupils demonstrate in and around the school.
29. The school has good links with the local community. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils and students visit the local college, use local businesses and have visits to and from local mainstream schools. In the wider community, the school has close links with other schools for pupils with visual impairment. The local environment is used well to support a range of subjects, such as history, geography and personal and social development. This includes resources such as the cinema, library and local shops. Visits to places such as the local police station for scuba diving and driving police cars on the skid-pan, to the English Blind Golf Association golf course and to the seaside, add another dimension to pupils' experiences and learning. The school makes good use of museums, the theatre and other places of interest in Central London, which further enhances pupils' education.
30. The provision made by the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Provision for moral and social development is very good. During the school day the quality of the registration period, assembly, drink and meal breaks, all make a very positive contribution to social development, while the many and varied off-site educational visits provide them with the opportunity to practise and acquire social skills and insights. The programme of activities in the residential setting and the development of shared targets with the school, enhance provision. Pupils and students are well aware of what is acceptable behaviour. This is constantly reinforced through praise and the celebration of achievement, both in and out of lessons. The whole school weekly assembly focuses on the celebration of success and plays an important part in increasing pupils' and students' awareness of acceptable behaviour.
31. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The organised act of worship provides pupils and students with opportunities to be aware of other religions as well as the Christian religion. Pupils join in with familiar songs, listening well and learning new signs. Spiritual influences are seen in art displays around the school, displays of other religions, in music lessons celebrating a feeling of community and joy. Examples include a pupil enjoying playing a piano alone, or, in the residential unit, pupils listening to the story of Saint David.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They have opportunities to participate in a range of cultural and cross-cultural experiences such as learning about Greek food, clothes and culture, celebrating Christian festivals and those of other cultures or religions. Visits to the theatre and concerts additionally contribute to this element of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment for pupils who are well known and looked after by well-qualified staff. It has addressed the gaps in provision identified in the last inspection report.
34. There are now good arrangements for promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Thorough risk assessments are carried out over a wide range of areas from infection control to school visits. The potential risks of so many vehicles dropping off and collecting pupils at the beginning and end of the day has also been recognised and some action taken. The fire drills, which have always been carried out regularly, are now appropriately documented.
35. There are good child protection procedures, which follow those of the local Area Child Protection Committee. There is good liaison with external agencies and child protection training for all care staff, but not all classroom staff. Prompted by parental concerns, raised in the autumn term, a good programme for sex education, involving the school nurse, is now in place.
36. There are good opportunities for pupils to work through issues that are upsetting them. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Counselling is now available from an independent trained female counsellor. There are two independent listeners, whose names are listed in booklets about making complaints, given out to pupils. Brailled and large print instructions on contacting *Childline* are also provided next to telephones.
37. Good procedures are in place for monitoring attendance and appropriate links with the local Education Welfare Officer, who regularly visits the school, and with pupils' placing authorities further afield. Class registers are completed appropriately but not always returned to the school office by the due time. The school recognises the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, despite the distances some pupils travel. Appropriate action is taken to address attendance issues, both on an individual basis and through the school governors' annual report to parents.
38. There are effective systems to promote good behaviour and to eliminate bullying, confirmed in discussions with pupils and the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. On several occasions, pupils were held to calm and keep them safe from hurting themselves. This was done sensitively and with care to maintain the pupil's dignity. A record of all incidents is kept by care staff and in the school staff room.
39. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and, since the last report, better links between the work of the care staff and the school curriculum have been developed. Daily communication diaries are completed by teaching and care staff (or parents). Individual care plans contain detailed targets for various life skills, which link across to academic targets, for example reading from recipes. These are fed into annual reviews. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets, reinforced by discussion, and residential pupils keep reminders of their independence tasks, such as watering plants, in their bedrooms. Care staff provide the principle support for work sessions after school.
40. The residential accommodation provides a happy and friendly weekly home, much appreciated by pupils. It is clean, cheerful and pupils have personalised space. There are detailed arrangements for ensuring the health, social and medical care of boarding pupils in compliance with the provisions of the Children Act 1989. However, the Social Services Inspectorate has chosen not to inspect the school's residential provision. There are unsatisfactory aspects to the accommodation, such as the lack of lift access for pupils with physical disabilities and the current need for some staff and pupils to share a bathroom (but not lavatories). The school's plans for building renovation and development take account of the concerns regarding shared bathroom facilities.

41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and there are examples of good practice in the use of individual education plans, which evaluate progress on a daily basis. Staff use the information well to inform planning for lower attaining pupils. However, where higher attaining pupils are taught in subject groups, their individual plans are focused on curriculum content, rather than on individual special needs and this is unsatisfactory. At Key Stages 1, 2 and post-16, and for lower attaining pupils across the school, individual education plans are well structured, targets are clear and continuous assessment is used to inform planning. This is good and has a positive effect on teaching and learning. The procedures used for lower attaining pupils are effective and consistent. The school meets statutory requirements for pupils, all of whom have statements of special educational need.
42. The school has made some improvements since the last inspection in monitoring, assessing and supporting pupils' academic progress and the immediate use of ongoing assessment in lessons is good overall. However, whole school provision remains unsatisfactory. The school's assessment policy shows that it uses a number of formal tests to assess many aspects of pupils' performance. Effective systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' functional vision, mobility, and independent living are in place, but pupils' academic progress is not monitored and supported so well. The main weaknesses lie in inconsistent practice between the primary and secondary departments and within different subjects in the secondary department, and the ways in which assessment is used to guide future teaching.
43. Teachers know their pupils very well and they use many opportunities in lessons to carry out ongoing monitoring and assessment. This may take place through careful questioning of pupils or by the completion of written, brailled, oral and practical tasks. Formal procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory overall, with some strengths. Procedures are particularly good in the primary department and some class-based and subject specialists in the secondary department work equally effectively. In these cases, teachers plan effectively. They set clear learning targets and monitor individual pupils' progress against them. As a result, at the end of each teaching unit they are able to assess clearly the new skills, knowledge and understanding that individual pupils have gained when measured against specific individual learning outcomes. However, this good practice is not evident in all secondary subject areas. In subjects such as history and geography, for example, planning is much less detailed and individual and, therefore, pupils' learning cannot be assessed against clearly identified criteria.
44. At the present time there is no consistency in the ways that different teachers assess pupils and make judgements on progress, as they do not use a common format, and there is frequently insufficient detail about what pupils have achieved. This is because the school does not have effective procedures for monitoring teachers' assessments and ensuring that they are sufficiently detailed to guide future planning and teaching. Although the school's assessment practice guidelines identify the requirement for teachers to assess pupils' achievements against key learning targets, there is insufficient monitoring of the process by senior staff to ensure that teachers comply. Subject co-ordinators have no active role in this respect. Therefore, as a number of aspects of assessment are not secure and lacking in subject detail, pupils' achievements in terms of what they can do, know and understand in each subject area are not always shown. This is particularly noticeable in some secondary subjects. On these occasions, teachers use the information they get from the ongoing informal assessments of achievements to guide their lesson planning. Therefore, whilst some pupils are challenged as teachers prepare and present tasks that are appropriate for them, the needs of higher attaining pupils in the secondary department are not always met.
45. As some teachers' assessment procedures in the secondary department are unsatisfactory, their recording of pupils' achievements is equally short of detail. As a result, reports to parents and those submitted to annual reviews are ineffective in describing pupils' subject knowledge and understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Good relationships with parents continue since the last inspection, encouraged by regular

opportunities for parents to raise issues through the annual survey and opportunities to spend time at school, including overnight stays, family lunches and special interest days. There is easy telephone access to day and residential staff. Parents are generally very satisfied with the care and education provided by the school and their children's achievements.

47. The quality of information provided for parents has improved. There is an informative school brochure, regular newsletters and the easy-to-read Governors' Annual Report to Parents now conforms with statutory requirements. Much information is also available in large print or braille as required. However, whilst pupil reports to parents have improved from the parents' point of view, they still provide insufficient description to identify exactly what is being undertaken in each subject and how successfully it is being achieved.
48. The involvement of parents in their children's learning is good and formalised in a home-school partnership policy, with an annual contract signed up to by parent, pupil and school. Many parents regularly complete the home-school diaries, which enable information to be fed into pupils' learning in class. A few parents have helped in school by hearing pupils read. Despite the distances involved, participation in annual reviews has increased to over 90 per cent over the last few years. Interpreters are provided as required. The school takes note of what parents say, for example, the rapid introduction of more detailed sex education, involving the school nurse, in response to recent concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Effective management and strong leadership by the headteacher and senior staff have enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's aims and values and the clear sense of purpose within the school and the governing body. Effective systems to monitor the school's performance are in place, supported by the local education authority. Areas of concern are dealt with promptly. Teaching has improved significantly, as has the learning of pupils, although the role of subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed across the school. Resources available to the school are well managed and specific grants are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The school takes effective action to meet its targets and has adopted an innovative approach to solving problems. This is demonstrated by the school's involvement in the Graduate Teaching Programme, which has resulted in several teaching posts being successfully filled. The headteacher also manages the local authority service for the visually impaired. This benefits both staff and pupils, as it increases the opportunities for the professional development of staff and the inclusion of pupils in other schools. However, within the school, there are insufficient opportunities in lessons for non-speaking pupils to interact with speaking peers.
50. The governing body is effective in monitoring and supporting the work of the school through frequent visits and the various sub-committees that are in place. The governing board meets its statutory responsibilities and plays an important part in the school's strategic planning for the future. Finances are well managed and resources are effectively targeted to support pupils' learning. Administration is good and the recent reorganisation of the finance and administration department supports the efficient day to day running of the school. The school makes very good use of specific grants and has a suitably costed development plan. Staff and governors share a commitment to improve. Taking into account the good quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make, the school is effective and provides good value for money.
51. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory, as in the last inspection. Staff are suitably qualified, with a number of teachers being qualified teachers of the visually impaired. This is good and an improvement since the last inspection. There is a new deputy headteacher who has been in post since January 2001 and this has resolved some of the issues noted in the last inspection. The school has been successful in recruiting and training several new teachers on the graduate training scheme. Carestaff are very well qualified and learning support assistants are given appropriate opportunities for training. They attend staff training days and can follow a course to learn braille. Mobility officers make a valuable contribution to pupils' independence skills training.

52. Most of the accommodation is satisfactory, but there are some unsatisfactory features. Classrooms are of a reasonable size to meet the needs of the curriculum. The multi-sensory suite is a good resource for lower attaining pupils and the on-site swimming pool enhances the curriculum for all pupils. There are specialist rooms that support the demands of a secondary curriculum satisfactorily. However, there are no hard play areas for the pupils to use for games or break-time in inclement weather. This is unsatisfactory and limits the areas available to pupils. The major weakness in the accommodation is the restricted access to the upper floor of the school, which prevents access to various specialist classrooms, to a significant minority of pupils. This is unsatisfactory. There is stair-climbing equipment, but this is not useful for all pupils with physical disabilities who would benefit from access to a lift.
53. The school is clean and well cared for and displays are bright and relevant. Good features of the environment include the walls being kept clear below average shoulder level to enable pupils to find their way about the school by touch and the use of braille and Moon labels on displays, light switches, doors and tables in order to help pupils orientate themselves. The grounds of the school are well maintained and attractive, providing an additional learning area, particularly for those pupils having mobility training.
54. The school has a range of resources which are satisfactory in meeting the needs of the pupils. There is a newly opened learning resources centre, which contains a well stocked library of braille, Moon and print books, suitable for the wide range of pupils within the school. Taped texts and videos are also available. The availability and use of this resource supports pupils' learning and progress by providing access to research and leisure reading. Some of the specialist information technology is also housed in the learning resources centre, including programs to teach touch-typing, computers with speech facilities and a range of different access boards, for example, a modified touch pad. There is also a toy library and an area for younger pupils to look at books and hear stories. Staff in the learning resources centre prepare texts, objects of reference and materials to support the teachers in the classrooms and this is a good provision. Resources for subjects are satisfactory overall. Where pupils have additional physical needs, technology aids are provided satisfactorily to enable pupils to access the curriculum, for example speaking dictionaries. The provision of tactile resources is good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To continue to improve the learning and achievement of pupils, the senior management team and governing body need to:

- a. provide suitable activities for all pupils, by developing a whole school approach to the co-ordination of subjects and the use of assessment (paragraphs 42, 44, 64 and 96);
- b. ensure access for all pupils to first floor curriculum and residential areas in the school (paragraphs 40, 52, 78, 90);
- c. increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils in the secondary department (paragraphs 41, 44 and 63); and
- d. increase opportunities for non-verbal pupils to interact with their speaking peer group (paragraphs 25 and 49).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	122
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	26	38	30	2	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	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

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	5
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	15

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: Y1 – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.8
Average class size	6

Education support staff: Y1 – Y14

Total number of education support staff	45
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1501

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	1,718,728
Total expenditure	1,675,712
Expenditure per pupil	21,763
Balance brought forward from previous year	126,545
Balance carried forward to next year	169,561

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	82
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	45	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	31	10	2	24
The teaching is good.	71	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	27	6	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	27	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	12	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	22	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	8	0	4	16

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

There were no children in the foundation stage at the school at the time of the inspection.

ENGLISH

55. Pupils' attainment in English is below national age related expectation. However, they make good progress compared to similar schools. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, which is in line with the previous inspection. Pupils now make satisfactory progress at all key stages in reading and writing, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Progress of pupils in English is good at Key Stages 1, 2 and post-16 and in the classes for lower attaining pupils across the school. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on the progress pupils make.
56. When the pupils enter the school, a majority are not confident or articulate speakers, although they gain confidence rapidly. They make good progress in speaking and listening. Pupils in Key Stage 1 decide whether to sing or sign a response to a question and they use objects of reference to make choices. They listen to stories and are beginning to predict the outcome of the story. In Key Stage 2, pupils answer questions with confidence, for example, to say where they live and who looks after them. They understand and know how to handle big books and listen to a story. In Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils use objects of reference to make choices and understand what is expected of them. Their individual education plans focus on communication and they make good progress against these targets. Pupils listen to poems and stories and choose their favourite pieces of verse. Higher attaining pupils understand predictions when reading Macbeth and discussing the predictions made by the three witches. They join in discussion with enthusiasm, use a wide vocabulary of descriptive words to discuss the text and listen to each other during the discussion. Pupils in Key Stage 4 discuss ideas fluently and think about the judgements they make about other people without having all the relevant information. They understand that this may cause them to form wrong opinions. Students at post-16 listen well to questions and answer thoughtfully. In media studies they discuss advertisements and remember and explain when they grew out of playing with certain toys.
57. Progress in reading and writing is satisfactory at all key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to understand that symbols carry meaning; for example, in the use of objects of reference. They begin to make marks on paper and develop their fine motor skills and hand control. In Key Stage 2, some pupils begin to use braille and distinguish different letter codes to find the odd one out. Other pupils use Moon to begin to identify letter symbols. Pupils use felt tipped pens to follow marks and patterns drawn for them and take care to be as accurate as possible. They use objects of reference mounted on card with additional braille printing to help them identify and distinguish words. In Key Stages 3 and 4, many of the pupils use either braille or large print to read. Some read very fluently from either source and use a speaking dictionary to find out the meaning of words that they do not understand, for example, paradox. They read with expression and concentration. Some of the higher attaining pupils are less confident readers and lack useful word attack skills. All pupils, however, follow and understand the text and the well-organised resources support them in this area. Pupils use computers with confidence to input text and some write very quickly using a brailleur. A few pupils write with a pen, although they do dictate their thoughts to another person. Post-16 students use computers to input text. Some students read very large text, know some of the phonic sounds and use them in their reading and writing. They develop their braille skills and make satisfactory progress.
58. The behaviour and the attitudes of pupils in English lessons are very good. Pupils are very well behaved and work hard. They concentrate and join in with enthusiasm. They listen well, respond

carefully to questioning, wait for their turn to answer and work very hard to articulate their thoughts. Pupils join in when they are requested to do so, without making a fuss. Some pupils work independently and are helpful in supporting their peers, for example when a word is difficult to read. The older pupils take a positive interest in discussion and listen to each other's points of view. They all make positive contributions towards the debate. Pupils sustain concentration for the whole lesson, take turns and support each other by listening. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, which reinforces high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes.

59. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good at Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and post-16. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching in all lessons seen was at least satisfactory. It was good or better in nearly two thirds of lessons seen, with a few lessons that were very good or excellent. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the progress made by the pupils. This is also reflected in pupils' work, which is age appropriate. However, some of the work has not been marked in a way that helps pupils to develop their skills.
60. In Key Stage 1, the teacher's quiet, gentle insistence that all pupils should take part ensures that they are all involved in the lesson. Good questioning during story time involves pupils in the story rather than them being passive listeners. The pace is good and there are high expectations that everyone should achieve. Resources are well chosen to meet the needs of the pupils and classroom management is very good. Staff use signing consistently to support communication and lessons are planned carefully to make sure that pupils are active learners. Pupils learn to be independent in finding their seats and start work quickly.
61. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good, with some excellent features. Good planning and good questioning skills enhance teaching. Learning support assistants are well briefed so that everyone is concentrating on helping the pupils to reach their individual targets. There is careful explanation about the next activity and pupils learn to sequence events. During story time, opportunities are given to pupils to predict what may happen next. The high expectations that staff have of behaviour and concentration help the pupils to learn effectively. However, in some classes, the use and teaching of phonics is not secure. Sounds are mispronounced and this makes it difficult for pupils to build the sounds into words. A good example of the excellent teaching is the very good pace of a lesson, very high expectations that pupils will succeed and clear explanations, which ensure pupils know exactly what to do during the lesson. Opportunities to extend learning are not missed. For example, when a pupil brings in a giant pinecone from home, spontaneous use is made of it to develop language skills. Words about texture and size are taught, pupils explore the cone with the sense of touch and smell and use comparative and descriptive language to describe the object.
62. In Key Stage 3, over a half the teaching seen was good and occasionally very good. The work of the pupils clearly reflects their individual education plans. Learning objectives are clear and carefully graded. This supports pupils' learning. Text is adapted to meet individual pupil needs, either in braille or in suitable sized print, depending on their visual acuity. Homework is used to extend pupils' learning, for example, making predictions. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their previous knowledge and understanding to answer questions through good quality questioning. Lower attaining pupils learn to recognise a change of activity through the teacher explaining what will happen next and signalling in good time that a change is about to take place. However, there is some insecurity in the teaching of phonics and the teacher's knowledge of Moon.
63. Teaching in Key Stage 4 and post-16 is satisfactory overall, although there are good features that enable the pupils to learn well. Questioning is effectively used to establish a discussion about the play the pupils are studying. Homework is set and checked at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils and students are encouraged to discuss and test their understanding. An example is a discussion about the timing of advertisements on the television throughout the day. This approach encourages pupils to use a wide, descriptive vocabulary. However, some of the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched in their reading and writing and in the content of the work. In some lessons, learning objectives are not clear in teachers' planning and time is not efficiently managed.

64. The curriculum for the youngest pupils, which is based on the national guidance for the foundation curriculum, is entirely appropriate. The Certificate of Achievement course for older pupils is good and well balanced, including speaking and listening, reading, media, drama, uses of information, reading for pleasure, story telling and mystery and legends. There is a good communications document to support teaching in the primary department and a policy for English for the secondary part of the school. Co-ordination of the subject within departments is good, but between the primary and secondary departments it is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient planning to ensure progression of pupils when they transfer from the primary to secondary department.

MATHEMATICS

65. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics overall. They enter the school with very limited mathematical skills and knowledge and become progressively more confident and competent in both their number work and their understanding and use of mathematical language. For example, one primary group of pupils begins to recognise and use the words "one more than and one less than" during a lesson. Good progress is linked to the work that has been undertaken in successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy across the school. It is particularly successful in the primary department and for lower attaining pupils across the school, where good use of the oral mental work, main activity and plenary sessions are having a significant impact. Achievement of higher attaining secondary and post-16 pupils is satisfactory. However, planning and assessment for these groups of pupils lacks the rigour of the other groups.
66. There is a wide range of attainment across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils show an interest in number songs. Higher attaining pupils count confidently to 30. Pupils begin to count, recognise and sequence numbers up to 10, add 2 numbers within 5 and recognise simple coins. They use the words 'big', 'middle' and 'small' after the story of Goldilocks. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils are adding and subtracting to 10 with confidence. Many of the pupils are counting with confidence, both forwards and backwards, up to 20, some beyond and some in multiples of 2 and 10. Other pupils use 1p coins when shopping for items up to 5p. By the end of Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils consolidate counting to 5 when working within the early stages of number. Higher attaining pupils multiply £350 by three in their heads.
67. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils add two numbers less than a hundred in their heads. Some pupils handle simple fractions and measure short lengths accurately to the nearest half centimetre. They find the volume of a cuboid using a calculator. These pupils follow a range of accredited courses, including Certificate of Achievement and General Certificate of Secondary Education. The provision of accredited courses is an improvement since the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils are achieving appropriate standards as a result of at least good and often very good teaching. Teacher records indicate very good progress in the case of some pupils. Some count, recognise shapes and coins and understand mathematical words, such as before and after.
68. The quality of teaching in the subject has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. Teaching is best in the primary department and for lower attaining pupils across the school. Teaching is satisfactory in groups with higher attaining secondary pupils and post-16 students. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all of the pupils, whether physical, emotional or intellectual. They have very detailed individual knowledge of their pupils. They keep detailed records of their achievements, set clear individual targets, have well structured lessons, high expectations and make very good use of the talented learning support assistants. Pupils are clear about what they are doing in the lesson. Careful questioning is targeted at individuals, encouraging all to take part and checking that they are understanding as well as extending their thinking. Good emphasis is placed on the use of appropriate language, supported by the use of signing, braille or Moon where appropriate. Pupils are well trained in classroom routines and move quickly from whole class to group work and clear away quickly. Display is very good and positively enhances the working environment. Learning support assistants are well trained to function as part of a very effective team. They provide invaluable individual support, particularly to lower attaining pupils. This has a significant impact on

the quality of learning. At post-16, learning support assistants join in very enthusiastically with the number songs, encouraging lower attaining students to sing with the music. Students respond very enthusiastically to this, with lots of smiles and signs of enjoyment. Unsatisfactory aspects of teaching in a few lessons are when planning lacks detail and is sometimes identical for different year groups. Mental activities, although pitched at an appropriate level, do not take account of individual needs and higher attaining pupils are not always challenged. Too long is spent on the mental activity at the beginning, with some pupils not contributing for long periods of time.

69. The curriculum for mathematics is good in that it is broad and there is a good balance of activities across the timetable. There is a clear scheme of work for each of the key stages and the teachers' planning follows this carefully. Targets are set in annual reviews and individual education plans that are drawn from the scheme. These are assessed very well and lead to individualised planning which matches pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. This is particularly evident in the groups for lower attaining pupils, where they join in enthusiastically with sounds and expressions of delight. Behaviour in lessons is at least good and often very good. Pupils have very good relationships with other pupils in the group and the adults in the classroom.
70. The primary co-ordinator for mathematics has only recently been appointed. As a result, there has been insufficient time for this co-ordinator and the overall co-ordinator to establish consistent approaches in curriculum planning, assessment and recording. However, the National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented. As a result, the lesson structure that has been introduced has had a positive impact on both the teaching and learning of mathematics. There are insufficient opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school and to share the good practice, particularly in the primary department and for lower attaining pupils across the school. There is limited specialised software available and, as a result, insufficient use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons. The department is aware of this and it is a current school priority for improvement.

SCIENCE

71. Overall, pupils and students make good progress when assessed against the targets in their individual education plans, through classroom observation and scrutiny of their work and records. Achievements are very good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at post-16.
72. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to distinguish between different tastes. With support, they identify the tastes sweet and salty and express a preference, for example, by experiencing the tastes of jam, syrup, salty popcorn and salty crisps. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn to identify sounds. The highest attaining pupils correctly identify the five senses. They explain that sounds become quieter as you move further from the source. Different types of sound are accurately identified and matched to pictures (tactile pictures for totally blind pupils). By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know and understand the difference between solids and liquids. They know that solids do not have spaces inside. Higher attaining pupils identify different materials accurately, for example plastics, wood, metals and stone. They know the difference between electrical insulators and conductors and identify basic circuit symbols. Lower attaining pupils experience the feel of different materials, the differences in sounds and tastes. They are encouraged to make choices, for example between using a tambourine or castanets to make sounds. Good use is made of switches to enable them to record their own sounds.
73. In Key Stage 3, pupils develop their knowledge of life processes and living things. Lower attaining pupils develop their knowledge of fruits through practical investigations, using taste, touch and smell. They respond to questions and indicate their preferences, for example liking grapes or bananas. Higher attaining pupils show good recall of the processes of photosynthesis and know that ethanol is flammable. They know the basic safety procedures required during scientific investigations. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils write up investigations formally, either using brailers or word processing programs. They make predictions and test them for example, without light, plants cannot produce starch. The principles of a fair test are well understood and explained.

74. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. They know that some elements are solids, some are liquids and some are gases and that mercury and bromine are liquids at room temperature. Reactions between different substances and water or acid are recalled, for example magnesium reacts very slowly with water, but quickly with acid. Pupils accurately describe the 'pop' test for hydrogen. Lower attaining pupils continue to develop knowledge and understanding of plants and fruits. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils know that there are over 100 elements, which include a mixture of metals and non-metals, solids, liquids and gases. They understand that all materials are made from atoms and molecules.
75. In the post-16 groups, higher attaining students continue to work towards gaining GCSEs or Certificates of Educational Achievement. They know the formula linking time, distance and speed and make good use of calculators and talking calculators in obtaining results from investigations. They draw speed time graphs from their results using ordinary or tactile graph paper. Higher attaining students predict results without assistance and offer help to fellow students. All students produce line graphs with or without help. Lower attaining students do not have access to external accreditation in this subject. They recall the names and functions of garden implements, for example trowel and seeds. They identify a range of fruits which have seeds. They know that planting a plum stone may produce a plum tree. Good use is made of switches and controls in the multi-sensory room to operate sounds and colours.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is sometimes excellent at Key Stages 1 and 2, very good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at post-16. Where it is good or better, lessons are well planned and prepared activities give each pupil a well-structured opportunity for personal involvement. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher respected individuals' reluctance to taste items, but encouraged them to experience and recognise their attributes. Intended learning outcomes are clear and shared with pupils or students at the start of the lesson. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the special educational needs of their pupils. They use a very wide range of teaching skills, which engage pupils of all abilities and levels of vision. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on sound, pupils' knowledge and understanding were stretched through constant verbal reinforcement. Lessons are made an enjoyable learning experience whereby pupils are enthralled and excited throughout. They start on time and are well prepared to ensure that all pupils begin work without delay. Skilful use of questions and answers, together with clear explanations, aid pupils' understanding and recall, for example, that plants store sugar as starch, in a Key Stage 3 lesson. Learning support assistants are very well deployed and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, for example listing pupils' answers in braille as they are given. Where lessons are well organised, purposeful and exciting pupils behave very well, work with enthusiasm, make good progress and enjoy the lessons. Very good rapport develops between pupils, students and all adults. Unsatisfactory features of some teaching are when staff are unsure of technology, for example in the multi-sensory room or when learning outcomes are vague. Sometimes the pace of lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4 and at post-16 is too slow to engage and motivate higher attaining pupils or students.
77. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. A subject policy is in place. The schemes of work follow the QCA scheme at Key Stages 1 to 3. In Key Stage 4 and at post-16, schemes of work are determined by ASDAN, General Certificate of Secondary Education and Certificate of Achievement courses. All courses are appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils and students. The quality of assessment and recording is good, particularly where learning support assistants make regular notes of pupils' achievement. Members of the senior management team monitor teaching. However, no time allocation is given to co-ordinators to develop formal systems for observing teaching or developing cross-curricular links. Despite this, there are some good examples of cross-curricular links in art, mathematics and English.
78. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in this subject. Schemes of work are in place and the quality of assessment and recording is now good. However, the lack of air extraction and a fume cupboard continues to restrict the number and nature of investigations that can be carried out. This restricts the breadth of the curriculum, particularly in studying the

properties of materials. The science room is located on the first floor, which is not accessible to pupils in wheelchairs.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Achievement in art is good for pupils up to the age of eleven and very good in the secondary and post-16 classes. The youngest pupils are given good experiences of handling art materials, including paint and clay, and many overcome an initial resistance and discomfort in doing so. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use any useful vision they have and their sense of touch to begin to observe objects and textures carefully. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their observation through sight and touch, for example, handling daffodils and describing flowers and leaves in terms of colour and shape. They mix colours and apply paint to paper with brushes, rollers and fingers. They learn about different approaches to painting, like impressionism. They pick out colours and forms on paintings by famous artists and experience different styles of applying paint. By the end of the key stage, they discuss which materials to use, for example, when planning to make a model of a Pharaoh's head. They plan and position their materials according to their own ideas.
80. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils produce interesting work based on a poem "The Pool". First they create ripple effects using coloured tissue paper, then develop it further by adding inks. Other pupils work in ceramics on the same theme, exploring how they can make ripple and raindrop effects using clay. They have skills in cutting, shaping, positioning and joining clay to make three-dimensional representations. They use moulding techniques with latex and plaster. Pupils know about the surrealist movement and produce highly original and personal work in paint or in clay adapting this style. They draw on African and South American work as inspiration for their own work. Pupils have good and varied finishing techniques. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils draw information from a number of sources to explore the detail of parts of buildings. They discuss and plan a project and use a range of techniques for working in two and three dimensions. Many pupils are approaching the standards expected nationally for their age, although they still require more time to prepare for examinations at General Certificate of Secondary Education level.
81. Students continue to study art at post-16 and go on to achieve passes and merits at GCSE or modules accredited by other bodies. They use sketch books, explore, select and adapt features of images. They apply a wide range of printing, moulding, photographic and drawing techniques to achieve a final design for a vase based on Native American totem poles.
82. Teaching of art is good overall throughout the primary classes, with no unsatisfactory lessons and with some very good teaching. The very good relationships in the classroom help pupils to be confident and try out new things. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and learning support assistants are active and effective participants in lessons. In very good lessons, teachers promote careful observation and ensure that pupils have access to the lesson through suitable methods and materials. Behaviour management is very good and informal, but careful assessment and observation of individual progress increase the teachers' knowledge of the pupils. There are good links with other subjects and all work is reinforced through careful use and repetition of key vocabulary. In lessons that, while satisfactory, have areas for further development, tasks are occasionally not well matched to pupils' ability and this leads to a need for too much adult intervention.
83. Teaching in art in secondary and post-16 classes is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and lessons are of a consistently high standard. The specialist art teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the needs of the pupils and adapts themes and methods creatively and imaginatively to overcome their difficulties. Expectations are extremely high and pupils respond very well to the demands made of them and work with interest, perseverance and confidence. Appraisal of work by other pupils is an important part of their experience. Lessons are extremely well planned and prepared and resources very well used and adapted. Pupils are encouraged to extend their work to their home environment. For example, the teacher in a Year 11 class suggests that one pupil should find out how many storeys there are in his block of flats and asks another to talk to his parents about bringing in samples of script in his

mother tongue to incorporate into his work.

84. Co-ordination of art in the primary department is at an early stage of development, but developing well. Co-ordination of art in the secondary department is well established and very effective, with very appropriate schemes of work devised by the co-ordinator. Assessment is fully in place and well used to promote very good progress. Very appropriate arrangements are in place for the external accreditation of students' achievements. The school's resources for art are well used, including the resources of the wider environment. Standards of work achieved and the quality of teaching are very much improved since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Overall, pupils and students make good progress and very good progress in Key Stage 4. Insufficient evidence was available to enable a judgement to be made in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils study food technology as well as design and technology. They identify a range of vehicles, including a car, fire engine, truck and police car. They know that vehicles have wheels. Higher attaining pupils recognise and name a scooter from tactile photographs. By the end of the key stage, pupils recognise and mix basic ingredients to make sweet buns, sometimes without help.
86. In Key Stage 3, pupils know how to smooth sheet materials, for example plywood, when making bird boxes. They name tools correctly. They choose suitable strategies for joining materials, for example glue when joining card. Pupils develop independence skills, for example washing up utensils at the ends of lessons. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of common tools linked to materials, for example they know that a tenon saw is used for cutting wood, not scissors. They draw up a sequenced plan of action, including naming tools and materials. They organise themselves. Lower attaining pupils explain what they are making and use tools and materials with support and hands-on help.
87. In Key Stage 4, pupils experience a wider range of activities, including modelling with concrete, making and joining boxes and making moving cams. Higher attaining pupils know the meaning of technical terms, for example riser, faller, dwell and eccentric. They know that levers are the earliest form of machines. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils use a wide range of sources, including ICT, to research and develop ideas. They devise comprehensive plans of action, naming tools, processes and materials. Lower attaining pupils identify, modify and improve on their design, with discussion and oral prompt.
88. Post-16 students continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Higher attaining students work towards GCSE or Certificate of Educational Achievement. They design and make a range of objects, using a variety of materials. Examples include tactile dominoes and a lift out dinner plate made from wood. Some students have produced lift out alphabet puzzles, wooden boxes, metal boxes and metal enamelling. They produce three design ideas and evaluate them. They choose one and build prototypes before evaluating and altering the design for a given purpose. Lower attaining students study food technology as part of their independence training. They plan a shopping trip, go shopping for ingredients, return and cook their chosen dishes, for example sausage rolls. They identify a range of kitchen utensils and their uses, for example opening cans, coring, peeling and cutting apples and toasting bread.
89. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Key Stage 4. Very good knowledge of the subject leads to good planning and use of resources. In turn, this motivates pupils and students and encourages them to complete the tasks set. Teachers provide appropriate levels of support, while encouraging pupils and students to attempt tasks for themselves. They test their own predictions and discuss them freely. Groups are organised well according to prior attainment. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour, which are reinforced by the very good use of praise. Good management by the teacher prevents an isolated incident from developing into a major issue; for example a pupil becoming frustrated with a task, which he thinks he cannot do. The food technology and design and technology technicians make a significant positive

contribution to pupils' and students' progress and achievement.

90. Design and technology is well co-ordinated with a policy and schemes of work in place. Assessment and recording are good. However, formal schemes of work and assessment and recording procedures are not in place for food technology at Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils with mobility difficulties are currently disadvantaged through lack of access to the food technology and design and technology facilities on the first floor. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

91. Pupils' achievements and progress are good in the primary department. No lessons were observed in the secondary department, as pupils in Key Stage 3 are not taught geography this term and at Key Stage 4 pupils do not study the subject. Scrutiny of the work of Key Stage 3 pupils showed that achievements are unsatisfactory and pupils do not make satisfactory progress over time. The school's provision for geography has not made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
92. In the primary department, effective planning and activities appropriate to the needs of all the pupils ensure that they achieve well. The geographical experiences of the youngest pupils are generally linked to the immediate environment, which they investigate using their senses. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils move around the building with varying levels of support, as they explore. They feel the different textures on walls and floors and investigate the different smells around the school, such as the laundry, garden and kitchen. Pupils recognise different foods from taste as they sample items they have bought during a walk to the shops.
93. As pupils move through the primary department, they increase their knowledge and understanding of places through topics such as the weather. Younger pupils understand that the weather affects the clothes that people wear, with some knowing words like "waterproof". Learning is reinforced with good practical activities, such as pupils designing and making summer outfits to take on holiday, and a model of mountains with people doing winter sports activities. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils identify the points of the compass and know that it is colder at the tops of mountains. They identify the reasons for going on holiday and understand the relationship between clothes, weather and activities and different holiday destinations. They understand the water cycle, knowing that water runs off sloping land and affects river levels. They know that some things can be recycled. Very creative activities enable pupils to develop their geographical skills, particularly with regard to journeys, maps and mapping. The story of Hansel and Gretel develops the idea of a journey and pupils collect appropriate objects and symbols to represent the sequence of the journey. They make simple maps, such as street maps, using appropriate symbols and objects to represent different buildings.
94. There was a very limited amount of Key Stage 3 pupils' work to examine. There is an over-emphasis on worksheets. Many of these are incomplete and much of the work is poorly presented. The evidence that is available shows that, by the end of the key stage, pupils know about features of their own country, such as National Parks. They extract information from bar charts and line graphs and understand the conflict that can be created through the different needs and expectations that people have of areas like National Parks. They know the impact of people moving from villages to cities in a country like India and understand the advantages and disadvantages of modern developments like the Channel Tunnel.
95. The teaching of geography in the primary department ranges from satisfactory to very good, but is good overall. Clear learning outcomes and very good strategies provide a very good range of learning opportunities and pupils' social and communication skills are equally well encouraged through group work. Teachers use simple but effective resources very well to provide tactile stimulation and to include all pupils in activities. A lesson that had many characteristics of very good teaching enabled a class of eleven year old pupils to make very good progress in their understanding of the needs of early settlers and their knowledge of why settlements developed in

particular locations. The teacher provided twigs, water, seeds and a clump of earth and grass and pupils felt and smelt these. She then used questions and prompts very well to encourage pupils to consider why each of these would be important to early settlers. This skilful and targeted use of questions enabled pupils to respond very well so that they suggested the idea that water was needed for drinking, washing and watering plants. Similar encouragement enabled them to link wood to building houses and its use as a fuel. The teacher had planned a particularly good activity to follow, during which pupils were divided into two groups and they had to put the four items into an order of importance. The teacher explained very carefully what was required and, therefore, pupils carried out the task sensibly and carefully with a clear understanding of the nature of the activity. This very well chosen activity encouraged geographical understanding as well as other skills as pupils were required to speak and listen carefully and to negotiate with others so that they could all agree on an order of priority.

96. The whole school management and co-ordination of geography is unsatisfactory and there is no clear sense of direction. The recently appointed geography co-ordinator in the primary department is developing effective planning procedures and individual targets for pupils, based very closely on their own experiences. However, the secondary department subject co-ordinator is only involved in planning the work of the classes he teaches and has no input into the planning carried out by other staff. Schemes of work in the secondary department are unsatisfactory and they make no reference to developing pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. The secondary subject co-ordinator is also the school geography co-ordinator and current arrangements mean that geography is not effectively managed across the school to ensure that pupils experience a broad, balanced and progressive subject curriculum as they move through the school. Procedures do not ensure an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' geographical skills and understanding of places, patterns and processes, nor do they encourage continuity in the primary to secondary transition.

HISTORY

97. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in developing the curriculum in history in Key Stages 1 and 2 and for lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3. However, for higher attaining pupils, progress has been unsatisfactory, with no changes made at Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. No provision is made at Key Stage 4. Elements of history were seen in related art lessons. The achievements of pupils are satisfactory overall.
98. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1. Records show that pupils learn to sequence the course of the day and the days of the week. They explore the concept of old and new in relation to toys and household appliances and to family members. The curriculum is modified appropriately to meet the learning needs of the pupils.
99. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils know when World War 2 began and ended. They name the combatants and give reasons for rationing and why children were evacuated. Lower attaining pupils use a tactile time line, know the difference between past and present and show understanding of how the lives of the Ancient Greeks were different from modern lives. In an outstanding lesson, the teacher used a tactile time line and the idea of 'time travel' to help the pupils realise they were thinking about a long time ago. She offered resources which pupils could feel and an activity requiring the pupils to build up their own model of a person at the court of Charles II, using satin for the frock coat, lace for cuffs and collar and leather for shoes. Pupils replicated the hair of the wigs worn and experienced the richness of fabrics and jewellery. Pupils were given a very good understanding of the differences between clothes being worn during the Restoration and those worn now. Skilful questioning and references to prior learning enabled pupils to recall what they knew of the construction of Tudor houses and to deduce that, when the Great Fire of London started, the houses would burn easily. Pupils were thoroughly involved and made very good progress in their learning.
100. In Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In a lesson about Henry VIII, lower attaining pupils recalled that he liked music and poetry, that he went riding and that he had six

wives. They listened to Tudor music and enacted a dance to the music. The teacher's commentary enabled them to place the music and dance in context and recognise differences between life at the Tudor court and the present. Head-dresses made in art added to the role play experience of the dance. In an art lesson, pupils made brooches linked to their learning about the Tudors, reinforcing their learning. Higher attaining pupils, taught in separate classes, learn about Britain between 1750 and 1900. Although Years 7, 8 and 9 are separated into classes by ability across the key stage, each class was taught the same lessons from the same materials. Although the worksheet was produced in different print sizes and in braille, it was not accessible to all pupils. Lessons for these higher attaining pupils were slow in pace and entirely teacher led, giving pupils no chance to investigate for themselves. Resources were limited to notes produced by the teacher, a video, diagrams and map, which some pupils could not access. Pupils' involvement in learning consisted of reading the texts provided, listening to the teacher and attempting to answer questions. Some pupils' attention flagged and some were barely involved at all in the lessons.

101. The quality of teaching in history ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, the teaching of history is excellent. There is a clear focus on learning about the past. Imaginative methods are used, appropriate to pupils' needs. Resources are well prepared and designed to give pupils the best possible access to the subject, taking account of their visual difficulties. In Key Stage 3, teaching of lower attaining pupils is very good, with imaginative teaching strategies, good resources and careful explanation and questioning at a level appropriate to the pupils' understanding. However, teaching of higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. Although relationships are mostly good and a small number of pupils show curiosity and interest in the subject, the lack of challenge, limited teaching strategies, poor resources and slow pace hamper pupils' progress.
102. Management of history is unsatisfactory. The policy is out of date and does not reflect current practice. There is no co-ordination of history across the school. Co-ordination of history in Key Stages 1 and 2 is at an early stage of development, but is proceeding satisfactorily. There is no overall scheme of work for the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, appropriate published schemes of work are being adapted to match the pupils' needs. They are used to set appropriate targets for individual pupils and demonstrate a good understanding of the place of history in the curriculum. The scheme of work for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 is a brief outline plan, lacking detail and providing very limited breadth of study. Assessment at Key Stage 3 involves end of module tests that do not contribute to planning. Records and reports at Key Stage 3 do not provide evidence of what pupils have achieved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils learn to use touch screens and adapted keyboards, to control the mouse and to move the cursor in enjoyable games. At Key Stages 3 and 4 and at post-16, pupils and students spend time learning keyboard skills and use speech and magnification programs to access the curriculum. All pupils are working towards achieving externally accredited qualifications. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils develop a knowledge of wider ICT applications. They use fax and Teletext to send and receive information and are beginning to access the Internet. In Key Stage 4, some pupils have developed a good knowledge of word processing skills. They use a range of software, including CD-ROMs, confidently. The attainments of students at post-16 range from working towards National Curriculum level 1 to level 4, from learning to touch type to using a spreadsheet program to input information on weather temperatures. All pupils enjoy using computers and developing their skills. They respond well in lessons.
104. Since the last inspection and the opening of the learning resources centre last year, ICT is now taught as a discrete subject to both primary and secondary aged pupils. The school has an ICT policy in draft format and has begun to implement an ICT action plan.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. No lesson plans are prepared, pupils are provided with individual tasks and a high level of support. However, this sometimes leads to too much

assistance being given to pupils. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, the teacher used the mouse to pull down the menu, while the pupil kept his hands on the keyboard. This reduces opportunities for independent learning. There is no specialist ICT teacher and not all staff have sufficient subject knowledge to help pupils develop their ICT skills appropriately. This sometimes results in too much repetition of a narrow range of word processing skills, or in just simple familiarisation with the keyboard. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, a pupil typed to dictation for a whole lesson. The learning resources centre staff provide subject expertise and very good support to teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.

106. The ICT co-ordinator has no time allocated to monitor and evaluate the curriculum and teaching. Records of work done by pupils are kept, but there is little evaluation of pupils' ICT capability. The ICT scheme followed is not clearly linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. Apart from word processing, there is little evidence of the cross-curricular use of ICT.
107. In addition to the ICT suite in the learning resources centre, the school is well equipped with computers and software and a range of other equipment in general classrooms, including closed circuit televisions, large screen televisions and talking calculators.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

108. Standards of achievement and progress in French are satisfactory for pupils aged 11 to 16 and good in the class of older primary pupils in which some French is taught. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils ask each other what their name is and how old they are. They ask and answer questions about where they live. Pupils often speak confidently and with good pronunciation. They enjoy their lessons and communicate well. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand and use common words and phrases in French connected with greetings, numbers, days and dates, and higher attaining pupils are working towards Certificate of Achievement modules about their town and their hobbies. They have some knowledge of French customs and culture. Pupils use braille or large font word processing to make mini dictionaries of the words that they know. They recognise and understand some parts of audio- and videotaped French courses. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils follow a simple French videotaped programme, when it is presented slowly. They greet each other and say how they are with some fluency and with good accents. They know and join in the words of French songs, such as the birthday song. They discuss recent events in their lives, or what they might like as presents, with support. Some pupils achieve passes in the Certificate of Achievement modules.
109. Teaching in French is satisfactory. In the primary class, lessons are lively and enjoyable, although the teacher's French is sometimes limited. In the secondary classes, the specialist teacher has very good knowledge of French. However, here the pace of lessons is slow. Use of the target language is insufficient and, as a consequence, not enough French is heard and used. Pupils do not readily volunteer French words and phrases and do not respond routinely in French. Pupils generally behave well but do not show much enthusiasm or enjoyment. Lesson planning and assessment are satisfactory and, in this respect, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, slow pace and inconsistent use of the target language are both factors that were commented on in the last inspection.
110. The subject is well documented, planning is sound and suitable accreditation in place, although expectations of what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. The co-ordinator organises useful visits. For example, there is a forthcoming visit to a French café where pupils will be able to order refreshments in French. The school has had successful links with a French school in the past.

MUSIC

111. Standards of music throughout the school are very high, with pupils of all abilities and those

learning English as an additional language achieving very well and making very good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen to music, join in songs and make sounds with percussion instruments. Some pupils sing tunefully on their own and all join in songs and copy rhythms by clapping. They begin to develop a memory for tunes and rhythms, they concentrate well on sounds and they have ideas of fast and slow, loud and soft. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils hold their pitch and rhythm strongly while singing rounds and they sing with good expression. Pupils copy quite complex patterns of rhythm by clapping or using percussion instruments and they improvise words to a tune. Some try to improvise around the melody. Pupils have a good understanding of musical vocabulary and try to sing in different moods, for example, happy, sad, silly or angry. In the junior choir, pupils have an opportunity to sing in a larger group and to combine gesture and movement with music.

112. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are familiar with Gamelan music and rehearse and combine tunes and rhythms in this style, using keyboards and piano, in preparation for a recorded performance. They discuss their tunes and suggest ways to improve them. Pupils follow a pulse as it gets quicker or slower and combine this with playing louder or softer on the teacher's cue. All pupils make choices in how they play or sing. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils practise and perform a version of the pop song "Locomotion", using voice, keyboards and percussion. They understand the "off beat" and sing and drum against a backing track. They understand that different versions can be made of the same song and they recognise and comment on the differences. A number of pupils choose to attend a voluntary singing group in the lunch hour and, apart from their musical skills, demonstrate an awareness of how to announce on tape what is going to be sung or played.
113. Post-16 students continue to learn and enjoy music. They rehearse and perform a Beatles song "Love me do!", using keyboards and full drum kit, voice and tambourine. They understand the principles of recording tracks and adding new elements, such as adding a vocal to a backing track. They know about re-mixing tunes in different styles, using the school's music technology equipment.
114. Many pupils show competence, some at very high levels, in playing musical instruments. They use their ability to contribute to their group's musical experience. Some pupils achieve good grades in instrumental music examinations.
115. Teaching in music is very good and sometimes excellent. The opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills are enhanced by individual instrumental lessons provided by a visiting teacher. The specialist music teacher has a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the subject; her expectations are extremely high and pupils respond to this and expect to work very hard and achieve well. The pace of lessons is always very good. Not a minute is lost and pupils are sorry when lessons come to an end. The teacher is particularly good at ensuring that all pupils have full access to the lesson, using gesture and sometimes hand over hand prompting where necessary, and, as a result, all pupils are successful and know they are successful. Even very shy pupils will volunteer to lead sections of the lesson and the teacher's insistence on giving choices to the class ensures that they are active learners. Excellent relationships and understanding of the pupils' needs make this possible. Respect for the performance of each individual is promoted by the teacher's example and is universal in all classes. Pupils help each other and are sensitive to each other's needs, for example, when a Year 3 pupil used gesture and prompting to draw a fellow pupil into the activity, or when two pupils share a keyboard to practise combining their different musical parts. There is very good assessment during the lesson and this is fed into lesson plans, which are detailed and clear about what pupils are to know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. Pupils' attitudes to music throughout the school are very good indeed and they are open-minded in their appreciation of all kinds of music including music from different times and places.
116. The music co-ordinator continues to develop the subject very well, extending opportunities for instrumental music lessons and increasing the opportunities for performances. Pupils are now working on a new course leading to accreditation at GCSE level. Where pupils show particular aptitudes, individually tailored arrangements are made for them to take appropriate externally

accredited examinations. The school's extremely good resources and accommodation enhance the pupils' already very good experience of making and listening to music. Improvement in the music provision throughout the school has been very good since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. All pupils have the benefit of being well taught by specialist teachers of physical education, so they continue to receive a broad and balanced curriculum through a variety of activities. Therefore, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
118. The school's physical education programme acknowledges the importance of developing pupils' mobility and co-ordination as well as giving them opportunities to acquire and practise new skills in ball games, swimming, and other activities, and to appreciate aspects of fitness and health. Only swimming and hall-based activities, such as dance and floor work, were seen during the inspection but these lessons demonstrate pupils' developing skills and confidence. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils develop the confidence to enter the water unaided. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are at the very early stages of swimming. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils put on snorkelling equipment independently and enter the water with very limited assistance or guidance. They swim confidently and some pupils surface dive and swim through a weighted hoop. In hall-based activities, Year 4 pupils show improving mobility and confidence, with varying levels of adult support. They respond to verbal instructions by walking along benches, stepping in and out of a large inner tube and bouncing on a trampette. In Year 7, lower attaining pupils respond to music and instructions in a dance lesson by walking on tiptoe, running and jumping.
119. All teaching is good or very good, with excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils achieve well in improving their levels of confidence and performance in swimming, because the teacher sets clear individual targets. Appropriate activities are provided to meet these individuals needs and so all pupils are full participants in lessons. A class of Key Stage 2 pupils is following a sequence of lessons focusing on floating and kicking. They make good progress in a lesson because of high quality teaching. Learning support staff have a clear understanding of their role, so they are very effective when working with the pupils. Staff use praise and encouragement very well, but as they know individual targets, they retain high expectations of pupils. This safe and supportive environment gives pupils the confidence to attempt new activities, secure in the knowledge that help is at hand. Therefore, all pupils made good progress. The more competent swimmers improve their swimming skills and others grow in confidence about being in the water.
120. Very high quality teaching is also seen in hall-based lessons. Very well planned and prepared lessons mean that relevant activities are used well to extend pupils' learning, confidence and mobility. Very good tactile experiences and the need to concentrate enhance this learning. Lessons also make a very significant contribution to pupils' communication skills and language acquisition. Activities are chosen to reinforce pupils' use of their residual vision and sound orientation skills. Adults provide very good support, for example, as pupils move barefoot to music around a circuit made up of a variety of items. High quality planning means that all staff emphasise the same specific vocabulary, such as 'along' the bench, 'step in' and 'step out' of the inner tube, as well as discussing the different textures. Pupils enjoy their lessons. This is demonstrated when one Year 4 pupil shrieks with pleasure as he walks over bubble wrap and calls out 'pop pop paper'. Each time the music stops the pupils have to sit on the bench quickly and the teacher rings a handbell. Some pupils point in the direction of the sound and move towards it, whilst others receive very good adult support to achieve this.
121. The overall management of physical education is good. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and is a subject specialist who teaches almost all classes. The subject policy document is comprehensive but it does not include detailed schemes of work that show how and when pupils will experience different activities as they move through the primary and secondary departments. The subject development plan does not have sufficient strategic direction and includes routine administrative matters as well as longer-term aims. Some aspects of the subject's facilities are good, such as the swimming pool and fitness room with exercise machines, but the school does

lack an outdoor hard play/games area. The school makes good use of local facilities, such as the river, for rowing and the nearby static rowing facilities as well as Wandsworth Prison exercise equipment. Visitors to the school also make a significant contribution, with staff from the Royal Academy of Dance and members of the Professional Association of Dive Instructors visiting the school on a regular basis. Pupils in Key Stage 3 also experience the very good opportunities for social development and outdoor education provided by a residential trip when they stay in tents at Woodlarks Camp.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. There was insufficient evidence during the last inspection for standards to be judged. Therefore, improvement in pupils' achievements since that time cannot be assessed. Pupils achieve well in all key stages and make good progress in lessons.
123. In Key Stage 1, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity, as they consider ideas that are part of their own experiences. Festivals such as Easter, harvest and Christmas emphasise the importance of special occasions and events. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand that they belong to many different groups such as the family, school and clubs, and that people may belong to a religious family. As pupils move through the primary department, they extend their ideas of religious families. They know the names of special places of worship associated with different world faiths and understand the importance of symbols in religion, such as the Christian symbol of the cross. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the birth of Jesus is celebrated on Christmas day and begin to understand the significance of Lent.
124. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know about the life of Christ and some of the lessons that special books like the Bible can teach us. They are also aware that there are other religions in the world that have their own special people, events and celebrations. Some pupils work independently to produce diaries that show their understanding of the importance of Islamic festivals and occasions such as *Ramadan* and *Eid*. In Key Stage 4, religious education is taught as part of the accredited Youth Award Scheme through the module of beliefs and values. These older pupils carry out independent research when studying the details of different religions, such as Judaism, and express their own views on a number of philosophical and moral issues. They explore the reasons for believing, or disbelieving, in the existence of God and write their arguments in their own words. These include 'He helps people through thick and thin' and 'He helps you to think positively instead of thinking in a negative way'. Older lower attaining pupils also study other world religions. They know about the *Divali* festival having made *rangoli* patterns from flour, rice and pasta, eaten *puri* bread, and decorated a *diva*, or candle holder. They demonstrated this knowledge in a school assembly in which they took active parts.
125. The teaching of religious education is good overall at all key stages. Pupils learn well because lessons are well planned, with activities adapted to meet pupils' needs, so they understand fully what they are required to do. Most importantly, relationships are good and pupils are managed well at these times and, therefore, they remain interested and on task. These characteristics feature in a lesson when seven-year-olds are considering friendship, and what it means, and learning about Jesus and his special friends. The lesson builds well on pupils' previous learning as the teacher gently probes their understanding of the characteristics of a friend, with searching but relevant questions. Following the class discussion, the teacher uses different strategies equally well as pupils demonstrate their developing understanding of friendship as they work in pairs and 1:1, considering the statement that 'A friend is someone who...'. Equally good teaching is evident in the secondary department. In a Key Stage 4 lesson, pupils make good progress in developing communication skills, while increasing their knowledge of charities. This is because effective teaching offers challenge. The teacher uses a very good range of activities, including group discussion, role-play and writing. This engages all pupils in all activities and stimulates them to express their views. Good classroom relationships enable pupils to communicate confidently and the teacher uses age-appropriate language to stretch their understanding. As a result of such good teaching, pupils respond well and their active participation means that they make good progress in understanding the role, significance and importance of local, national and international

charities. However, on occasions, plenary sessions are not used effectively to assess pupils' learning.

126. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Management of the subject remains unsatisfactory as there is still no appointed whole school co-ordinator of the subject. The co-ordinators of the primary and secondary departments nominally have these roles but they are unable to carry it out effectively because of other commitments. Therefore, whole school planning and monitoring of the subject remains unsatisfactory. The subject is very well resourced, with a number of very good religious artefacts and books covering all major world faiths.

POST-16 COURSES

127. Provision for students over the age of sixteen has shown good improvement since the last inspection. The introduction of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) has supported the development of an appropriate curriculum in which students' achievements are recognised and which prepares students well for their transition to college.
128. Vocational education now provides good opportunities for learning for students over sixteen. A transition course is provided in Key Stage 4 for pupils with complex educational needs. Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) provides good opportunities to support students' communication, numeracy, personal skills and information technology. 'Towards Independence' provides appropriate learning opportunities prior to students embarking on ASDAN bronze awards. Students follow modules related to the community, the environment, home management, leisure and the world of work. Appropriate adaptations have been negotiated with the board in order to meet the students' visual needs. Careful assessment and planning ensures that students make good progress in these areas and receive appropriate accreditation for their efforts. Good links have been established with a specialist college for students with visual impairments, to which many students transfer.
129. The teacher and learning support assistants give students following the ALL course very good support. This enables them to work independently and follow a range of activities related to their individual learning targets. They identify a wide range of kitchen utensils, including kettle, toaster and can opener and they use them to make a simple meal. Other students list the ingredients they need to buy to make a birthday cake and record their list. They are supported to go out to buy what they need. Another group makes a meal using the microwave oven. One student shows consideration for his peers by selecting vegetarian food, so that a vegetarian student can share the meal. These students all make good progress.
130. Teaching is satisfactory on vocational education courses, with some good teaching for lower attaining students. Management of vocational education is split within the school, leading to unnecessary duplication. There is no liaison between the ASDAN co-ordinator and those teaching ASDAN award courses to higher attaining students. Careers advice is well informed, with very good liaison with school staff and good support for the pupils and their parents.

