

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **AMWELL VIEW SCHOOL**

Stanstead Abbots

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117684

Headteacher: Mrs Jan Liversage

Reporting inspector: Ian Naylor

20906

Dates of inspection: 13 - 15 May 2002

Inspection number: 197431

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Community special

School category: Maintained

Age range of pupils: 2 to 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stanstead Abbots  
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Herts

Postcode: SG12 8EH

Telephone number: 01920 870027

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Farrington

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Amwell View is a mixed maintained community special school. There are 105 pupils on roll, aged 2 to 19. Most have severe and sometimes complex learning difficulties. Eight have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Eight pupils aged 2 to 11 have autism. The school has expanded the number of pupils on roll since the previous inspection, from 84 to 102 local education authority funded places. Pupils are placed in the class which can cater for the individual's own particular special needs while giving due regard to his or her age. Specialist provision has been made to cater for pupils with autism and severe language and communication difficulties. Some of the classes include non-ambulant pupils. A separate class, however, is well established to provide appropriate educational provision for a discrete group of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties who have more complex needs. The staffing ratio in each class varies and takes into account the individual needs of each pupil in the class.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school in which effective leadership and a high quality of teaching make a significant contribution to pupils' academic achievement and personal development. The school provides good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Teaching is very good and contributes to very good progress, achievement and the excellent personal and social development of pupils, particularly in communication skills, physical education and music.
- Very good relationships help to foster the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- The curriculum is very good and is well supported by extra-curricular and out-of-school activities.
- Leadership is very good and the management of the school has many very strong features.
- Target setting is of a high quality, and this enables the individual needs of pupils to be met very well.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- There are no major issues for the school to address.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made many significant improvements since the previous inspection in 1997. All statutory requirements are now met. The governing body is supportive of the school's drive for improvement. A comprehensive revision has been completed of all assessment and recording procedures, and these are now of high quality. Evaluation of pupils' progress

is now in place, and this informs teachers about achievement and about the type of provision each pupil requires to meet his or her needs. The school takes part in many local and national initiatives. Curriculum opportunities continue to be improved, with a strong emphasis on performing and sporting activities. The school has engaged in self-evaluation under the very effective direction of a new headteacher and a re-structured senior management. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is now very rigorous. The headteacher and governors have instigated a building programme, which is nearly complete. This adds significantly to the accommodation for students age 16 to 19, and will soon give provision for design and technology, science, and changing rooms for the school swimming pool, for pupils of all ages.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	<b>Key</b>	
Speaking and listening	B	A	A	A	<i>excellent</i>	<i>A*</i>
Reading	C	B	B	B	<i>very good</i>	<i>A</i>
Writing	C	C	C	B	<i>good</i>	<i>B</i>
mathematics	B	B	B	B	<i>satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
Personal, social and health education	B	A	A	A*	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs**	A	A	A	A	<i>poor</i>	<i>E</i>

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

Achievement and progress are excellent in physical education, and very good in English (particularly in communication skills), music, and personal social and health education. Pupils are particularly successful in meeting their personal academic targets in each subject and the targets in their individual education plans. By the age of 19, students are very well prepared for the next phase of education or training. Realistic whole school targets are set for pupils, and most are achieved.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and respond very well to all activities provided. They work very hard in lessons and always strive to make the best effort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and often exemplary, especially when off site, visiting places in the local community. Pupils learn how to manage their own behaviour well in different situations.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils make outstanding progress in their self-confidence, self-esteem and ability to perform tasks independently. The quality of relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, is exceptional.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good overall. It is excellent in physical education and very good in English, music, and personal and social education. There is high quality teaching in communication skills, particularly in the use of signing and symbols. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. Teaching is good in mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communications technology and religious education. It is satisfactory in history. No other subjects were observed. Learning is very good across the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and offers relevant and challenging opportunities for pupils with a wide range of needs. There is exceptional provision for extra-curricular and out-of-school sporting and musical activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The provision has been sustained and expanded through the school's community involvement. The school is a welcoming and positive learning environment. There are many opportunities created to foster and promote spiritual and cultural development. Moral and social development is particularly enhanced by the emphasis placed on sporting and musical achievements.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good provision. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are of high quality. Liaison with other professionals and agencies is very good. A range of therapies, including music and dance, provide excellent support to pupils. The school is very inclusive and there are many opportunities for pupils to integrate with local schools and colleges.

Use of the P-Scales (Differentiated performance criteria for National Curriculum subjects) is an outstanding feature. The measurement, recording and reporting of academic achievement, personal development, and progress are very good, particularly for English and mathematics and for social skills.

There is insufficient time allocated to teaching a modern foreign language to ensure that pupils make progress over time.

Lesson planning is of a high standard in many instances, but not consistently so. Whereas the use of learning support assistants to support care and behavioural needs of pupils is very good, its use to support teaching and learning is less specific, and does not always feature in individual lesson planning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is of a very high quality. The re-organisation of the senior management team has given it more focus, and it is particularly effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The staff works very well together. The work of learning support assistants is highly valued.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors are very involved in the life of the school. The chairman in particular is a very experienced governor and sets an excellent example of close liaison with staff and pupils. All statutory responsibilities are met. There are regular meetings of the governing body, and governors receive regular information of a high quality from the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school is engaged in self-review and enjoys good support in this from the local education authority advisers. The curriculum is constantly reviewed and evaluated by staff. Senior staff measure the quality of teaching and learning by regularly carrying out lesson observations. These and other evaluations are closely linked to school development needs and to staff training and induction. The school has a very good idea of its own strengths and weaknesses and is constantly striving to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school development plan is detailed and comprehensive. It guides all aspects of management, including financial management. Prudent budgeting has earmarked funding for improvements to the school's accommodation and facilities. Financial control is satisfactory but the school is not very efficient in gathering financial information. Sound attention is given to the principles 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"> <li>• The staff are totally dedicated, friendly and approachable. They give individual attention, set challenging targets, and have high expectations of pupils.</li> <li>• Parents feel well informed, and fully involved in annual reviews</li> <li>• Pupils enjoy and want to come to school.</li> <li>• Pupils are taught good manners and to think of others.</li> <li>• The staff give excellent support to extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• There is good support from other professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents think that there is not enough homework, whilst a few think it is inappropriate.</li> <li>• A number of parents would like to see more after-school activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all the many positive views of parents. The provision for homework is satisfactory. There are extensive and excellent out-of-school activities, but not all parents seem aware of them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Teaching is very good and contributes to very good progress, achievement, and the excellent personal and social development of pupils, particularly in communication skills, physical education and music.**

1. Teaching and learning are very good in all areas of the school, including the Nursery and the Post 16 classes. Thirty eight lessons were observed. Four were excellent, 13 very good, 18 good and two satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This means that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. There is more teaching of a consistently high quality than before.
2. Teaching is excellent in physical education and very good in English, music and personal and social education. There is a high quality of teaching in communication skills, particularly in the use of signing and symbols. Teaching is good overall in mathematics and science. On the evidence of a small sample, teaching is satisfactory or better in design and technology, information and communications technology (ICT), religious education and history. No other subjects were observed.
3. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good and this has led to very good achievement by pupils. This is particularly evident in most lessons when pupils are able to join in with question and answer sessions, take part in discussions and listen to what they have to do. It is also apparent in their ability to remember numbers, shapes and sequences in various other activities, such as in dance and in gymnastics.
4. The qualities that make teaching so successful include very good planning and organisation to provide a wide range of interesting and motivating activities. Teachers have very good knowledge of pupils' needs, and good and often very good subject knowledge. There is very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants, who provide invaluable support to the pupils' learning and care needs. All staff have very high expectations of pupils' participation, effort and involvement in their learning, and this creates a climate for learning in the classrooms. Teachers work well in conjunction with other professionals such as therapists. Teachers and staff use assessment procedures very well to help pupils make progressive steps in their learning. They also make very good use of signing and other forms of communication to support pupils' communication needs. Staff use praise and encouragement skilfully to manage behaviour and to recognise pupils' successes.
5. A minor area of weakness is that the specific duties of learning support assistants to support learning are not always identified in lesson planning. Lesson planning is of a high standard in many instances, but not consistently so. Whereas the use of learning support assistants to support care and to meet the behavioural needs of pupils is very good, its use to support teaching and learning is less specific and does not always feature in individual lesson planning.
6. Learning is very good across the school, and exceptionally good in communication skills, physical education and music, and in personal and social education where it leads to very good and often excellent achievement. Pupils are able to concentrate for long periods, work hard to improve their skills and understand what they have to do to succeed. They listen carefully to instructions and carry them out. They are well motivated by the wide variety of interesting activities in lessons. Pupils take pride in their achievements and are

encouraged by thoughtful teaching to make every possible effort. They delight in receiving praise for what they have done well and in receiving recognition for their personal successes. These were witnessed at the weekly award assemblies when pupils received their certificates from staff, and also in the very full individual records of achievement in which teachers collected pupils' certificates and made notes about their achievements.

7. Achievement in English has improved, and pupils make very good progress throughout the school, particularly in communication skills. This is due to very effective teaching, which is underpinned by good planning and assessment and a sensitively adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy. It is also due to an extended range of strategies used by teachers and to the strong focus on communication for pupils with more complex needs. For example, in a very good English lesson for pupils in Years 9 and 10, about their news, the teacher had planned and organised classroom routines very well. All staff were consistent in their use of signing, so that pupils understood what they had to do and what was expected of them. There was a very good relationship with pupils and a close partnership between teacher and learning assistants, and adult volunteers. These gave very good support to pupils' speaking and listening skills and to their reading, and helped them to achieve their targets.

8. Achievement in mathematics is good and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Much of this is due to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been adapted to meet pupils' specific needs. For example, a very good lesson on number for pupils in Years 4 to 6 set challenging activities at a relevant level for each pupil. The teacher gave enthusiastic explanations and instructions to pupils and they were highly motivated to succeed in their tasks. Higher attaining pupils were able to count to 50 with the use of a grid, and subtract from numbers up to 10. Lower attaining pupils were accurately counting numbers to 6. Pupils used a simple ICT program to help them consolidate their learning. The teacher concluded the lesson with a very good 'recap' of what pupils had done and pupils could recall what they had learnt.

9. In science, pupils make good progress and achieve well. In the other subjects observed, and taking into account an analysis of pupils' work, their achievement was never less than good. Achievement and progress are very good in music, and in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are particularly successful at meeting their personal academic targets in each subject and the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs).

10. Achievement and progress in physical education are very good and often excellent. This is due to the excellent quality of the teaching pupils receive. By Year 6, pupils understand the need for exercise and are confident across a range of activities, including gymnastics, dance, athletics, and swimming. By Year 13, many have developed very good skills in a range of sports, have learned to play in team games, and have raised their own level of performance across a wide range of athletic and sporting activities. They can perform confidently in public.

11. In an excellent lesson in athletics for pupils and students from Years 9 to 13, the teacher and learning support assistants created a great sense of purpose and challenge, which motivated pupils to achieve excellent results. Ambulant pupils showed amazing self-control and excellent behaviour when practising in the gymnasium for events such as running and jumping over low hurdles, and passing a baton in a running relay. They worked hard and clearly got a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from their efforts and success, spurred on by the clear instructions and praise from staff. They practised and refined their skills and understood the need to work hard to achieve results. Non-ambulant pupils were engaged in outdoor activities on the sports field. With the support of staff and students on work placement from a local secondary college, they were able to take part in

practising various forms of races that will feature in the forthcoming sports day.

12. In music, a qualified musician and a music therapist use their respective skills to enhance learning opportunities for pupils. As a result of their combined efforts the school has established a strong culture of using music to support the social skills of pupils. This was seen in the performance of the school choir during a club at lunchtime. It was also evident from analysis of the video and photographic materials that showed school musical performances involving large numbers of pupils. All pupils have access to music teaching. Circle time and many school routine activities are often accompanied by music or by staff and pupils singing together.

13. In a very good music lesson for pupils in Years 4 to 6 featuring animal stories, there was very enthusiastic teaching by the teacher and teamwork by learning support assistants. These made the lesson come alive for pupils and helped them with a range of personal skills. They knew all the actions to the song and recalled animal names, and some gave individual performances. Pupils showed excellent personal skills and personal development. For example, they knew how to be friends with one another, and exercised choice. In an excellent music therapy session, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) showed by their facial expressions immense enjoyment and interaction with percussion instruments such as a bass drum. Pupils were further encouraged to perform and participate by the piano-playing skills of the therapist.

14. In the Foundation Stage (children aged two to five years old), teaching is very good, and this contributes to the very good progress and achievement of the children. Children sat in a circle and took turns to answer to their names, some by signing, and others by eye contact or gesture. They counted and recognised numbers to five in a song. Higher attaining children chose from several objects and lower attaining children from two.

15. Teaching in the Post 16 class is frequently very good and often excellent. By the age of 19 students are very well prepared for the next phase of education or training. They make superb progress, particularly in their self-confidence and communication skills and use these to good effect when adjusting to the variety of different adult environments they encounter. These include work placements and the college of further education.

### **Very good relationships help to foster the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils.**

16. All staff work very well together to create a good climate for learning in the school. There is a strong feeling of togetherness in whole school activities and this is particularly evident at the annual musical performance or at sports day. It is also present in the more routine activities of assembly and lunch times. A very warm and welcoming atmosphere is created.

17. Pupils generally display exemplary relationships with each other and with all staff. They work extremely well with their peers and gain obvious enjoyment from helping each other. Pupils with autism, and those with PMLD, are well integrated into school life and fully accepted by their peers. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their time at school in the daily acts of collective worship, and they frequently show respect for each other. For example, in a special assembly to prepare pupils for a trip to France the following day, pupils particularly enjoyed a presentation of photographs which showed their friends on the same trip the previous year.

18. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally very good and are a strength of the school. The high standards found at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon. Parents report that pupils are keen and eager to come to school and interested in all activities. In the great majority of lessons pupils showed great enthusiasm for learning. Pupils willingly take the initiative and assume small responsibilities when asked.

19. Behaviour in and around school is very good. In most lessons pupils are attentive, respectful, and fully engaged with their learning. At break, and at lunchtimes, pupils behave very well, communicating socially with their peers and helping those less able than themselves. On out-of-school trips, such as the Post 16 group's visit to a local college, behaviour is exemplary. Post 16 students are encouraged to behave responsibly. For instance, they successfully help to serve other pupils in the school tuck-shop.

**The curriculum is very good and is well supported by extra-curricular and out-of-school activities. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is exemplary.**

20. The curriculum was deemed to be good at the last inspection. This situation has been improved upon. The curriculum offers relevant and challenging opportunities for pupils with a wide range of needs, including all subjects of the National Curriculum. There is exceptional provision for extra-curricular and for out-of-school sporting and musical activities.

21. The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and National Numeracy Strategy (NNS), have been successfully introduced and sensitively adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils. Schemes of work are being rewritten to comply with the latest National Curriculum requirements. Those for English and physical education are complete. Those for mathematics, science and personal and social education are scheduled to be in place for September 2002. This shows a positive approach to review and evaluation of the curriculum provision.

22. Most pupils with PMLD or with autism are successfully taught in their peer groups and their key stage as far as possible. A few who require a specifically adapted approach to the National Curriculum, or who have significant medical or therapy needs, are taught very effectively in discrete classes.

23. The school places good emphasis on securing integration into moderate learning difficulty or mainstream provision for pupils for whom this is relevant. There is also a strong commitment to sport and leisure activities. These have an enormous impact upon building pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem, and this increased confidence is further enhanced through relevant integration exercises. Recently, these have included a pupil attending a local primary school for one day per week. Two pupils attend a mainstream nursery for half a day per week. There are extensive whole group links with a primary school for physical education and dance. The school choir links with mainstream schools for public performances.

24. The curriculum for students at Post 16 is very good. Staff have established close links with the local further education college and regular visits are made, for example to use the leisure and sports facilities. Through these links, students gain experience of integration into adult communities. They also learn many skills of independence from the work experience placements in local supermarkets, nurseries and within the school itself when helping younger pupils. There is good provision for careers education and there are links to the County Careers Service. Students follow 12 elements of the Award Scheme Development

and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award Scheme Bronze Award and Towards Independence for practical skills, ranging from Information Handling to World of Work. Many also take part in the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance Unit Award scheme in English, mathematics and practical home management skills. These are relevant to their needs, and students show a good level of performance.

25. The previous inspection reported that there was exemplary provision for spiritual moral, social and cultural development. That position has been maintained and extended. There are very good assemblies which give pupils corporate opportunities to explore values and beliefs, recognise and celebrate achievement, and reinforce the school's values. The school generally provides a climate of nurture, respect, and achievement where pupils flourish. There are extensive links with the immediate and wider community and the world of work, and these instil in pupils a sense of community with common inclusive values. There is a clear moral code for behaviour, reinforced through all aspects of school life. Examples are the excellent relationships, the curriculum, religious education lessons, sports activities, collecting for charity, and recognition and respect for other cultures and religions.

26. There are extended opportunities for all pupils to use their initiative, take on responsibility, and gain independent skills. Pupils are able to make choices and decisions through routine tasks, and through the School Council, work experience, college links, inclusion activities, sporting activities, extra-curricular activities, presentations, and musical performances. Older pupils have the opportunity to help younger ones, for example by wheeling them into assembly or out to play. The school evaluates the success of this provision in simple pragmatic ways, for example by a parents' questionnaire, or by collecting press releases, letters and other commendations in the school's 'Golden file'. They are also able to demonstrate it through a variety of photographic and video evidence which staff have compiled of pupils' achievements and accomplishments.

27. The school excels in its provision for extra-curricular and out-of-school activities. These are extensive and very well prepared and organised. Many of them are centred on physical education and musical activities. The teachers with subject responsibility for these areas must have the accolade for the efforts they make on behalf of pupils and the quality of the pupils' success. However, many other staff make a similar effort and contribution to teaching and supervision for these events, much of it in their own time, to ensure that the activities can take place. Many of the out-of-school activities are closely linked to integration with mainstream schools and colleges. For example, pupils share in sports activities with their mainstream peers at a local primary school, a local swimming club, and an athletic club. A small group of pupils also joins pupils at a local primary school for shared creative dance sessions. In school, there is the provision of a dance therapist. This helps to create additional opportunities for pupils to communicate and express themselves through movement.

28. The school maintains close links with other similar schools in the authority, staff of which meet regularly to organise regular sporting fixtures between pupils at the respective schools. There is an annual athletics competition, soccer tournament and swimming gala. All of these involve many of the school's senior pupils and help to build their confidence, self-esteem and sports skills. Some pupils take part very successfully in the local area Special Olympics. Others participate in team events for the school, competing in the Hertfordshire Schools Youth Athletics and Games competition alongside their mainstream peers. They have made superb contributions to the county's recent successes at regional events.

29. There is a good range of lunchtime clubs, including gymnastics, soccer, dance and swimming. These offer pupils the chance to extend their skills still further outside formal lessons. During the inspection the gymnastics team performed an excellent demonstration

to a group of invited visitors. Pupils demonstrated skill, confidence, self-control and courage during their routines on the floor mats, springboards and balance beam. The school choir also meets regularly and is the key to many successes at public performances, such as the Easter Concert. This is a whole school event in which pupils of all ages and abilities take part before an invited audience of parents and friends of the school. It combines a series of theatrical and musical sketches, including the staff's performance of a pantomime, and it is highly regarded by parents for the opportunities it gives to their children.

**Leadership is very good and the management of the school has many very strong features.**

30. The leadership by the headteacher and senior staff is of a very high quality. The headteacher appears to have successfully taken on the mantle of strong leadership from her predecessor. Relationships between headteacher and senior staff are very good. Those between all staff appear to be strong and this leads to good teamwork. The re-organisation of the senior management team (SMT) has given it a more focused approach. Responsibilities are delegated well to senior staff, who are effective team leaders with responsibility for performance management, a system for measuring the quality of teaching and learning.

31. Regular staff and SMT meetings provide a forum for very good exchange of information and for discussion about pupils and the curriculum. The headteacher is very knowledgeable about the needs of pupils and has harnessed a very good system for measuring the progress of pupils over time (P-scales). She has the full confidence of the governing body and of parents, and provides them with a comprehensive range of information. The SMT makes best use of very good support from the local education authority (LEA) advisory service, particularly on school improvement issues, to support all staff.

32. The governors are very involved in the life of the school. The chairman in particular is a very experienced governor and sets an excellent example of close liaison with staff and pupils. All statutory responsibilities are met. There are regular meetings of the governing body, and governors receive high quality information from the headteacher and staff.

33. The school is engaged in self-review and the curriculum is constantly reviewed and evaluated. The key issues from the previous inspection have been rigorously addressed. Senior staff regularly carry out lesson observations as part of the teachers' performance management arrangements to measure the quality of teaching, and targets are set for teachers' performance. Additionally, observations of lessons are made by the headteacher to support the development of teaching and learning in subjects. These and other evaluations are closely linked to the school development needs and to staff training and induction. Staff take part in a wide range of professional training. The work of learning support assistants is highly valued by teachers, and they form an integral and vital part of the teaching teams.

34. There is a sound school development plan which is detailed and comprehensive. It guides all aspects of management, including financial management, and is currently being extended to cover more than one year. The school has a very good idea of its own strengths and weaknesses and is constantly striving to improve.

35. Prudent budgeting has earmarked funding for improvements to the school's accommodation and facilities. This has led to the building programme which is nearly completed, developed by the school in conjunction with the local education authority. This programme adds significantly to the accommodation for students age 16-19. It will also give a high standard of provision for design and technology and science, and changing rooms for the school swimming pool, when fully completed.

36. There is insufficient teaching time allocated to a modern foreign language to ensure that pupils make progress over time. However, the school does plan for a short block of work to cover most of the relevant National Curriculum areas of learning at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is also an annual educational trip to France by pupils.

37. There had clearly been some slackness in financial administration, which was disclosed by an internal audit report 12 months ago. This was caused by a deficiency in the quality of financial information that informs strategic planning. The leadership of the school recognises that further changes need to be made to improve the quality and reliability of this information. However, financial control is satisfactory and the recommendations of the audit report have been addressed. Governors monitor finances satisfactorily. Good attention is given to the principles of best value.

**Target setting is of a high quality, and this enables the individual needs of pupils to be met very well, which in turn supports good integration of pupils within the school and into other schools and colleges.**

38. The overall achievement and progress of pupils have been improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Much of this improvement can be attributed to the quality of teaching and learning, and to the way in which the school has embraced a system of target setting. Whole school targets are set for pupils, for teaching and for parents, and most are achieved. The school makes great effort to set realistic and achievable individual targets for all its pupils.

39. Target setting is based on sound knowledge of pupils, and aims to extend this knowledge further. In recent years the P-scales (Differentiated performance criteria for National Curriculum subjects) have been used to provide indicators of pupils' progress. The outcome of the school's data analysis of P-scales is that it provides the headteacher, staff, governors, local authority officers and parents with information about individual pupils that can help to decide placement. For example, two pupils have transferred to a school for moderate learning difficulties as a direct consequence of their scores as measured on P-scales. In other words, they have shown very good progress and need the additional challenge of a change of placement.

40. The school was part of the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) pilot for the introduction of P-scales and has been effectively using and helping to develop them for four years. It has developed a reliable system for data analysis based around the P-scales. The school liaises closely with the local education authority's school development adviser who monitors and assists senior staff in setting targets for pupils. Progress is reviewed at the end of each year. Staff use a projection of levels to forecast the rate and pace of learning. For example, Key Stage 1 targets for 2001 were largely achieved. Pupils were deemed to be 'making at least steady progress'.

41. Individual targets are set in each subject area, and IEPs contain social skills targets and cross-curricular skills. Teachers use P-scales to help inform them about the levels of achievement of each individual. P-scales are linked to commercial curriculum and assessment materials that are used extensively to support teaching. Progress for each pupil in the National Curriculum subjects is reported to parents annually and reviewed at the annual review.

42. Through the performance management process, the setting of targets for the whole school and for individual pupils has been extended to include targets for the headteacher and for teachers. This has helped to focus much of the areas for improvement directly upon the school's development planning for the curriculum and for teaching and learning. It has also helped to guide the pace and direction of in-service training for all staff. For example, a target for teachers (2001/2) relates to the percentage of Annual Reviews to reach the headteacher prior to the annual review date. There are also targets for parents. Recent ones included a target on pupils' unauthorised absence and parental attendance at parents' evening. All these targets have been effective in raising performance and standards.

43. A measure of the effectiveness of the target setting can be seen in the accredited awards achieved by school leavers at age 19. In the past four years 11 students have attained Bronze Award in the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme; two students attained Bronze/Silver Awards, and one a Silver Award. In the same period 82 passes were gained in the AQA Unit Award Scheme. These are very commendable achievements for pupils with severe learning difficulties.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

44. There are no major issues for the school to address.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

45. When considering their action plan, the headteacher, staff and governors might wish to consider the following minor issues:

- Increase the teaching time allocated to a modern foreign language.
- Further improve the quality of some lesson plans and the allocation of specific duties to learning support assistants as part of lesson planning, as already detailed in the School Improvement Plan.
- Take steps to ensure that there is sound financial information to inform strategic planning.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	4	13	18	2	0	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	11	35	49	5	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	105
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	27

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	7.1	School data	1.1

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	91
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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	1
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:**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.3
Average class size	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff:**

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

### **Financial information**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>
	<b>£</b>
Total income	1465918.00
Total expenditure	1790967.00
Expenditure per pupil	17559.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	605338.00*
Balance carried forward to next year	280289.00

\* Includes funds reserved for building programme.

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

105
57

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	82	16	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	63	32	2	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	39	0	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	45	13	0	11
The teaching is good.	77	21	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	25	4	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	68	26	2	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	77	20	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	31	0	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	30	2	0	25