

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CURNOW SCHOOL

Drump Road, Redruth

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112086

Headteacher: Mrs. Christine Simpson

Reporting inspector: Sue Aldridge
8810

Dates of inspection: 5th – 9th March 2001

Inspection number: 208364

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Drump Road Redruth Cornwall
Postcode:	TR15 1LU
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. K. T. H. Matthews
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Modern foreign language; Post 16.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9895	Roger Williams	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23300	Lily Evans	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Geography.	
18261	Tony Hill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Personal, social and health education.	
15590	Sue Slocombe	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
8056	Howard Probert	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music; Religious education; Foundation Stage.	
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Special educational needs.	How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
21061	Mike Whitehead	<i>Team member</i>	Design and technology; Physical education.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Curnow is a mixed, day, community special school catering for 117 pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The age range is 2 to 19, and there are almost twice as many boys as girls. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than similar schools nationally. All pupils come from English speaking families, and all have statements of special educational need, or are being assessed for one. The school forms part of an Education Action Zone called the Success Zone, and this has brought a number of benefits to the pupils and staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Children in the nursery achieve well in all areas of learning. Good teaching and learning ensure that most pupils achieve well. Standards of attainment for students are satisfactory. The school is well led and managed, and achieves good standards at a relatively low cost per pupil. It therefore gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Good teaching and learning promote good standards of achievement. There are good relationships between all members of the school's community; pupils and students behave well, and their attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good.
- The school is well led and managed. Staff are hard working, work well together, and share a determination to improve the school.
- Strengths of the curriculum include excellent links with the community, very good provision for careers and work related learning, a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and high quality provision to develop pupils' cultural awareness.
- There is very good provision for children in the nursery.
- Financial administration is good; the school uses its financial resources wisely, and applies the principles of best value well.
- There are constructive links with parents, who have positive views of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Teaching of personal, social and health education at Key Stage 3.
- Planning for pupils of all abilities, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism, and challenging behaviour.
- Assessment in some non-core subjects is not well developed, and recording arrangements are cumbersome. Pupils' individual targets are not always measurable.
- There is too little administrative support in the school.
- The recording of incidents is not carried out correctly, and incidents are not monitored.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1998, when it was found to have serious weaknesses in standards, quality of teaching, and the curriculum, including access for pupils with PMLD. Despite considerable staffing difficulties, including a lack of continuity in the senior management team, the school has raised standards, improved the curriculum, and improved teaching, in a relatively short time. The school's organisation is now much more inclusive, with pupils and students taught in groups of the same age. Teachers have improved their skills in teaching pupils of all abilities, and although further improvement is needed in this respect, improvement overall is good.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	<p>Key</p> <p><i>very good</i> <i>A</i></p> <p><i>good</i> <i>B</i></p> <p><i>satisfactory</i> <i>C</i></p> <p><i>unsatisfactory</i> <i>D</i></p> <p><i>poor</i> <i>E</i></p>
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	
reading	B	B	B	C	
writing	B	B	B	C	
mathematics	B	B	B	C	
personal, social and health education	B	C	B	B	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	C	B	C	

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

The school has reached, or exceeded, most of the targets it set last year to improve standards. Standards are highest in the nursery, where children achieve well in all the areas of learning. This is because they are well taught and have a very broad range of learning experiences, and detailed

records are kept on them. For pupils from five to 16, standards of achievement are highest in physical education. They are good in English and design and technology, and in mathematics and science at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. Standards of achievement in personal, social and health education vary across the school. They are very good for the youngest pupils, and good for the oldest ones, but unsatisfactory for those between 11 and 14, where teachers do not plan their lessons well enough. In general, standards are not as good for pupils between 11 and 14 as they are for others. Students over 16 achieve best in communication, personal and social development, and physical education. Their achievements in literacy, numeracy, and all other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. In a few lessons, students with PMLD do not achieve as well as those with severe learning difficulties, because teachers do not plan enough suitable activities for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and students enjoy coming to school. Their positive attitudes to their work help them to achieve well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved in classes, around school, and when they go to other schools for classes.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships create a harmonious learning environment. Personal development is good: pupils and students take increasing responsibility as they get older, and become more self-assured and independent.
Attendance	Good; attendance compares well with that of similar schools nationally, and has improved since the school was last inspected.

Pupils are highly motivated, and work particularly hard in physical education sessions. They are keen to do well, and pleased to celebrate the success of others. Pupils and students behave well when they visit other schools and colleges, and grow in confidence as a result of their contact with others in mainstream. Students take responsibility for working in a group to plan, prepare, and sell snacks to the staff one lunchtime each week, and willingly help to clear away afterwards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 and learning are good overall. Altogether, 113 lessons were seen; teaching was excellent in three (three per cent), very good in 27 (24 per cent), good in 44 (39 per cent), satisfactory in 30 (26 per cent), and unsatisfactory in nine (eight per cent). Teaching is best in the nursery, where it is at least good in every lesson, and sometimes very good. Teaching of English is good across the school; teaching of mathematics and science are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, and satisfactory at

Key Stage 3. The structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been adapted well for primary-aged pupils. Communication, literacy and numeracy are taught well, and there are satisfactory opportunities to practise literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Teaching of personal and social development is very good for pupils at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stages 2 and 4, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, where planning is very weak. Teachers have improved their expertise in planning for pupils of all abilities, and support staff make a strong contribution to teaching and learning. Sensory methods are used to good effect, but there are still a few lessons when pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, those with autism, and those with challenging behaviour are not catered for well throughout the lesson. As a result, there are times when these pupils are not involved enough in activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum in the nursery is very good. Pupils and students have a broad range of learning experiences, enriched by excellent links with the community, and very good extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Arrangements to develop cultural awareness are very good, and include regular whole-school culture days. There is good provision for social and moral development. Arrangements to encourage spiritual development are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of pupils. Arrangements to ensure pupils' and students' health, safety, well being and protection are good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. It provides them with good quality information, and strongly encourages contact with them. Several parents help in the school, and parents are made welcome when they visit.

The school has worked hard to include all pupils in the full range of National Curriculum subjects, whilst continuing to meet their individual needs. This has increased pupils' and students' opportunities for socialising with others of their age. Although staff are close to making all activities meaningful for these pupils, there is still further work needed before this is a reality for all pupils with PMLD, autism and challenging behaviour.

A particular strength of pupils' and students' care is the constructive way in which the school works with external agencies. Annual reviews are well managed, and are well attended by parents and professionals. Very good support is provided to ease the transition from school to adult life. Teachers collect a wealth of information about how well pupils are getting on, but this is not easy to manage and could be streamlined. Students leave with very good quality records of achievement, which are meaningful to them and show clearly how they have progressed through the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Despite a lack of continuity in the senior management team, leadership has secured good improvement since the last inspection. Senior staff have shown a high degree of flexibility in regrouping to ensure that priorities for development have been well supported. In general, subject co-ordination is good.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Through their curriculum committee, governors are developing a better understanding of this key area, and they have begun to monitor pupils' progress. This aspect could be improved further if governors had a sharper focus for their visits to classrooms.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school development plan review shows that the school is aware of the priorities for further development. Targets to improve standards have been set, and the school can demonstrate its success in these areas. The success criteria in the school development plan are not always measurable, which makes evaluation difficult.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well, to improve both standards and provision. It invests wisely in developing staff skills, devotes funding to areas that are development priorities, and takes good advantage of grants, advice, and training from other sources.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school is limited in the extent to which it can remedy the few weaknesses that exist in the accommodation, mainly because of lack of space outdoors. It compensates well for the unsuitability of the hall for physical education by making good use of external resources. The principles of best value are applied well.

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 children like school; • The school is well led and managed • Teaching is good; • Children are expected to work hard and do their best; • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children getting the right amount of homework; • More interesting activities outside lessons; • Information to parents about how their children are getting on; • Children making better progress.

Inspectors support all parents' positive views of the school. They find the arrangements for homework are satisfactory; homework is given when parents request it. Extra-curricular activities are judged to be very good, reports to parents are good, and home-school books are informative and used well. Inspectors found that the school welcomes parents, and encourages them to work in partnership with the school. In a few lessons, inspectors found that pupils could have made more progress if they had been set more suitable tasks and had been managed better.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The characteristics of the pupils and students for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge the standards they achieve against age related expectations or averages. In this report, therefore, judgements about standards of achievement take account of information contained in pupils' annual reviews and their progress towards the targets set for them. The report also gives examples of what pupils and students know, understand and can do.
2. Standards of achievement are good overall, and this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. Children at the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning. Standards are good for pupils of primary age (Key Stages 1 and 2) and good for pupils aged 14 to 16 (Key Stage 4). For pupils aged 11 to 14 (Key Stage 3), and students over 16, standards are satisfactory.
3. There are some differences in how well different groups of pupils achieve at the different stages of education, although this is not a consistent weakness. In a small number of lessons, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, with autism, or with challenging behaviour, were not included well throughout the session. In an even smaller number of lessons, higher attaining pupils were not given sufficiently challenging tasks, and could have achieved more than they did in the time.
4. Last year, the school set some fairly challenging targets for improving standards of achievement. Most of these targets were achieved, and some were exceeded. For example, the target for 20 per cent of pupils' aged 14 to 16 to achieve one accredited module was exceeded, as 50 per cent succeeded in this. In the nursery, a target for 80 per cent of children to improve their socially acceptable behaviour was reached. There was particular success in literacy targets for younger pupils, where half of the pupils aged seven reached Level 1 in reading in the national tests in 1999 and this rose to 75 per cent in 2000. By the end of that year, all pupils and students at Key Stages 4 and Post 16 achieved nationally recognised accreditation, and in the case of students over 16 this covered all aspects of their curriculum. Pupils also achieve a variety of external awards for sporting and leisure activities such as horse riding, swimming, trampolining and athletics. Comparisons of Curnow's results with the achievement levels of pupils and students in similar schools has not yet been attempted, though there are plans to do this through the local education authority (LEA).
5. Children in the nursery achieve well in all areas of learning. They soon settle in, begin to take turns, work in pairs, and become aware of the needs of other children. As their confidence grows, they start to play with other children. They make good progress against targets for personal care, such as feeding and toileting. Children's communication skills develop well; whether in speaking and listening, signing, or communicating in another way, such as pressing a switch to activate a recording, of *Hello*, for example. Many show an interest in books, learn about different sounds, and realise that pictures and text have meaning. They begin to develop the skills to write, and some make

marks on paper. Children begin to count along with number rhymes and songs, lower attainers participating by pressing a Big Mac switch to activate a recording. Higher attaining children count five objects, such as 'ducks', and distinguish between *light* and *heavy* objects. They develop knowledge and understanding, such as of different materials, and use their senses to explore these. Physical development is evident in the Duckling Awards children get for their achievements in swimming. They also develop their fine motor skills when they use tools, such as brushes. Achievement in this area of learning is good, but could be further improved if children had access to an outdoor play area with large toys and climbing apparatus. Children enjoy music, and some move to it; higher attainers distinguish between *loud* and *soft*. All enjoy making pictures by using a range of materials such as corn flakes, paper and glue.

6. Standards of achievement in English are good across the school. They are promoted well by good teaching and learning, and the literacy strategy has been modified well to suit pupils' individual needs. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. Younger pupils describe the weather, using single words, and as their vocabulary increases they talk about characters and events. Lower attaining pupils begin to use symbols to communicate. By the time they are seven, pupils follow straightforward instructions, and talk in simple sentences about what they are doing. Secondary aged pupils ask and answer questions, and they gradually use a wider vocabulary, including that associated with the subjects they study. By the time they are 16, higher attaining pupils hold a conversation, contribute in discussions, and express opinions. They are confident enough to speak to unfamiliar people on school trips and visits.

7. Pupils achieve well in reading. Higher attaining pupils reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum, and all pupils make good progress towards their individual literacy targets. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils read words and phrases. They retell stories with some prompting, and their knowledge of letter sounds increases. By the time pupils are 16, they can retell stories from more challenging texts, such as 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', and show a good understanding of them.

8. Standards of achievement in writing are good. Younger pupils begin to control a pencil, and make marks on paper. Older, higher attaining pupils, write their names, and copy letters and words accurately. By 16, higher attaining pupils write in a neat script, and use the computer to write and spell accurately.

9. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress against their communication targets. They make a range of responses to adults who communicate with them; some eye point in answer to questions, while others vocalise, smile, gesture or change their facial expression. Some begin to anticipate, such as a particular repeated phrase in a story. They show enjoyment of stories read aloud, particularly those accompanied by sensory stimuli, such as noises, or actions.

10. Standards of achievement in mathematics are good for primary pupils and for pupils from 14 to 16; they are satisfactory for pupils from 11 to 14. High standards are linked to the introduction of the numeracy strategy, and to the imaginative and enthusiastic teaching in the primary department. Lower standards are linked to less successful teaching. By seven, higher attaining pupils count from zero to 15, and backwards from ten. They recognise coins up to ten pence, recognise and name a

triangle, square and circle, and use mathematical language, such as *taller* and *smaller*. Lower attaining pupils count to ten, play shopping games where they exchange coins for items, and are beginning to understand that money can be exchanged for goods. By eleven, higher attainers add and subtract to ten, recognise three-dimensional shapes, and can make simple block graphs. Lower attainers can count one and two. By 14, higher attainers add coins together, and know some fractions, such as a half and a quarter. Lower attaining pupils name a square, circle and triangle. With support, they will exchange money for goods, and they colour halves and quarters. By 16, higher attainers use the language of three-dimensional shapes, such as *face*, *corner* and *edge*. They recognise a wider range of three-dimensional shapes, such as a pentagon and hexagon. Lower attainers successfully sort coins up to 50 pence into sets. Pupils with PMLD become aware of cause and effect, such as a switch activating a blender. They develop an awareness of shape in the environment, and begin to anticipate events.

11. Standards of achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) vary across the school. They are very good for the youngest pupils, up to seven. Here, the quality of planning, assessment and recording promotes progress well. Standards are good for pupils from 14 to 16, where pupils are awarded nationally recognised accreditation for their achievements. Standards are satisfactory for pupils from seven to 11, but unsatisfactory for pupils from 11 to 14. Low standards are associated with the lack of planning for sessions which are timetabled for pupils to work towards their individual targets. They also derive from weak planning and preparation in other sessions, where the PSHE programme is taught.

12. Standards in physical education are very good across the school. This success is associated with the wide range of learning opportunities that are given to pupils, and skilful teaching. Pupils achieve many awards for their achievements, and older pupils rise to the demanding physical challenges of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and participate in the Special Olympics.

13. Standards of achievement are good in science for primary pupils and pupils from 14 to 16, and are satisfactory for pupils from 11 to 14. Differences are related to variation in the quality of teaching, which is less effective for pupils from 11 to 14. Standards of achievement are good in design and technology across the school, and this is associated with good teaching, and with the use of the design and make process as part of other subjects. In all other subjects, standards are satisfactory. In several of the non-core subjects, like history and geography, standards could be further improved by developing better assessment procedures.

14. Standards of achievement are satisfactory for students over 16. All students achieve well in communication, personal and social development, and physical education. Standards in literacy, numeracy and other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. Although students with PMLD achieve well in the key skill of communication, they are not always provided with meaningful tasks in other lessons, or ways of demonstrating their knowledge or understanding of these areas. In general, students with severe learning difficulties, who are higher attainers, achieve better because they are provided with a very broad range of suitable learning experiences. All students are assessed well, and achieve nationally recognised accreditation before they leave school, in all areas of their curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils and students have good attitudes to their learning, and this was also commented on during the last inspection. Parents say their children look forward to coming to school, and this is very evident in lessons, where they consistently concentrate and play a full part, particularly when they are given suitable activities. An example occurred in a mathematics lesson in Year 7, where all the pupils quickly settled down, took turns in their groups, were polite to each other and were very proud of their results. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked consistently throughout the lesson, showing good concentration right to the end. Pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties are generally integrated well into lessons; they co-operate well with adults supporting them, and try hard to make responses.

16. Behaviour at the school is good, as was the case at the last inspection. This good behaviour is evident not just in lessons, but throughout the school, including at arrival and departure times. Parents are pleased with this good standard of behaviour. Very occasionally, when some challenging behaviour happens in the classroom, there is evidence of a lack of consistency in staff reaction. Sometimes, there is also a lack of consistency in the use of an appropriate method of intervention, but such instances are rare. Most pupils and students behave maturely and sensibly and follow instructions carefully. For example, in a Year 9 design and technology lesson, pupils used wire-cutters to cut wire netting for a model, whilst wearing safety gloves, in a very responsible manner. Pupils also behave well when they go to other schools for their lessons. During their time at Curnow, they develop good levels of self-control and learn to act appropriately towards others. There has been one recent exclusion, on a temporary basis, of a pupil who has experienced behaviour difficulties associated with a medical condition.

17. Relationships were judged to be a strength of the school during the last inspection and they are still consistently good. Pupils and students regularly show consideration for each other, and towards staff and visitors. They socialise well together during breaks and at lunchtime, and whilst waiting for transport at the end of the school day. Their appreciation of each other's efforts was seen to best effect in a number of physical education lessons in the hall. Pupils co-operated well in pairs and groups, despite the limited space, and applauded generously each time a classmate tried his or her best to jump and roll forwards.

18. The school ensures that pupils and students are encouraged to become independent and to take on a growing number of extra responsibilities as they mature. This process starts in the nursery, and older pupils are expected to take responsibility as class monitors, to take registers to the office, and eventually to become school prefects. At lunchtime, even the youngest pupils take responsibility for collecting food, and they clear away when they have eaten. Pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are included in the taking of responsibilities, and they are helped by an able-bodied pupil or student; they all take great pride in the trust placed in them to fulfil their tasks responsibly.

19. Rewards and praise are at the core of the school's successful efforts to raise self-esteem, and the response to the presentation of achievement awards at assemblies is a genuine delight in the achievements of others. Parents are pleased with this provision and the recognition of their children's achievements. Staff, pupils and students are seen as one big family, and all members of

the school community take pleasure in the celebration of each other's achievements on such occasions. The school is involved in a number of initiatives with mainstream schools and colleges to develop and integrate its pupils and students, and these links are working well. The pupils and students involved are making good progress, and are gaining in confidence.

20. Attendance is good. It has improved since the last inspection, owing to the school's efforts, and is above the national average for special schools. There is no unauthorised absence, and authorised absence is mainly due to medical treatment. Most pupils and students are transported to and from school, and any lateness is usually due to late transport.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching and learning are good overall. Altogether, 113 lessons were seen; teaching was excellent in three (three per cent), very good in 27 (24 per cent), good in 44 (39 per cent), satisfactory in 30 (26 per cent), and unsatisfactory in nine (eight per cent).

22. In the nursery, teaching and learning are at least good in all lessons, and very good in those that promote physical development. Particular strengths of teaching are the language-rich environment, which helps children to understand and learn new vocabulary. Other strengths are the detailed planning that takes into account children's individual needs, and the well kept records, that help staff to identify what children have grasped, and what needs further work.

23. Teaching and learning in English are good across the school. The most telling improvement has been the improved planning, which takes account of the individual needs of all pupils, as well as the requirements of the National Curriculum. In this subject, teachers make good use of sensory approaches to encourage communication. Baseline assessment is used well to set suitable targets for pupils, who make good progress against them. Some of these targets could be improved by making them more specific. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to speak and listen, throughout the school.

24. The literacy strategy has been well adapted to meet pupils' needs. Lessons are well planned to include work at text, sentence and word levels, and teachers successfully group pupils with similar ability levels as a way of providing activities suited to pupils' individual needs. Good relationships help to create an atmosphere in which pupils feel well supported and valued. Resources are good and are sufficiently varied to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers make every effort to include all pupils in shared text work. Learning support assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups, supporting pupils' learning and behaviour. All staff make good use of suitable praise, and there is no shortage of encouragement. All this helps to motivate pupils, who are keen to do well and enjoy their literacy sessions.

25. Teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall, though it is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Particular strengths include teachers' enthusiasm, which is contagious and secures pupils' interest. There is usually a lively, prompt start to lessons, and a challenging mental exercise which gets pupils thinking. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff ensures that all pupils are engaged well throughout sessions. At the end, the plenary is

usually used well to praise and reward pupils for their efforts, but occasionally lessons are not well timed, so the plenary is rushed or missed altogether. Numeracy is promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum. Examples were seen in registration, religious education, history, geography and design and technology.

26. Teaching and learning in science are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, and satisfactory at Key Stage 3, where there is a weakness in planning for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. A particularly good science lesson was seen at Key Stage 1, where the teacher successfully encouraged a sense of awe and wonder in pupils, who were looking at how plants had grown since their last lesson. She also reinforced literacy skills well, by carefully pointing out labels on apparatus and words on seed packets; she repeated scientific words, such as *experiment*, so that pupils developed an understanding of them.

27. Teaching of personal and social development is very good for pupils at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stages 2 and 4, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, where planning is very weak. Most teachers plan less formal sessions well, to take account of pupils' individual targets for personal and social development, and they also record pupils' progress towards these. Circle time is used well, too, with teachers showing clear learning objectives in their plans. For example, in one successful lesson, pupils made clear progress in recognising emotions by looking at facial expressions and listening to the tone of an adult's voice. However, at Key Stage 3, some teachers have no planning for these less formal sessions, and no recording. In a more formal lesson at this key stage, where pupils were learning about recycling, the planning and preparation did not help to support learning. Pupils were faced with the task of designing an object from used materials, and there was not enough support to enable them to do what was a very demanding task. Resources were not readily accessible, so pupils had to wait, and they became unsettled.

28. Teachers have improved their expertise in planning for pupils of all abilities, and in information and communication technology pupils with PMLD were catered for particularly well. Support staff make a strong contribution to teaching and learning. For example, they often take small groups of pupils for considerable parts of lessons. Sensory methods are used to good effect, but there are still a few lessons when pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, those with autism, and those with challenging behaviour are not catered for well throughout the lesson. As a result, there are times when these pupils are not involved well enough, or for long enough in activities. In general, teachers have too few strategies for engaging pupils with autism, and few have received specific training in teaching these pupils. The same applies to the teaching of pupils with challenging behaviour.

29. Teaching and learning in physical education are very good. Lessons are well planned to include a very broad range of suitable activities for pupils of all abilities, and skilful teaching challenges pupils physically. For example, pupils are often out of breath by the end of the vigorous part of a lesson. Teachers make good use of demonstration; they have high expectations, and pupils rise to these. As a result, pupils and students show clear progress during lessons; for example, one group progressed from controlling a ball to the more difficult task of controlling a puck.

30. At Post 16, the teaching of communication skills, physical education, and personal and social development is good. Strengths of teaching at this stage lie in the very broad range of learning

opportunities that is provided for students with severe learning difficulties, and the good assessment which ensures that all students receive externally recognised accreditation for their achievements. However, the key to further improvement is in using more successful methods for ensuring that students with PMLD are fully involved in all activities. For example, in a literacy session, students with PMLD were very well catered for; the use of sensory methods ensured that they were constantly stimulated during the reading of a book. This gave them opportunities to respond, and thus achieve communication targets. In a geography session, good use was made of similar approaches, by allowing students to taste American foods. However, later on in the lesson, PMLD students were shown maps of the various American states from a geography book, and this did not promote their understanding of America at all.

31. In several subjects, such as music, art, modern foreign languages, religious education, geography and history there are no formal arrangements for assessment. Teachers know pupils well, and they question them during lessons to assess their knowledge and understanding. However, they do not keep ongoing records, which would be helpful if a different teacher needed to take over.

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

32. Learning opportunities for children at the foundation stage are good, preparing them well for when they enter Key Stage 1. The curriculum is very well planned, with a good range of practical activities and tasks to cover the six areas of learning. Children are provided with stimulating and interesting experiences, well matched to their needs and abilities. There is an emphasis on learning through play and on developing language, communication and literacy skills.

33. The curriculum provides pupils in Key Stages 1 to 4 with a satisfactory range of broad and balanced learning experiences overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the curriculum was unsatisfactory. The senior management team work well together to provide a strategic overview of the whole curriculum, making sure that it meets statutory requirements and that planning ensures that pupils cover broad range of learning experiences, and continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding, without repeating topics unnecessarily. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils but there is need for further work to enable pupils with profound and multiple difficulties to experience full involvement. All subjects required by the National Curriculum are studied at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are disapplied from a modern foreign language and design and technology, to provide the time for one day a week to be spent on work-related activities, the acquisition of key skills, and preparation for adult life.

34. The school places a strong emphasis on personal social and health education, which is taught as a discrete subject and underpins the curriculum. Time is allocated at the beginning and end of the school day and at break times for pupils to develop and practise personal skills. This time is not always used well, particularly at Key Stage 3. Sex education and information regarding drug misuse are handled sensitively. Following lessons on drug misuse, the local police support the school well in offering advice and guidance on the subject. Sex education lessons are structured to match the physical and emotional stage of pupils' development, and are well planned to this end. Pupils benefit from a number of opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility and to work on their own

initiative. They are entrusted to take messages, undertake errands around the school, help give out equipment, and clear up after lessons.

35. The planning to enable pupils to make progress is good in English, mathematics, science and religious education. It is very good in physical education and design and technology and is satisfactory in all other subjects except personal social and health education. Here, it is unsatisfactory overall, although there are examples of very good planning, particularly at Key Stage 1. Schemes of work are mostly well developed, matching the requirements of the curriculum with pupils' needs and abilities. However, planning to meet the needs of pupils with profound and multiple difficulties requires further development.

36. Information communication technology (ICT) is satisfactorily planned, promoted, and used throughout the school. Pupils are familiar with computers and generally use them well. There are some missed opportunities for older pupils to use ICT in the presentation of their work. The new library provides an excellent resource for the school. It has a wide range of equipment and materials, including computers, height adjustable trolleys and a good variety of visual aids.

37. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well implemented at Key Stage 1 and 2, and are being developed at Key Stage 3. Good knowledge and planning provide teachers with the confidence and expertise to adapt and refine these strategies to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils.

38. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and students at Post 16 have excellent opportunities to develop an understanding of the wider community through well-planned programmes of activities. At Key Stage 4 pupils have been successfully involved in a project to develop key skills and business links. The interest and encouragement of mentors has assisted pupils in reaching personal targets, and helped to raise their self-esteem and confidence. Visits to places of interest in the local area give pupils good opportunities to extend their learning in curriculum subjects and in vocational areas. Students in the post 16 unit follow a separate curriculum, which prepares them very well for both the transition to the next stage of their education and for when they leave school. They complete practical work, both around the school and in the community and successfully extend their skills in a broad and relevant range of contexts. All leave school with nationally recognised accreditation.

39. The education business partnership works well with the school in promoting school-business links and in providing work experience for students. Such placements help to give students a real understanding of the wider community and the world of work. Parents, pupils and students also meet the careers officer, who attends all transitional reviews, giving advice and guidance on the range of opportunities available to pupils when they leave school. This helps to prepare pupils and students well.

40. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are very good. There is a wide range of lunchtime clubs for primary and secondary pupils alike, attendance at which benefits pupils both physically and mentally. Extended day activities, including leisure and sporting activities, theatre visits and residential experiences, help pupils to grow in their personal, social and creative skills, develop independence, build relationships and learn to share.

41. The school has developed excellent links with local mainstream schools, colleges and day centres. A carefully planned and staged programme is designed for pupils who might benefit from integration into a mainstream school. This has proved very successful. In addition, a small group of pupils attend classes for part of a day each week in a local school. This gives them opportunities to develop their social and communication skills, as well as a positive experience of learning in a different environment. All schools involved in these links say that staff and pupils alike benefit from the sharing of resources and expertise, and from the development of a greater understanding of pupils' differing needs and interests. Pupils are invited to a number of events, such as a story day workshop, which are held in mainstream schools. They enjoy these occasions, mix well with other pupils and are proud of the certificates they receive for participating. Staff from all link schools value meeting and sharing teaching expertise and examples of good practice. The school is well supported by the Education Action Zone, or Success Zone, which has provided the impetus and funding for the links to be developed and maintained.

42. Opportunities to develop pupils' and students' cultural awareness are very good and are a strength of the school. There are many opportunities to experience some of the customs of other peoples, linked to geography, religious education, history, art, literacy and drama, music and dance. Provision for moral development is good, and relationships between adults and pupils are a strong feature, which helps pupils' personal esteem. Social development is good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and links with the local community, which are effective in promoting citizenship and personal development. Spiritual development is satisfactory, and helps to promote a feeling of self worth and an awareness of personal achievement.

43. The school has an impressive photographic record of cultural days for many countries of the world, such as Spain, Greece, America, Italy and France. There is also a regular recurring focus on aspects of British, French, German and Cornish culture. Visits to museums, theatre, historic sites, and places of worship offer a wide range of first hand experiences, which broaden experience and help pupils develop interests.

44. Relationships between staff and pupils and between staff, provide positive role models for the pupils and students. Pupils have an awareness of right and wrong. They learn from an early age what is socially acceptable behaviour and the importance of sharing and taking turns. Pupils took part in a sponsored silence in order to raise money for UNICEF, thus helping others less fortunate than themselves. There are suitable strategies in place to deal with bullying and aggression towards others. In assembly, staff, pupils and students enthusiastically share and applaud the successes of others, and those who receive awards feel valued for their achievements.

45. There are good opportunities to socialise. For example, there are extra-curricular activities within lunch times, such as a mathematics club, and a stretch club for five to eleven year olds only. There are clubs and after-school activities, such as computer, health, beauty, relaxation, music, sports, hydrotherapy and dance clubs. There are also extended day activities such as bowling, disco, theatre, barbecues, sleepovers, and dry slope skiing and ice-skating. In class, pupils collaborate and share resources, help each other, and show respect for one another, for example when someone in class has a seizure. Students integrate into local colleges and take part in work placements, and some pupils have personal mentors from the community, giving them a wide range of settings in which to operate with some personal autonomy and independence. The Bishops Forum Outward Bound centre offers valuable experiences which encourage pupils and students alike to attempt more adventurous pursuits and to discover capabilities they were unaware of. Students can go on to work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award and a few went on to gain a Gold Award.

46. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The main focus of the school has been through providing experiences which build self-esteem and confidence, as well as recognising and celebrating achievement. Pupils are encouraged in religious education lessons and in assemblies to think about others and to celebrate success. However, opportunities for spiritual enrichment are missed and are absent from teachers' planning. Examples of experiences which raise pupils' experiences above the mundane were seen in lessons such as science, where pupils were quite amazed by the growth of roots on an onion. In information and communication technology, pupils were astonished when their names were transformed into photographs of themselves by a touch of the screen. PMLD pupils became very relaxed in aromatherapy when they had a hand massage with coconut oil; the soothing music and quiet voice of the adult helped to create a quite, reflective atmosphere.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school has maintained improvement in this aspect and continues to make good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of all pupils, in a caring and supportive environment. A high priority is given to the welfare of pupils and this has a beneficial effect upon their learning. Relationships are consistently good throughout, ensuring that pupils feel confident, secure and valued. The school attaches great importance to the personal dignity of pupils. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school. They see it as a caring community where staff are approachable and in which their children feel happy and safe. Inspection findings support these views.

48. Good arrangements are made to ensure pupils' health, safety, well-being and protection. The designated people responsible for child protection are suitably trained. All staff receive regular training and briefing on the procedures to be followed, supported by a suitable policy and guidelines. All members of staff are vigilant in their care. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient frequency. Members of staff are aware of safety issues relating to pupils, through an individual risk assessment which takes account of all lessons, and they know the steps necessary to ensure that the correct procedures are followed. These are especially useful when pupils make off-site visits.

49. The school has very good relationships with a wide range of support services and makes effective use of them where needed. The provision for first aid is very good, with a nurse available throughout the school day. Visiting medical professionals are always willing to talk with staff, which helps staff to have a good understanding of the medical needs of pupils. The designated governor, headteacher and caretaker make regular inspections of the site. These are supplemented by the day-to-day observations of staff to ensure a safe environment for the pupils.

50. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All staff have high expectations and help pupils to understand and meet these by consistently reinforcing clear routines. They talk about behaviour in lessons, in assemblies, and on other occasions when the need arises. For pupils who have specific difficulties there are behaviour management plans, which are generally effective, and these are usually drawn up in consultation with parents. They are used successfully to support improvement, and are regularly reviewed and updated as needed. As a result of this, and generally effective classroom management, the school maintains a positive learning environment that is only occasionally disrupted. Pupils are clear that, on the few occasions when there are difficulties, they all have an adult in whom they can confide, and that the school takes appropriate action.

51. The educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils are effective in raising achievement throughout the school. The support for pupils with more complex learning difficulties is good; the school works very closely with all agencies and specialist teachers. However, difficulties do occur with some pupils who have autism and challenging behaviour and, as yet, the procedures for recording such incidents are not incorporated into the routine of all staff, nor monitored by senior management. Regular meetings, with a full spectrum of support specialists, set realistic targets, which are monitored against educational progress. This liaison results in a consistent approach to the support and guidance given.

52. Very good support is provided to ease the transition from school to the next step. It includes the use of external agencies, such as the careers service, the close involvement of parents, and links with establishments which may become the destinations of school leavers.

53. The monitoring of progress is good, particularly in English, mathematics and personal and social development, where there are good arrangements for assessment. Individual education plans (IEPs) have a consistent format across the school. The school maintains detailed individual records of progress based on Equals, 'P' Levels (Pre-Level 1 National Curriculum), and National Curriculum attainment levels as appropriate. There are suitable accredited courses for pupils at Key Stage 4 and for students over sixteen.

54. Assessment is very good for children at the Foundation Stage. Baseline assessment helps set suitable individual targets for these children, and detailed records are compiled, which help teachers to identify what children know, understand and do. This information is used well to plan the next steps in learning.

55. The school has satisfactory procedures in place for assessing how well pupils achieve. A great deal of information is carefully collected and filed. Much of this information is in the form of photographs which have been taken during or at the end of lessons. Staff make very good use of the digital camera for immediate recording of evidence which can be stored on computer, or printed for display purposes.

56. The annual reviews are well managed and are well attended by parents and professionals who are involved in the care and education of pupils. At these reviews, targets are set for the pupil and staff, both short term and long term. These targets are transferred directly on to each pupil's individual education plan and are carefully considered by teachers as they plan most lessons. This good practice does not extend to all lessons of personal, social and health education, and some important learning opportunities are lost as a result. Some of the targets that are written on pupils' annual review forms are not measurable, and this makes it more difficult to assess when targets have been reached. The school is aware of this weakness and is working on improving target setting.

57. From the wide variety of information that has been collected on each pupil, the school prepares records of achievement which are ready for pupils as they leave the primary part of the school and move into secondary education. When pupils complete the secondary part of their education, another record of achievement is prepared. Both records of achievement contain samples of pupils' best work and are highly valued by the pupils. When students leave the school they take with them a high quality National Record of Achievement which is well supplemented with video and audio evidence. Good quality photographs make the records meaningful to all pupils, whatever their ability.

58. In most of the foundation subjects, assessment is not well developed. Subject managers are aware of this, but the further development of assessment is not a priority in the current school development plan.

59. The school's procedures for checking the progress pupils make are satisfactory but are in need of simplifying. At the moment it is difficult to get a quick and clear picture of the progress being made by individual pupils in each subject, without trawling through a lot of evidence that has been collected. The school is aware that its system is in need of rationalisation. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

60. Attendance procedures are very good. The school does not monitor non-attendance, but it makes contact with the parents of all pupils who do not arrive on the transport provided, if there has been no previous notice or no reason for absence given to the escort. The late arrival of transport is carefully monitored and appropriate action taken if necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents hold positive views of the school, as was the case during the last inspection. However, at that time the school was found wanting in its provision of information for parents, which was felt to be unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case.

62. The school provides good quality information in a variety of ways, and caters well for parents in this respect. The comprehensive, key stage information booklets are very informative, and they are regularly reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevance. Pupil and student reports and individual educational plans, as well as behaviour management plans, are shared with parents, who have an opportunity to contribute to them. Pupils' individual targets are negotiated with parents. Parents are pleased with the improved quality of information, and find the certificates of achievement, which show clearly what their children have achieved, a source of particular satisfaction.

63. Home visits, particularly for younger pupils, are made regularly, and workshops have been held at school on numeracy and literacy, when parents were given the opportunity to visit classrooms. Speech and language therapists, and teachers of the hearing impaired, have explained their specialist input to parents, and some parents have received help from staff on how computers can support children's learning at home. The school sends home a fortnightly bulletin, restricted to one sheet of paper, which reports the latest news and achievements by pupils and students. Parents said they appreciated this information and felt they are being kept up to date. Home-school diaries are used to good effect and are a useful line of communication. Reading books are sent home regularly. Careers guidance is of good quality, and is particularly useful to senior school pupils and students over sixteen, and to their parents.

64. A number of parents come into school and help in classrooms on a regular basis, and more turn out for special events and to help out on occasions such as swimming and residential visits. The school association is very active. It organises fund raising events, which are very successful and provide valuable extra resources. The association also runs social events and coffee mornings which new parents find supportive, through meeting other parents with similar problems.

65. A few parents felt that homework and activities outside lessons could be improved, but the inspection found that the school's provision for homework is satisfactory, and provision for extra curricular activities is even better. Indeed, the variety and take-up of extra-curricular activities is very good. The key stage information booklets clearly set out the school's policy on homework for parents.

66. A very few parents expressed their general misgivings about the relevance of the National Curriculum to special schools, and other changes, such as the principle of educational inclusion for all pupils, which have taken place since the last inspection. Inspectors found that the inclusion of pupils with PMLD with others has been beneficial to all, and that the school is close to making the National Curriculum accessible to pupils with PMLD whilst ensuring that their individual needs are also met.

67. The school has recognised the need for better information for all parents, and has addressed this in its development plan. A number of measures to keep parents well informed are already in place.

68. Parents are strongly encouraged to visit or telephone, and teachers or the secretary often telephone parents during the day, especially when it is important for them to be aware of significant developments. There is good attendance by parents at key events in the school calendar, and teachers regularly discuss with parents the strategies which will help their children. The school places great importance on the need to speak regularly with parents and does all it can to maintain contact, despite the constraints of its large catchment area.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The school is well led and managed. Since the last inspection in November 1998, there has been good improvement, despite considerable staffing difficulties. In the past two years, the headteacher has suffered deteriorating health, and was on sick leave at the time of the inspection. Both the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have been away, following surgery, for significant periods of time. Despite this, staff have worked hard to address the significant weaknesses identified at the last inspection, and senior staff have regrouped to ensure that staff are well supported in continuing improvement. Members of the present senior management team have demonstrated considerable flexibility, and good teamwork, in doing this.

70. All staff with management responsibilities have played their part. The headteacher has undertaken a rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching, and has set targets for improvement. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching as a result. Departmental heads have provided support for colleagues, and curriculum co-ordinators have tackled the development of their subject areas. They have been well supported in this by the deputy and assistant headteachers, local education authority subject advisers, and external consultants who have been called upon for assistance in specific areas. For example, a mathematics consultant has helped in the training of staff to put into practice the numeracy strategy. Throughout this period of rapid development, the school has continued to build on its strengths, and has taken a full part in the wealth of opportunities offered through the Success Zone. This has enabled it to extend opportunities for pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers, for example.

71. The aims of the school are reflected well in its life and work, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. The school is particularly successful in uniting parents and professionals, in celebrating success, nurturing self-esteem and valuing the individual, and in working on inclusion into society.

72. Governors are very supportive, and one regularly helps in lessons. They have also played a part in school improvement. For example, since the last inspection, they have formed a curriculum committee, which has set out to keep curriculum development under review. This committee does not have terms of reference, though, and some of the visits governors make to classes do not have a clear enough focus, which reduces their effectiveness. Nonetheless, governors have achieved one important goal, which they identified in their action plan, and that is to raise their own awareness of the curriculum. Governors meet all their statutory responsibilities, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

73. The school development plan sensibly continues to prioritise areas of weakness identified since the last inspection, and the recent evaluation shows that there is a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve provision further. For example, the review identifies the need for improved planning to fully include pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in all National Curriculum programmes of study. The school development plan has been successful in supporting school improvement, but it is less effective in providing a means of evaluating developments, as the criteria for success are not always measurable. There is better practice in the setting of targets for improving standards, as these set precise numbers of pupils or students who are expected to reach certain levels of achievement. The school development plan does not include all that the school aims to achieve, as it does not feature co-ordinators' action plans.

74. Financial planning is good. It has improved since the last inspection, and subject co-ordinators now take a full part in the financial planning process; they each have budgets, for which they bid annually. A particular strength of the school's commitment to best value principles is the way subject co-ordinators keep detailed logs of their use of non-teaching time.

75. The headteacher has firm control over planning the budget and linking proposed spending on priority areas within the school development plan. Suitable delegation takes place. The finance committee holds regular monthly meetings and monitors the budget closely, together with the headteacher and the bursar, whose services are purchased from the LEA. Although the school had a large surplus at the end of the last full financial year, this is set to reduce to a sensible level (5.7 per cent) in the current financial year, which is almost at an end. The school uses the advice of the finance team adviser very effectively. He is involved at each planning stage, and guides governors, head teacher and senior management team through the process of planning and monitoring. However, financial planning is focused on the short to medium term, and there is little evidence of a longer term strategy by the school. Now that the school's budget is determined by an audit, carried out by the LEA, the school is in a better position to consider longer term financial planning.

76. Specific grants made to the school are used well to extend the curriculum and to raise standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The school's participation in the Education Action Zone, or Success Zone, and in Education Business Partnership initiatives, provides essential resources and opportunities for its pupils. This funding is spent wisely and evaluated by the school to ensure maximum value.

77. The school applies the principles of best value well. All purchasing proposals are examined for cost effectiveness; before orders are placed, several local authority consortia and private businesses are compared, and the suppliers are regularly reviewed during the year to ensure value for money. There are plans for comparisons of standards to be made with other similar special schools. Governors have carried out a 'customer satisfaction survey' amongst parents, and are to act on the outcomes.

78. There is good day-to-day management of the finances of the school and of school administration in general. The last local Education Authority audit recommendations, which were of a minor nature, have all been implemented. However, the level of administrative assistance at the school is low, in relation to the number of pupils, and does not compare favourably with similar schools nationally. Of greater concern is the fact that so much rests with one person, whose efficiency and skill are such that she is relied upon for many key tasks, and no-one else on the school's staff would be able to take over if she were absent for any reason. The school has taken advantage of funding available to small schools and is employing a part time administrative assistant, who is being gradually trained in all tasks. This needs to be accelerated as a matter of urgency.

79. The school uses information technology (IT) well for management purposes. In addition to its use by administrative staff for financial management, IT is employed well to enhance the day-to-day working of the school. For instance, good use is made of the Internet for email and to research classroom projects, and pupils and students throughout the school regularly use CD-ROMs.

80. Staffing is satisfactory. There are sufficient teachers; although the average class size is relatively large, good use is made of supply teachers, and those without full time class responsibilities, to give subject co-ordinators time to carry out their managerial roles. The majority of teachers have long experience and additional qualifications in the area of special educational needs. Half have had previous experience in the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are two members of staff trained to teach pupils with autism, and one with experience of this. However, not all teachers have sufficient skills in teaching pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism or challenging behaviour, and this does affect standards adversely.

81. The generous number of experienced and qualified learning support assistants work well with the teaching staff. They are confident and knowledgeable about their work with pupils who experience severe and complex difficulties in learning. There is good and regular appraisal of their work by senior teaching staff. Staff who are newly qualified, or new to the school, are given an appropriate induction time, during which they are assigned a mentor who reviews and reports on their work at least every half term. There are suitable arrangements for the performance management of teaching staff. The school has recently been successful in achieving the Investors in People Award.

82. The accommodation is satisfactory. It has many positive features, notably the recently upgraded library and computer suite, and the well-maintained hydrotherapy pool. There are excellent toileting facilities for pupils, affording them privacy and dignity. There is good accommodation for physiotherapy, currently being upgraded with a static hoist. The open plan accommodation for Post-16 students is separate from the lower school and affords good, flexible provision. The main hall has many uses, and it enables a suitable programme of physical education (PE) to be offered to pupils. The use of the PE facilities at a nearby primary school helps to broaden the curriculum. The hall is a thoroughfare, and this intrudes on all activities that take place there. The storage of PE equipment, along with dining furniture and stage equipment, reduces available hall space. The nursery department does not have an outdoor play area, and the very limited outdoor space, along with the position of the nursery at the edge of the site, imposes a real restriction on any such development.

83. Overall, the accommodation is attractive, stimulating, internally spacious and well maintained. Apart from the hall, there are no subject specialist rooms available. The Post 16 accommodation is used for food technology, but the lack of other specialist accommodation does limit the range of learning experiences that can be provided. For example, it means that pupils cannot work on certain materials in design and technology, because it would not be safe to do so without specialist facilities. There is space available on the first floor of the building, but this is not accessible to most pupils because there is no lift.

84. Learning resources are satisfactory. The books and computer resources in the library are very good and are well used by the pupils. The wall-mounted computer touch screen is a very high quality resource which improves access to information communication technology for pupils with severe and complex learning needs. The big books and story sacks held in the library provide well for the English curriculum. There are good resources for science, which have been well organised for ease of access and use. In religious education, there is a good range of artefacts. The primary department's resources for multi-sensory activities are in need of development, and the lack of big books and large toys for the nursery class is a weakness. The lack of outdoor play space for the nursery class clearly restricts the use of large toys, which are so important to the development of mobility through play.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Improve the teaching of personal, social and health education, particularly at Key Stage 3, by ensuring
(*Paragraph 27*)
 - * that all timetabled sessions are well planned, and include reference to pupils' individual targets for personal, social and health education.
 - * that staff record how well pupils achieve in these sessions.
- Improve staff expertise and planning for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism, and challenging behaviour.
(*Paragraphs 28, 50*)
- Improve assessment arrangements by
(*Paragraphs 56, 58, 59*)
 - * ensuring that pupils' individual targets are specific and measurable.
 - * streamlining the recording of pupils' achievements, and developing a summary record.
 - * further developing assessment arrangements in non-core subjects.
- Increase the amount of administrative support, so that the school is not over-reliant on one person.
(*Paragraphs 78*)
- Ensure that incidents are recorded in a bound book, and that these are carefully monitored.
(*Paragraph 51*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	113
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	24	39	26	8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y13
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	9	108
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y13
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	110
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	110

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.8	School data	0
National comparative data	8.6	National comparative data	0.6

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 1999/2000

Fewer than 10 pupils took part in end of key stage National Tests in Summer 2000, and therefore results are not included in this report.

Attainment at Key Stage 4 1999/2000

Number of pupils	Number of Modules	Grade/Level	Curriculum area(s)	Awarding body
6	17	Introductory	Key and Vocational Skills	OCR Accreditation of Life and Living Skills (ALL)
2	0	Bronze	Various	Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Attainment at Post 16 1999/2000

Number of students	Number of modules	Grade/Level	Curriculum areas	Awarding body
11	70	Introductory	Key and Vocational skills	Accreditation of Life and Living Skills (ALL)
10	16	First Grade	Key and Vocational skills	National Skills Profile (NSP)
2	0	Bronze	Various	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)
3	0	Level 1	Working with others	OCR Key Skills
3	0	Level 1	Improving own learning and performance	OCR Key Skills
2	0	Gold	Various	Duke of Edinburgh's Award
3	0	Silver	Various	Duke of Edinburgh's Award
1	0	Bronze	Various	Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Ethnic background of pupils
(compulsory school age only)

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	107
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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:
YR – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	9.0

**Education support staff:
YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	35
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1058

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	997605.00
Total expenditure	1021639.00
Expenditure per pupil	8732.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	179220.00
Balance carried forward to next year	155186.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	117
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	16	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	72	23	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	28	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	22	10	8	10
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	80	15	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	28	3	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	15	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	33	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	13	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	19	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	14	8	0	8

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents expressed misgivings about the relevance of the National Curriculum for their children, and were concerned that pupils individual needs were met less well now that the school is striving to include all pupils in National Curriculum subjects. Inspectors found that all pupils were

benefiting from the more inclusive organisation, and that the school is meeting additional needs well, such as for physiotherapy, often through extra curricular clubs.

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

86. At the time of the last inspection the provision for the school's youngest pupils was judged to be good. The findings of this inspection confirm that a good standard has been maintained and there have been some improvements. There have been two significant elements to the improvement. Firstly, the school has one nursery class which caters well for all the children. Secondly, the school has appointed a co-ordinator who leads and develops the staff team which works to provide good quality early education and which does so very effectively. As a result, children achieve well and make good progress towards their early learning goals. There are 10 children in the nursery class, three who attend full time and seven who attend part time. One of the support staff works closely with children who have more complex needs and the second supports the other children. The teacher/co-ordinator provides very good leadership during lessons. The quality of the planning of lessons and the monitoring of progress ensures that all the children, who have a wide spectrum of learning and behaviour difficulties, make good progress. The classroom space is well arranged to ensure that all children gain experiences of class, group, and individual work throughout the school day.

87. Standards of achievement are good in all areas of learning. Children make good progress towards the targets they are set, and high standards result from the quality of the teaching, which is always at least good and sometimes very good. Altogether, 13 lessons were observed; 11 of these were good and two very good. In all the lessons observed there were clear objectives for the class, groups and individuals, and the resources were available to ensure that high and low attainers alike could have experiences at an appropriate level. For example, during the Hello sessions in the morning, in addition to the consistent use of signing, a Big Mac, which plays a pre-recorded message when pressed, is used for those pupils unable to sign or verbalise.

Personal, social and emotional development

88. The school's good provision for promoting personal, social and emotional development begins with an induction programme which successfully eases the transition between home and school. This programme promotes trust and respect between the home and the nursery, and builds children's confidence and self esteem. The co-ordinator makes a home visit to all the children, and this is followed by an initial visit to the school. The school also produces The Early Years Curriculum Booklet, which informs the parents about the baseline assessment, statementing and annual review procedures, and about the integration links with a mainstream nursery class. Parents and school staff jointly agree children's learning targets, and this is a strength of the arrangements. During the inspection two of the parents came into the classroom confidently to collect their children. They were welcomed by staff, who talked easily with them about the children's progress.

89. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted well throughout the day. An emphasis is placed upon giving children skills, confidence and initiative to become effective learners. They experience and learn about life skills through role-play and real life situations. For example, one high attaining child was using the computer to select a story from the Living Book programme and was using the mouse. He was able to identify the 'Beach Umbrella'. Other children take part in play activities with support. One child who has a behaviour intervention programme was encouraged to select a book and story of his choice, 'The Cat in the Tree'. Children are often excited and enthusiastic about their learning; they take turns, work in pairs, and are beginning to develop an awareness of the needs of others. In their play, children show a growing understanding of safety and consideration for others. In all this activity the sensitive intervention and guidance by the teacher and staff helps to promote confidence in the children and in their ability to learn. Pupils make good progress because of good planning, specific target setting, and monitoring of progress. The quality of the teaching and learning is good.

Communication, language and literature

90. Teaching and learning is good. Children's speaking and listening skills are successfully promoted throughout the school day. This happens in the Hello sessions in the morning and in numerous individual and group activities, including creative activities, mathematical lessons and the children's free choice activities. In addition, there are specific sessions that focus upon sounds and reading. For example, in one lesson involving the use of a Big Book, children were learning the a, a, a and b, b, b sounds and placing them in appropriate contexts. Examples were 'ants are all around' and 'baby in the bath'. The higher attaining pupils were able to repeat some of the sounds, such as 'd' is for 'dig', and sang 'the dog is digging deep'. They were learning to interact; they took turns, and enjoyed trying out the letter sounds as they passed on the 'dog', and responded to the talking frog puppet held by the teacher.

91. A start is also made in promoting stories and reading. One group of children selected The Dolphin Story on the computer, and one of the children used the mouse to turn the pages as they followed the storyteller and pictures on the screen. The higher attaining children handle books and are beginning to realise that books have pictures and pages and that the text has meaning. They use language in play, listen to stories with enjoyment, and respond to questions about their experiences. A feature of the lessons is the consistent use of 'signing' and the response of the children, and the result is that good progress is made towards their literacy goals.

Mathematical development

92. Teaching and learning are good, and there is a good range of enjoyable and relevant activities. For example, in one lesson the teacher was developing children's understanding of numbers, and counting numbers one to ten, using 'frogs' and 'ducks' and the frog five-finger puppet. Children's interest was stimulated by the collective singing of 'the five speckled frogs' song, accompanied by counting of the frogs. One child with complex needs was involved by using a Mathematics Box with a touch pad which allowed her not only to take part but to respond to the 'five little ducks' rhyme. The learning was extended to the ten green bottles song. The higher attaining children were able to

count five frogs and five ducks as well as to contrast objects that were light and heavy. The teacher had assembled a good range of resources to accompany the counting, and every child participated with enthusiasm. The lessons have pace and excitement and all the children took part in the tasks and made good progress towards their mathematical goals. The singing and the signing, and the use of resources like the Big Mac and the Mathematical Box, ensured that all the children were involved.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. In their knowledge and understanding of the world children make good progress overall. They soon develop information technology skills, particularly the use of the mouse, Big Mac, and Mathematical Box. They investigate objects and materials using all their senses. In one lesson observed, they were exploring and investigating the properties of crisps and pasta as part of their food topic. The children were given opportunities to use their sense of touch, taste, smell and sound. They were learning that crisps were hard, and sometimes soft, and that some crisps are like shells and others are twisty. They learned that pasta is squishy and wet. They reacted to the different textures and smells and responded to questions like 'what do you like best?'. The higher and lower attaining pupils all made gains in their understanding because of the multi-sensory opportunities to handle the materials. In another lesson children were using food packaging materials, including bottles, cardboard boxes, and a range of such substances as rice, to shake and make different sounds with. They explored the containers and were learning the different shapes, textures and sounds made by the different materials. At the end of the lesson the teacher made good use of the computer programme 'One Bear Band' to give children an opportunity to shake their bottle/instrument when the music was playing. They were aware of the sound patterns and the movements of the programme and took part enthusiastically. The lesson had good pace, with carefully planned changes of activity when interest waned. The teacher plans well to ensure that suitable tasks and resources are selected, and this helps the children to learn.

Physical development

94. Physical skills develop well in the daily programme in class and around the school. Movement in the classroom is well planned as children move around to different activities in the language, craft and activity areas. Activities like 'Going on a Picnic' and visits to the swimming pool and sensory room give them opportunities to be mobile. Good use is made of songs. For example, the children sing 'The Wheels on the Bus' song as they move around. In the swimming pool, children gain confidence in the water and become familiar with a variety of means of propulsion, using arms, legs or both. Children made their way to the pool with enthusiasm. The school uses the Duckling Award Scheme to record individual achievements, and several children have achieved Levels One and Two, which relate to entering the water and moving confidently in it. Effective use is made of a volunteer and an extra teacher to provide individual support for pupils with complex needs. For example, one child with very little movement in the water was stimulated with arm and leg movements, while a high attaining child using arm bands moved confidently. Every child took part eagerly, and achievements against targets were recorded for each child. For example, one child's target was to float on his back in a relaxed manner. Another child's target was to be able to float on his back for 13 seconds. The swimming lesson was very well planned and carried out efficiently,

with due regard to health and safety factors. This ensured that the children made good progress towards their physical goals. The children do have access to a school outdoor area but they do not have their own play area adjacent to their classroom, with a wide range of large toys and climbing apparatus. In other classroom activities they learn fine motor skills through the use of tools, brushes, containers and a range of toys. All are making progress and improving their dexterity as a result of good planning and the targeting of individual needs. Although the quality of teaching is very good, learning is not as good because children do not have access to an outdoor area, which limits opportunities for them to play.

Creative development

95. Creative skills develop well through a variety of independent and guided activities. In music, for example, children learn about fast and slow, loud and soft, and how to move to music. In one lesson, the teachers used an electronic keyboard to stimulate the children. Children stamped their feet, waved and swayed in response to music, changing their movements. They also had opportunities to select the music they liked. In another lesson the teacher used a tape and a welcome song 'Who is Julie?', and each child took part with enjoyment when it became their turn. They were also grouped into 'movers' and 'shakers' and each child had his own shaker to participate in the song. They sing songs like 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' accompanied by the guitar, played by the teacher. They sing action songs like 'Open, shut, open, shut, then give a little clap, then lay them on your lap'. They respond to the different tempo and rhythms with enjoyment and fun. In art, they make 'pasta art', 3D models, and chocolate crispy pictures with corn crisps, paper and glue. They create their own designs with the materials they are given. The quality of the teaching and learning is consistently good.

96. The provision for the under fives is a strength of the school. Under the leadership of the co-ordinator the good standards have been maintained and improved. Curriculum policies have been updated to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced, and due attention is given to all the early learning goals. Information technology is making an increasing contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The individual needs of the diverse range of pupils are met well. The existing resources are of good quality. However, there is still no outdoor play area with large toys and climbing frames, and this was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. The school has consulted widely on the matter, and found no solution, as there is simply no room for expansion. There is also a shortage of big books for work in the Nursery. The recent changes in the Library, although beneficial for others in the school, have made it difficult for children in the nursery to see the white board.

ENGLISH

97. Standards of achievement in English are good across the school. This has been an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. Clear, well-considered planning of the subject across the school has underpinned this improvement. The curriculum is planned in detail to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and to comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum. To assist in planning, teachers make suitable use of material from a developmental curriculum and from information on multi-sensory approaches. This enables the curriculum to be broken down into small steps, which enables progress to be assessed in greater detail. Pupils make good progress against the English targets in their individual education plans, though occasionally targets could be more specific. Information from baseline assessment helps teachers to set relevant targets and measure pupils' progress.

98. In speaking and listening, higher attaining pupils in all key stages make good progress. Constant reinforcement of language by teachers helps the pupils to develop skills. They generally listen well, particularly when reminded to make eye contact, and can respond appropriately when asked a question. They are encouraged to talk about experiences and to describe everyday happenings and events. In Key Stage 1 pupils can, when asked, describe the weather, using single words. By the end of the key stage their vocabulary is increasing and they are able to discuss characters and events when listening to stories; one pupil was able to predict what would happen next when discussing the story 'We're all going on a Bear Hunt'. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 their responses become more fluent, with symbols used effectively to help communication. They can follow straightforward instructions and talk about what they are doing, using simple sentences. When pupils move into the secondary department, progress continues with the acquisition of increased vocabulary, including specialist words, and a willingness to ask and answer questions. Opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills are provided throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can hold a conversation, contribute to formal and informal discussions, and express opinions. In response to a question, pupils were able to select their favourite television programme and say why they liked it. They show confidence in talking to unfamiliar people on school trips and visits.

99. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in reading in all four key stages, and a few reach Level one of the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1, early reading skills are well developed. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and looking at the words and pictures, thus developing an awareness of how books work. Teachers plan good opportunities, and provide a variety of resources for pupils to learn to recognise the initial letter of their own and others' names. In Year 1, pupils were observed working successfully at making a book of items beginning with the initial letter of their name. Labels are attached to items of equipment, and writing is included in displays to reinforce the concept that words, pictures and symbols carry meaning. In Years 3 and 4, pupils can read individual words and short phrases, can retell familiar stories with prompts, and can recognise the initial sounds of words. Pupils in Year 6 were able to identify that *chocolate* and *cheese* begin with 'ch'. They know the words *author*, *illustrator*, *content*, and *index* and can say what they mean. Resources such as story sacks are used well to interest pupils and help their learning.

100. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils are introduced to a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction. They enjoy listening to stories, plays and poems, and are progressing in their recognition of words and phrases, and matching words to pictures. Whilst working on part of the story of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, some pupils were successful in writing in initial letters where these were missing from words, and writing missing words into spaces in the text. In Years 10 and 11, pupils attempt some challenging texts and show good understanding and appreciation of characters and plots. In a lesson on 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' pupils could retell the story with the aid of symbols, and understand what had happened and why. Pupils extend and consolidate their reading skills by regular practice. They have weekly lessons in the new school library, where a record is kept on computer of all books they have borrowed and read during their time in school.

101. In Key Stages 1 and 2 early writing skills are well promoted, with pupils making deliberate marks on paper, and beginning to develop pencil control. As they progress through the school they are able write their names and copy letters and words accurately. In Years 10 and 11 pupils were observed completing a worksheet by filling in missing words and phrases. The letters were well formed, the words spaced correctly, and the handwriting neat. Pupils are beginning to use information communication technology to help with writing and spelling, and with reading and comprehension.

102. The literacy strategy is well planned and implemented and helps pupils to make good progress in all aspects of the subject. Teachers have worked hard to adapt the strategy so that it meets the needs of the pupils. Careful and detailed planning has identified ways in which materials that appeal to the senses can support the subject, and make learning interesting and fun. Lessons are well planned to include text, sentence and word levels, and whole class and group work.

103. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress over time. They are generally included in activities but occasionally have to wait for the teacher or assistant to help them with their work. Strategies to ensure that they are fully involved in all lessons, throughout the curriculum, need to be improved. Pupils are developing a range of communication, pre-reading and writing skills. They respond well to objects they can touch, feel, hear and smell. When listening to the story of 'The Little Princess', pupils were able to handle cards on which the characters had been illustrated with a variety of materials. They use facial expressions, vocalise and point, to show their interest. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed playing a game where they had to identify which toy was missing from a choice of three. The teacher covered the toys with a cloth and removed one. Pupils then indicated their choice by gesture, when shown pictures or articles.

104. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good overall. The work motivates and interests pupils, and this results in good attitudes and learning. Teaching was very good or good in 13 of the 18 lessons observed, and satisfactory in the remainder apart from one lesson, which was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or very good, tasks and activities are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, and to expected learning outcomes. Good lesson planning and organisation provides challenging work which is broken down into small manageable steps, enabling pupils to learn successfully. Good use is made of praise and individual attention to keep pupils motivated and on task. The very good relationships, which are a feature of the school, help pupils in their learning by providing a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in which they feel safe and well supported. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They

know the pupils well, anticipating how best they can be helped in their work. They are effectively deployed to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of resources and objects of reference to help pupils learn. On occasions, though, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not fully involved in lessons. Teachers are still developing and refining the skills needed to include and engage pupils for the whole lesson.

105. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are good at all key stages. Pupils concentrate well and generally work hard, focusing on tasks and completing them successfully.

106. Assessment procedures are very effective, but very time consuming. Pupils' individual targets are set, monitored and assessed comprehensively. This information is used well in teachers' lesson planning. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is overseen by the curriculum committee and by the subject co-ordinator, and this has helped to promote high standards.

107. The subject co-ordinator and both the primary and secondary link co-ordinators work well together and make an effective team. They are clear about areas needing improvement and are working hard to develop the subject across the school and to provide support for staff. Leadership is very strong. General teaching resources are good and support both English and literacy across the curriculum. The school has committed significant funding, and received good support from a number of organisations, in upgrading the school library. This is now extremely well resourced and organised, with a good range of both fiction and non-fiction books and story cassettes, videos and tapes. Computers on height-adjustable trolleys help all pupils to access the up-to-date software used in the library. A number of big books, resources for teachers, and an excellent projection system combine to make an impressive teaching and learning resource. The school makes good use of the local environment to develop pupils' confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. During visits, pupils are encouraged to apply their basic literacy skills in real situations.

MATHEMATICS

108. Overall, standards of achievement are good. They are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The improvement in standards in numeracy is linked to the introduction of a modified numeracy framework across the school, and to the enthusiastic and imaginative teaching which pupils receive in the primary department. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in this subject.

109. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils can count from zero to 15, and backwards from ten to zero. They generally know the one, two, five and ten pence coins, and use the correct language for shape. They recognize and name the triangle, square and circle. They accurately use mathematical language such as *big*, *little*, *short*, *smaller* and *tallest*. They name several colours and use a commercial computer software program to practise their mathematics. Lower attaining pupils count numbers to ten and bang a drum in unison. They play shopping games by exchanging coins for items, and begin to establish the connection between buying and paying. By 11, higher attaining pupils can read Monday to Sunday and put them in the correct order. They recognize and sequence zero to ten accurately and, generally, 11 to 20. They can add and subtract to ten. They recognize two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, and can make simple records in the form

of a block graph. Lower attaining pupils can count one and two. They recognize the difference between night and day and relate pictures to each. Pupils with complex difficulties respond to familiar people and objects. They reach out to, hold on to, or turn to familiar voices and attempt some activities through trial and error.

110. By 14, higher attaining pupils know shapes, such as *square*, *circle*, *triangle*, *rectangle*, and many colours. They match coins and add them to make amounts such as 15p and 25p. They know that two quarters make a half. They can fill in missing numbers in a 100 number line. They add and subtract to ten and can construct a bar chart, of favourite vegetables, or different coloured Smarties in a tube, for example. Lower attaining pupils name *square*, *circle* and *triangle*, but require lots of help. With support they will use coins to 'buy' and receive 'change' when shopping as a class, and colour halves and quarters.

111. By 16, higher attaining pupils recognise the names and properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, count the 12 edges on a cube, and use terms such as *face*, *edge* and *corner* correctly. They measure the radius and diameter of a circle to the nearest centimetre. They match numbers to 20 and money amounts to one pound. They recognise all coins and understand one half and one quarter. They recognise and name shapes such as *circle*, *rectangle*, *square*, *triangle*, *pentagon* and *hexagon* and use appropriate mathematical language such as *heavy* and *light*. Lower attaining pupils successfully sort coins to fifty pence into sets. They are able to beat a drum 10 times, then stop with minimum of verbal prompts. Others will beat or clap to ten with co-active support. They improve eye pointing and discrimination skills and operate a single switch control independently. A visually-impaired pupil makes good progress using a computer program, tracking a yellow colour. Pupils with complex difficulties, with varying degrees of support, become aware of cause and effect when switches activate a blender, for example. They develop an awareness of shape in the environment and anticipate some events from cues. For example, a pupil will fidget in his seat when a coat is brought in, prior to going for a walk.

112. The school provides satisfactorily for mathematics throughout the school day. For example, in registration pupils learn to order the day in relation to the activities they will undertake, and they count those present. More examples of mathematics in other subjects were observed in religious education, history, physical education and design and technology.

113. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the 13 lessons observed, one was unsatisfactory, three were satisfactory, four were good and five were very good. Teaching is good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic and there is a lively, prompt start, with a well planned and executed mental exercise to focus the pupils on the subject, and activities which interest them and help them to learn. Learning is reinforced at the end of the lesson by a plenary session where pupils are praised and rewarded for their efforts. Pupils show their work to peers with great pleasure and others respond well to their success. However, some lessons are not well timed, with the result that the plenary session is either too short or missing altogether. In most lessons there is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff. There are good relationships between pupils and adults, and pupils show good attitudes to their tasks. Pupils are generally well managed, resources are used well, and changes of activities are well timed. The result is that pupils are motivated and take a full part in their work. Support staff make a very positive contribution; they know the pupils very well, and often anticipate

situations which might arise, thus avoiding confrontations or problems in class. The staff are good role models, and they provide the pupils with many activities which demand working together, co-operating, collaborating, and thinking about the needs of others. In this way, mathematics contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.

114. In the unsatisfactory lesson the few activities offered were not stimulating or challenging enough for the higher attaining pupils. This resulted in them spending too much time colouring. Planning was in terms of the class as a group, with not enough recognition of the pupils' differing abilities or individual education plans. Lower achieving pupils were unoccupied and ignored for long periods of time. As a result, pupils lost interest and switched off.

115. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinating team are a dynamic duo and fulfil their roles effectively. The development of the subject since the last inspection has been well managed. A revised scheme of work has been written and introduced. The previous report's recommendation to increase resources has been implemented, and further improvement is planned. Teachers have been supported well in introducing the numeracy hour, and teaching has been monitored. Teachers keep accurate records of pupils' attainment, using both 'P' Levels and a commercially published scheme, and they use this information well when planning future work. In time, an accurate picture of individual progress will be created. Older pupils have the opportunity to receive a nationally accredited award, through the Transition Challenge (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) and Towards Independence (Accreditation for Life and Living Skills) modules. Pupils' progress in mathematics is reported clearly to parents in pupils' annual reviews, which show what pupils can do, understand, and know.

SCIENCE

116. The standards of achievement in science are good overall, because teaching and learning are generally good. However, there is a difference at Key Stage 3, where occasionally pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not involved well enough in lessons, as suitable activities are not planned for them. Standards of achievement at this stage are satisfactory.

117. By age seven, pupils can identify instruments that require shaking, beating or blowing, and use them appropriately to explore different sounds they make. Pupils with PMLD eye-point, gesture and vocalise in response to different sounds, making their preferences clear. Higher attaining pupils are able to locate and identify different sounds when these are produced from different directions. By age 11, pupils have experienced a wide range of well-planned sensory experiments, learning that light travels in straight lines and that sound creates waves in the air. They are able to identify most of the sound on a pre-recorded tape, and display or indicate the picture that correctly relates to the sound. Pupils with PMLD are able to track a good range of sounds, and vocalise a response to them. By age 14, higher attaining pupils are able to write notes on their experiments, with minimal support. A small minority present their work neatly, cutting, colouring and sticking pictures on their classification charts. They can identify symbols for planets, and they learn about the planetary positions necessary for an eclipse to occur. Pupils with PMLD experience a range of fruit through their senses of touch, taste and smell. They make limited progress in lessons where they are insufficiently involved in the experimental activity. By age 16, all pupils make more use of the

computer in recording their experiments. Pupils are able to identify simple food chains, using pictures and symbols. They make simple hypotheses about some experiments; for example, they predict how a row of dominoes will fall or how many coins a sheet of stretched paper will support.

118. The quality of teaching is good overall. Altogether 10 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching and learning were very good in three, good in five, satisfactory in one, and unsatisfactory in one, when a minority of pupils were not sufficiently engaged in the experiment. In most lessons, class teachers know the pupils very well and have a secure understanding of the subject and how to teach it to pupils of all abilities in the school. Enthusiasm for the subject comes across well in some lessons. For example, in a lesson for younger pupils, their sense of awe and wonder at the germination and growth of plants was clear to see, and was encouraged well by the teacher's expression of surprise and appreciation of nature. Teachers and pupils are well supported by learning support assistants, who are able to take on a planned teaching role with pupils who have additional needs. Teachers plan and prepare well for lessons, ensuring that the pupils' interest is sustained, and that they enjoy the experiments they undertake. Staff support the provision for literacy development effectively, especially when their knowledge and understanding is conveyed through scientific terms that pupils are able to understand and make use of in the lesson. However, in some lessons rather difficult terms are used, such as reference to *xylem* tissue when the pupils are looking at plants. In the best lessons teachers make good use of signing and symbols to support learning, using tactile resources effectively to ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to experience topics in a sensory way. The very good relationship between staff and pupils ensures that pupils generally respond positively to lessons and are well behaved, and this enables the class to make good progress. Classroom management is generally good, but where the lesson fails to secure the attention of pupils and some are insufficiently engaged in the experiment, pupils become restless. Teachers at Key Stage 4 make good use of information technology to support learning, but this is not the case lower down the school.

119. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over her temporary role. In the short time she has been at the school she has worked hard to develop and extend the curriculum, successfully addressing most of the concerns that were expressed in the last report. In this she has benefited from the support of a colleague who takes responsibility for the subject at Key Stages 3 and 4. She has built up and organised the resource base for science to support the widening curriculum, and has begun to monitor standards in the department, including the standard of teaching. She knows the strengths and weakness of the department and is addressing these. For example, the weakness, in some classes, in the use of computers to support learning is being addressed through additional guidance in the recently re-drafted subject policy.

120. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning have both improved and are now good overall. Longer term curriculum planning has improved, so pupils now have a broad range of learning experiences. Resources are now good and reports to parents are of a good quality. To improve standards further, planning for pupils with PMLD needs to be improved, particularly at Key Stage 3.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards of achievement in art are satisfactory across the school. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is working on adapting the art curriculum to produce schemes of work which are more appropriate to the needs and abilities of all pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, while still meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.

122. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils are able to use a range of materials and techniques for drawing, painting, and collage and model making. They experience working with a variety of textures and fabrics such as feathers, sponges, wood, pasta and rice. In Year 1, pupils were observed making interesting patterns using pasta, which they stuck on card and painted. They handled the materials carefully, and with help completed the task well. They explore shape and form by making objects in both two and three dimensions. Pupils in Year 2 were observed modelling with scrap materials. They chose shapes to use and assembled interesting models. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils work with increased confidence, and their skills develop well as they experiment with pattern, colour, texture and line. In a lesson on fabric printing and appliqué work, pupils arranged cut out shapes whilst experimenting with pattern making. They used glue carefully to fix the shapes when they were satisfied with their pattern.

123. At Key Stage 3, pupils use playdoh, plasticine, clay and papier-mâché to make models of animals they have learned about in other lessons. They work with increasing independence as they review, modify and refine their work. In a Key Stage 4 lesson, where pupils were painting a sunset, they were observed identifying and matching colours, and mixing colours and additives, to create differing effects of mood and depth. They considered carefully how to apply the paint by using sponges, brushes, palette knives and their fingers to obtain the required result. Opportunities to develop observation skills, and time for reflection, are missing from some lessons. Displays around the school indicate the broad scope of work that pupils produce in all key stages and demonstrate the importance of the subject in terms of raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. There is a wide variety of methods, genres, material and styles in the work on display. One example of this is a number of bookmarks of various designs and materials, made by the pupils to celebrate World Book Day. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, particularly where tactile materials and multi-sensory resources are used to aid learning. On a few occasions where work is not well matched to their needs and abilities, pupils are not fully involved in learning.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at all key stages. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities in planning activities and tasks that are interesting and enjoyable and motivate pupils to learn. Relationships are good, with teachers encouraging pupils by giving careful guidance and help. Praise is used well to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers' competent demonstrations of techniques and processes help pupils to learn new skills and improve their work. Support assistants are used well. They ensure that materials are easily accessible and that pupils are clear about what they have to do. They give high levels of individual help to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, helping to involve them more fully in the lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed calmly and firmly in accordance with their behaviour management plans. Pupils enjoy art and the range of opportunities available for them to work on creative and practical activities. Talks and exhibitions by artists visiting the school stimulate pupils' interest in the subject. Learning is less effective when pupils have to wait for assistance, they are not fully involved, and the pace of lessons is slow. Resources are used well. Teachers engage pupils' interest and attention by using a well-chosen selection of sensory materials.

125. Assessment and recording are underdeveloped in art. There is no uniform system for identifying and documenting what pupils learn and what they know, understand and can do. The facilities for teaching art are satisfactory. The co-ordinator organises these well and the management of the subject is sound. The subject is well led and there is a clear agenda for further development. The co-ordinator monitors planning, and some teaching, but neither of these are extensive enough to allow identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject across the key stages.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Overall standards of achievement in design and technology are good, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, as there is now good management of the subject by a specialist who has very clear aims for the development of the subject across the whole school. It is the school's policy to disapply pupils in Key Stage 4, from design and technology, in favour of a curriculum that is developed specifically to meet their special needs. Teaching and learning are good overall. Too few lessons were seen to allow valid judgements at each key stage, but scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that teaching and learning are good across the key stages.

127. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator who has excellent skills as a teacher and manager. He is working on the development of technology throughout the school. This will include some incidental technology for pupils in Key Stage 4; the co-ordinator is working on integrating design and technology with other subjects. There has been an audit of resources within the department, which shows that there are sufficient to meet the demands of the present curriculum. There is no special room for the teaching of design and technology and very little in the way of machinery or equipment to work with resistant materials such as

metal, acrylics and timber. There is no heat treatment area, nor is there any provision for the teaching of electronics, pneumatics and control technology. Whilst pupils are achieving well in the areas they are able to study, there are some areas to which they do not have access. The school has some facilities for the teaching of food technology, but they are not in use at the moment as there are some health and safety issues that have to be resolved.

128. By the age of seven, pupils discover how things work when they rely on batteries and electric motors or switches. In the one lesson observed the teaching and learning were very good, and the lesson was very well planned to ensure that each pupil had a different electric toy to investigate. Higher attaining pupils were able to insert batteries correctly into a toy, whilst a lower attaining pupil felt the effects of a small battery-powered fan when the learning support assistant helped him to switch it on. The very good lesson planning and skilful teaching helped pupils to learn well as they investigated the use of batteries as a power source. They discovered that batteries vary considerably in size, and they learned to use the switches to activate the toys.

129. By the age of 11, pupils have made models, using junk materials which they stick together successfully and cut and shape them when necessary. Their achievement is good in this activity. Pupils also design and make a greetings card, having investigated the properties and use of hinges.

130. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 3. Teaching in the single lesson seen at this stage was satisfactory, and much good practice is evident in the work which pupils have done. By the age of 14 years, pupils are successful in making models with wire, wire netting and papier mâché. Teachers are competent in using signing to support the speech during lessons. The learning support assistants work consistently well to support the pupils and ensure that they are able to take a full part in the lesson.

131. From the scrutiny of pupils' work it is clear that there are often times when design and technology is taught as part of other lessons. For example, in a history lesson on the Romans and Greeks, pupils made working models of musical panpipes and a model of an Olympic torch. There is also clear evidence of good progress as pupils take part in cookery session, when they stir, whisk and pour cake mixtures. Many pupils do need a great deal of help when taking part in such activities.

132. Pupils also complete special design and technology projects with such titles as 'Fun with fibres' and 'Making a packet'. These innovative titles give serious clues about the content of the project. Here it can be seen that pupils learn to follow a design brief, devise a solution, and put that into practice by making the object.

133. There are sufficient resources to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. However, there are some areas of technology that are not represented in the curriculum at the moment. These are the study of electronics and pneumatics, and the further use of more resistant materials, including wood, metal and plastics. Without specialist accommodation, these would be difficult to safely provide.

GEOGRAPHY

134. At the time of the inspection it was possible to observe one lesson at Key Stage 2, and two lessons of humanities with a geographical bias at Key Stage 4. This evidence, amply supplemented by splendid wall displays of pupils' work, and by work in folders, shows that standards of achievement are satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and in humanities studies at Key Stage 4.

135. Since the last inspection, a broad and balanced geography and humanities curriculum has been put in place, including long, medium and short term planning, which is in a standard format across the school. Taught time has increased, and is sufficient now for teaching the broader curriculum. Repetition of the modules is avoided by their two, four and three year rotation in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 respectively, and similarly for humanities at Key Stage 4. However, scrutiny of work indicates that there is not enough planning of different learning objectives for pupils of differing ability across key stages. Assessment in geography and humanities has begun, but is inconsistent in use, and opportunities are missed to record pupils' experiences and what they know, understand and can do. Improved planning for individual needs and more consistent assessment are required to improve standards further.

136. Five to seven year old pupils explore their environment within school, finding out who is in the next class and finding their way around. They explore the playground, the garden and the car park. They practise kerb drill, and crossing the road at a zebra crossing inside school, before experiencing the real thing outside. They learn about holidays to the seaside, by Gyllanvase, Falmouth, where they play on the beach. They help to pack a case for a holiday and see that they have tickets to travel by train. They visit the local railway station to observe the trains and experience the station environment. They use symbols to keep a weather chart and later make a graph of the different kinds of weather.

137. In Key Stage 2, with the aid of a symbol card, pupils are able to identify the word *geography*. They locate the town where they live on a map of Cornwall, with varying degrees of assistance. They recognise their photographs stuck on to large cuts of buses showing who goes on their bus and where it is going. Before visiting the playground and gardens, pupils answer questions about the area, such as 'What is in the play area?' and 'How do we get to the garden?' Following a visit to the playground, where they explore features such as the gate, trees and flowers, most pupils show an understanding of a plan of the playground and gardens. They stick word labels on to the plan. Pupils with autism and others with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are encouraged to look and smell, listen and touch, and join in the activities. When learning about water, pupils name or sign to indicate water sources, such as the sea and rivers. They find things connected with water such as taps and drinks. Pupils with PMLD experience how water is used, and distinguish clean and dirty water. Pupils' sort pictures into categories of water according to use, and they taste and identify different flavoured water.

138. Pupils in Key Stage 3 consolidate and build on prior mapping skills to understand two-figure map references, when they identify objects on a room plan. They have some understanding of the globe and of the four compass points. They look for features on a pictorial map of Ancient Egypt and look for cold lands on the globe. Most pupils know that polar regions are cold.

139. By Key Stage 4, in humanities lessons, pupils are beginning to research in books, independently or with support, to find out about features of polar regions, such as transport, homes, clothes, and animals. They know that wheels can stick in snow, that people wear warm clothes, sometimes made of fur, and that polar bears and reindeer are found in Arctic areas. The most able pupils copy sentences about the animals and draw polar foxes and reindeer, free-hand and unaided. Pupils with PMLD work with different textured materials to create a polar landscape, and others enjoy the feel and smell of various furs and textured papers in 'cool' colours.

140. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. One in three lessons was good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, whilst of the two lessons observed at Key Stage 4, one was satisfactory and the other of a very good standard. A key feature of very good teaching is the questioning, which enables pupils to achieve success and to feel safe in having a try at the answer, for example, 'Is the Arctic a hot or a cold place?' When talking about the playground the teacher asks the pupil to use their senses; 'What can you hear?' Another feature of the more successful teaching is thorough planning, with short well-focused and timed activities, and clear learning objectives, which are reviewed at the end of the lesson. In those lessons, pupils' concentration and interest is sustained, making work purposeful and stimulating. Where lessons are less successful, activities last too long, with a consequent loss of interest. In lessons where Internet research is planned, pupils endure much waste of time, because of difficulties either logging on or in finding the appropriate material.

141. Teachers seize the many opportunities for practising literacy and numeracy skills in geography. These occur when pupils are reading and writing key vocabulary, using the books to find information and in the graphic representation of surveys, or in mapping skills. There are also links with religious education, art, science, physical education and music. This subject makes a very good contribution to social development.

142. The co-ordinator gives good leadership, and is aware of the need to modify some of the modules. Book resources are of a good quality and there are enough of them to support learning in the modules of work. There are few videotapes and computer programmes, although such resources are borrowed from the local libraries.

HISTORY

143. Standards of achievement are satisfactory. During the inspection period, lessons could be seen only at Key Stages 1 and 2. Additional evidence came from scrutiny of work and documentation, attractive displays, which included pupils' work, and photographs of visits and experiences.

144. Pupils enjoy a broad range of activities and experiences at first hand, gain a sense of chronology, and explore contrasting lifestyles of rich and poor. They enjoy handling artefacts from the past, such as fossils, and dressing up in costume, whether it is that of a medieval knight in armour or of an ancient Greek. They try out the sorts of food that the Greeks would have, and say which they like. Strengths of the history curriculum are the programme of visits, which accompany each module of work, and enhancement of learning experiences through cultural days.

145. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement. The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and there is now sufficient taught time to teach the broader curriculum. Teachers help pupils to have a better understanding of time passing and of historical evidence, and are successfully amending the modules of work. However, there is a tendency to have the same learning activities for all, which are not always suitable for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties (PMLD). Long, medium and short-term plans have a common format, and clearly show progression in the development of skills across the key stages. To ensure pupils do not repeat the same module twice, the modules are rotated over two, four and three year rotation periods dependent on the key stage.

146. History is fun for five to seven years olds. They have their own 'museum' in the classroom, with collections of artefacts from the past, and they confidently join in discussions and activities. They examine evidence from the past by handling fossils. They enjoy making their own dinosaur prints in clay, and higher achievers compare them with photographic evidence in books. They make rubbings of old coins and look at differences in current coins. When they watch a video of the first manned moon landing they hear an eye witness account from the classroom assistant about the event, and see a picture of her when she was a child at that time.

147. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about invaders. They enjoy visits to castles and workshops at the museum at Truro. One pupil wrote 'The Normans lived in big castles.' They also learn about the contrasting life of poor country people. 'If you were bad you were made to go in the stocks', one pupil observed. They are pleased to be dressed in the costumes. Pupils with profound and multiple disabilities appear animated as they try on 'armour'. They have the novel and strange experience of holding and writing with a quill pen. When learning about the Roman invaders, one pupil wrote as a newspaper reporter, 'The Romans have invaded. They came in ships' another wrote, 'Evidence shows they spoke an entirely different language'. They enjoy visiting the Chysauster settlement, which was occupied during Roman times. In symbol writing, using a computer, one pupil word processed, 'I dressed a Roman lady on the computer using the roller ball.' Another commented that the Romans 'have strange food'.

148. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 turn their thoughts to the peoples of Ancient Egypt. They enjoy writing hieroglyphics, touching papyrus, and making model pyramids. They experience foods, dance and music from Egypt, and print off pictures and information from the internet with support. They combine their studies of history with geography by using a pictorial map of Egypt. In a display about the work of UNICEF, pupils know that village children in India often have to work instead of going to school, and that they may have no water in their village.

149. Fourteen to sixteen year olds learn about the world of the Aztecs, and combine their studies with geography to build on their previous experiences of map reading. They consider important issues of citizenship, and take part in a sponsored silence to raise money for UNICEF, They are aware that children in places like India have different lifestyles and religions, and that children often work instead of going to school.

150. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. At Key Stages 1 and 2, only three lessons were observed, and none at Key Stage 3. Of the three lessons observed, two were of satisfactory standard and one was good. In more successful lessons, teachers challenge pupils to examine closely what they see, and plan thoughtfully for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism, so that tasks and experiences engage and challenge them. Another feature of good teaching is a rich language environment, in which the teacher sets out to extend pupils' understanding but at the same time presents key vocabulary effectively, encouraging pupils to use the correct terms when talking about a topic. Evaluation of lessons and assessment of pupils' progress within a module of work are inconsistent, and often do not say how pupils reacted to experiences and what they know, understand and can do.

151. There are many planned opportunities to extend language and literacy in history, and to use opportunities to apply mathematics. Where viable, links are made with art, music, personal and social education, modern foreign languages, drama and dance. There is good use of information and communication technology, especially in the practice of recording by digital camera. The library has good quality book resources to support each module, but the use of the internet to research topics can amount to time wasted because material is difficult to locate, or is mainly in text that pupils cannot read. Pupils are usually patient, but time would be better spent using programmes that relate specifically to each topic. Although spiritual experiences do occur, these are not planned. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

152. Evaluation of each module is planned for on the planning sheets. However, teachers need to agree formally how modules are to be adapted and to share good practice. Assessment of pupils' gains and experiences is not yet well recorded, although there are examples of good practice. The co-ordinator has given good leadership but the role of monitoring has yet to be developed fully.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

153. Standards of achievement are satisfactory across the school. Although no discrete lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, evidence from other lessons where information technology was seen in use, teachers' planning, discussion with staff and pupils' records indicate that pupils' achievements in this key stage are satisfactory also. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in this subject.

154. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils can use the roller ball and paint program to make a picture. They change colours and make connections between operating a switch and the picture on the screen. Pupils also improve their mouse and cursor control through English work. Lower attaining pupils make ten marks on the screen, using a roller ball, and use a button switch to generate sound and to experience the relationship between cause and effect. By 11, higher attaining pupils can click and drag, using the mouse. They use a software program to access their reading book in English, and carry out a simple internet search with support. They record their work in science and geography, using a digital camera. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with complex difficulties use switches to change the computer screen and consolidate their understanding of cause and effect.

155. By 14, higher attaining pupils make popcorn in a microwave and are able to use the photocopier to copy work they have completed. They make pictures using a paint program on the computer. They learn that switches make a fan work, and use switches to work disco lights. They complete a worksheet showing how traffic lights work. A pupil with autism has a good knowledge of the computer keyboard, and types several letters whilst looking at the piece to be copied. A second group works much more slowly, typing letter by letter, but is also successful in the activity. Lower attaining pupils watch popcorn being made in the microwave and press the button on the photocopier to produce a copy. They use the roller ball to make a picture with the computer and operate a switch to make a fan work so that they can experience cause and effect. They feel the vibrations through the loudspeaker as the volume of sound is increased.

156. By 16, higher attaining pupils are able to switch on the computer, load a game from a CD-ROM, start the program, and follow through to play the game. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with complex difficulties are able, with support, to load a cassette into a video recorder. They can operate the two remote controls to view a program and then stop the cassette and switch off the television.

157. The quality of teaching and learning in information and communication technology lessons is satisfactory, with some good features in some lessons. Of the six lessons observed, three were satisfactory and three were good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Learning support assistants are briefed well by teachers and work satisfactorily with pupils, particularly on a one-to-one or small group basis. Care is taken to ensure that pupils' additional special educational needs are met. For example, switches are used well to enable pupils with complex learning difficulties to establish a relationship between cause and effect.

158. In the best lessons, there are very high expectations that pupils will succeed, and challenge is provided through a wide range of exciting activities. For example, in one Key Stage 3 lesson, pupils were enabled to use a simple switch to edit the sound from a video clip which was to be used as background in a future production to be put on for the school. The teachers' generally good subject knowledge and careful planning has a very positive effect on the quality of learning in the classroom. Because they are able to complete their tasks, pupils enjoy the lessons, and show high levels of motivation. The sound teaching strategies ensure that pupils develop the necessary skills to move forward. Pupils often work in pairs or small groups, which encourages their personal development.

159. Information and communication technology is used suitably to support other curriculum areas. The most frequent uses of information and communication technology are in English and mathematics. Interactive published schemes are being used to good effect in both subjects to increase pupils' understanding and consolidate skills. In mathematics, information and communications technology also provides staff with full details of any area of difficulty for each pupil. The school is beginning to make very good use of equipment such as a digital camera, to record good work in all subjects, as well as highlights of visits, to be used as recall triggers. Some older pupils are encouraged to use this equipment independently and to make connections between their use of it and the photographs produced.

160. Information and communications technology is well coordinated by the subject leadership team. The curriculum is broad and balanced for all pupils. Priorities for development are clear and

there has been steady and satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Teachers, support staff and the technician are very well used and all adults are supported by relevant training, so that they feel comfortable with the technology. Access to the internet is available, but there is not yet much evidence of its use. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant upgrading of the resources for information and communications technology, which has improved the opportunities available and the progress made by the pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

161. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a study of French, Cornish and German to pupils at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, pupils are disapplied from learning a modern foreign language, to make it possible for them to follow a work-related curriculum. During the inspection week there were no lessons timetabled, and no detailed records of pupils' progress. It is not possible to make valid judgements on standards of achievement, or of teaching and learning in modern foreign languages.

162. The curriculum provided is satisfactory. The well planned range of learning experiences makes a very strong contribution to developing pupils' cultural awareness, as it includes the provision of culture days which are for all pupils. Students over 16 continue to have an element of modern foreign language within their studies of the wider world. They are able to obtain nationally recognised accreditation for this.

163. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator's log shows that a range of activities has been carried out to improve provision, support staff and promote inclusion. The policy gives very good guidance for non-specialist staff, and a resources audit has been carried out, to find out how well these are used. There is some informal tracking of pupils' progress, though this is not easy as there are no formal records showing achievements in the subject. Although monitoring of direct teaching has yet to begin, the co-ordinator has been trained for this task. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

164. At the time of the last inspection not enough time was allocated to music, there was no scheme of work, and music resources were limited. There have been a number of improvements which are helping to raise standards, and enable the subject to make a more significant contribution to the work of the school, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. The school now has a draft subject policy in place, and resources have been improved in line with the enhanced curriculum and to ensure that they match the needs of the pupils. Music has a higher profile in the school. For example, there has been a performance of 'The Lion King', and rehearsals for the Millennium Prayer in December 2000. Since Easter 2000 there has been joint co-ordination of the subject and non-teaching time made available for monitoring music. Because one co-ordinator has been absent from school the remaining co-ordinator has

concentrated upon providing other staff with advice on lessons and the use of appropriate resources, so very little monitoring has occurred. The existing resources are of good quality. There is a good range of instruments, including a gathering drum, sets of tuned hand-bells, table top chime bars, woodblocks, electric keyboards and a supportive range of videos, CDs and tapes. All these contribute to building the pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical forms.

165. Standards of achievement are satisfactory. Pupils have a range of musical experiences. In addition to their singing in assemblies and concerts they are introduced to new types of music awareness. They learn about melody and rhythm through a range of activities and develop confidence through singing and playing instruments.

166. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, at Key Stages 1 and 2. One lesson was judged to be very good, one good and one satisfactory. The lesson that was judged very good involved two Curnow School pupils joining a lesson at a mainstream primary school as part of their integration programme. The pupils joined in with the warm-up songs and one was selected to join a game with musical instruments. One was allocated a triangle and was able to name it and responded well to instructions. The higher attaining pupil was attentive and enjoyed the musical games. Both pupils gained much from the lesson and were well accepted both by the class teacher and by the other pupils. In the lesson that was judged to be good the class were singing songs such as 'Its Raining Again', 'My Land is Your Land' and 'Jack Hammer John', and some of the pupils were playing instruments. There was a good choice of musical resources to interest the pupils. Instruments like chimes were passed around the room and pupils given an opportunity to play and handle them. The pupils were learning about rhythm and beat and showed some understanding of the sounds made by wide range of instruments. They were also able to move in time with the music and developed their listening and singing skills. In the third lesson pupils were developing their sense of awareness and appreciation of the different styles of music, as well as singing songs like 'Zippedy Ziss, Show me where your Tummy is'. During the lesson each pupil was given an instrument to explore, and to find different ways of playing the instruments, such as blowing, plucking and beating. They were learning to play along with the music, either soft or loud, and practised starting and stopping together. On this occasion not all the pupils were fully involved and there were a number of disruptions which detracted from the flow of the lesson. Some of the support staff made valuable contributions to the lessons and this helps some of the pupils to obtain the help and encouragement they need to make progress.

167. There is no overall assessment policy in music, though some teachers do keep individual records using the Equals scheme. Teachers are gaining greater confidence in the use of instruments but not all staff have a good enough working knowledge to ensure that pupils with more complex needs have full access to the music curriculum. Relationships are good, and teachers and pupils enjoy making music together.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

168. Standards of achievement in physical education are very good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning have also improved and are now very good overall, with some excellent teaching of pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of activities and they benefit greatly from the dedication of the teachers and support assistants. Music and dance play a large part in the programme of study and there is also a wide range of other activities which take place away from the school. These include swimming, horse riding and ten-pin bowling. All pupils enjoy their lessons and the success they achieve.

169. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. This ensures that all pupils in all lessons make very good progress. Six lessons were seen; one was good, three were very good and two were excellent. Lesson planning is of high quality and takes account of the wide range of special needs amongst the pupils. Lessons are also planned to challenge pupils physically. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, and the pupils rise very successfully to those expectations.

170. By the age of seven, pupils take part in team games, which are extremely well organised by the teacher. The excellent teaching ensures that all pupils are highly motivated and work very hard during the whole of the lesson. Counting out aloud is a very important part of many lessons, and the pupils enjoy this. It helps to develop their counting skills and general confidence. The teacher directs the learning support assistants very well as they work with the pupils; he calls the moves to the adults as the whole group dance together. The teacher's energy and enthusiasm is infectious, and all pupils catch his excitement as they chase each other around the hall, during a 'through the bridge' game. Achievement by all pupils at this stage is very good.

171. Learning support assistant work very closely with individual pupils or pairs of pupils to ensure that all are able to take a full part in the activities. They hold hands with the pupils and accompany them as they run around and seek space to avoid being tagged. The pupils are highly motivated and work very hard during the lesson. Achievements of pupils are very good. They are out of breath when they have finished. Pupils learn the importance of warm up exercises at the beginning of a lesson and of the need to warm down to finish a session.

172. By the age of 11 years, pupils have learned many new skills. In one lesson observed the pupils entered the hall in file and in absolute silence. The skills of the teacher were obvious, as she had established a very clear and precise routine for the lesson. The pupils' response was excellent. They were extremely proud and pleased to be able to present such a sophisticated sequence of activities. The teaching was inspiring as she led the 'Fairy Dance', collecting her 'fairy' accomplices and dancing gracefully around the hall. A 'magic' touch from the teacher was a signal for a pupil to join the dance, until all the pupils and assistants were dancing around the hall.

173. The teacher was also very skilled in directing the pupils and assistants. She spoke beautifully to each in turn, inviting him or her to stand in a line. She then asked each person, in turn, the name of the person that he or she was following. In this way the teacher was constantly reinforcing and developing language skills of the pupils. Achievements of pupils during this lesson were excellent.

174. By the age of 13 years, pupils develop a simple gymnastic routine for demonstration to the rest of the group. In a successful lesson, the teacher and learning support assistants worked very well as a team to make sure that all pupils took a full part in the lesson. The teacher split the class into three groups, each of different attainment levels. This put the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties all into the same group. Here they were well taught by staff, who made suitable demands upon them to ensure that all were working hard. The very good planning and organisation of the lesson ensured that all pupils learned new skills, such as catching and throwing a ball.

175. By the age of 16 years, pupils perform a simple routine along a low bench. The teacher is very skilled at organising the group and motivating the pupils. In one lesson, the teacher spoke very positively to the pupils and showed high expectations of them. Pupils made good use of the apparatus, the benches, the low section of the box, plastic hoops, and mats. At the end of the lesson all pupils were proud to display the routine they had developed during the lesson. These varied in complexity according to the ability of the pupils. Pupils were so positive about their work that they applauded spontaneously as others completed their routines.

176. The management of the subject is very good. There is an informative policy, and very comprehensive documents to present the curriculum for the primary part of the school and a separate document for the secondary part of the school. These documents have been produced by carefully considering the National Curriculum guidelines and the needs of the pupils.

177. The school has a small hall for indoor games. This also doubles as a dining hall and a thoroughfare for all people when passing to and from the primary end of the school. Despite the small nature of the hall and the complexity of its use, the hall is very well used for physical education. The school makes very efficient use of neighbouring establishments. There is weekly use of the neighbouring mainstream primary school. Their playing fields are very convenient, and are a bonus for the pupils at Curnow School. The school also makes very good use of the leisure centre in the town. Pupils use these facilities for ten-pin bowling, swimming and outdoor pursuits. There is a group of pupils who have successfully followed the Duke of Edinburgh's award course and gained medals at a Bronze, Silver and Gold Levels.

178. There are sufficient staff to enable physical education to be taught very successful in all year groups. There are also skilled and well qualified members of staff leading the subject in the school. There are sufficient resources. The school makes very good use of its own hydrotherapy pool and of the local swimming pool. Many pupils are awarded certificates and

badges for their achievements in swimming. Physical education in the school is a strength, and there are many pupils who are delighted by the achievements they have made whilst there. The very high expectations of the staff are reflected in the performance of the pupils, which is high, when account is taken of their learning and physical difficulties.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory. Pupils develop a sound awareness of Christianity and of other religions. At Key Stage 1, pupils study modules of Christianity and Hinduism and explore six core themes including 'Me and Us'. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 they are introduced to a series of modules about Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. The scheme of work is based upon the local Agreed Syllabus and lesson plans are closely linked to the syllabus. Since the last inspection the school has improved the range of artefacts to support work in lessons. These improvements help to promote learning.

180. Taking account of evidence from pupils' work and lessons seen, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the inspection, six lessons were seen; three were satisfactory, two were good, and one was very good. Pupils at Key Stage 1 were learning about the story of Noah, and were supported by a good range of artefacts; pupils were constructing their own Arks and had some animals to enter the Ark, making it possible for them to act out the story. Effective use was made of BBC sound effects music to set the scene. The higher attaining pupils were able to identify the range of animals, including giraffes and elephants, and were able to recognise the colours of the rainbow. At Key Stage 2, the pupils were learning about the Creation and the teacher used a powerful light to represent day; contrasting darkness made a strong impression on the pupils. Pupils have developed booklets about 'My Work in Religion'. In the other lesson the teacher was using a Big Book 'My Jewish Faith' and reviewing Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and the Jewish Festival Purim. There were good opportunities for speaking and listening as the pupils learned about Haman and responded to his name as they shook their 'graggers'. At Key Stage 3, one group reviewed a recent visit to a local church. The higher attaining pupils were able to name some of the features of the church, for example the pew and pulpit, and one of the support staff provided some organ music for the class to hear. This helped to set the scene. Other pupils at this stage were learning about 'The Good Samaritan' and asking questions about 'What is a Good Neighbour?' The lesson was well planned but it did not successfully engage some of the pupils with more complex needs. The fact that assessment procedures need further development is a significant weakness of teaching and learning.

181. In general, the quality of resources and artefacts available to support the topics is good. Teachers strive to make their lessons practical and to arrange visits to churches and Truro Cathedral. The school received the Barnabus Award for Religious Education in 1998, 1999 and 2000 and it has used the money to improve resources. Teachers and classroom assistants have established good relationships with pupils and these promote good behaviour and attitudes to work in the majority of lessons. However, pupils with more complex needs are not consistently involved in religious education lessons and the school acknowledges this to be a priority for future development.

182. There have been some good improvements since the last inspection. Planning has been updated and resources have been matched to it. There is also a clear understanding of the need to develop the assessment procedures on the subject.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

183. Standards of achievement in personal and social education are satisfactory overall. They are very good at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stage 4, satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. Standards are related to the quality of teaching and learning at each key stage. This is very good at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stage 4, satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. All pupils have suitable individual targets for personal and social development (PSD), and there is a planned programme of lessons to develop their knowledge and understanding in the subject. However, where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, at Key Stage 3, time allocated for circle time is not planned, and in some other sessions, such as when pupils are having drinks during the day, planning does not take account of pupils' PSD targets. The result is that learning opportunities are missed. Staff do not systematically assess and record pupils' achievements in some of these sessions. At Key Stage 1, where the planning for these sessions is very good, and clear 'personal skills' targets are set for individual pupils, standards of achievement are good. All staff make good use of incidental learning opportunities, during the school day, and this helps to promote personal and social skills.

184. Teaching and learning are very good at Key Stage 1, which promotes high standards. An excellent lesson was seen at this stage, and pupils' records suggest that teaching and learning are very good overall. The quality of planning and recording is very high at this key stage. For example, during drinks sessions, all pupils have individual targets to work on, and detailed records are kept of the progress pupils make in acquiring personal hygiene skills. Individual needs are catered for very well, by building in a stretching session, for example. Speaking and listening, and co-operative play, are encouraged by the staff. By age 7, higher attaining pupils know the names of familiar adults and children, and several feed and change with minimal support. They play together at break times and are confident in communicating with each other and with adults. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are taught with sensitivity and understanding and they successfully achieve the 'self help skills' targets that are regularly set for them. They are able to express likes and dislikes through facial gestures and vocalising. They clearly enjoy the company of others.

185. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Three lessons were seen, and teaching and learning were satisfactory in each. During drinks sessions, communication is encouraged, as well as socially appropriate behaviour. However, not every session has clear planning, which is a weakness. During circle time, pupils' social skills are developed when they are encouraged to learn to recognise human emotions from people's voices and facial expressions. Higher attaining pupils are able to identify colours that represent human emotions of sadness, anger and happiness, and they 'model' those emotions with facial gesture. PMLD pupils can eye point to appropriate colours that represent particular emotions. By age 11 pupils have grown in confidence and self esteem. They become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses through the end-of-day sessions when they are encouraged to reflect on how well they have done, and when good work is celebrated.

186. At Key Stage 3, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Altogether, seven lessons were seen; one was good, two were satisfactory, and four were unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning are associated mainly with the lack of planning for taught PSHE sessions at break times and at the end of the school day. These sessions tend to be familiar rituals. Unfortunately, many opportunities for pupils to make progress in their personal and social skills are not taken during these sessions. Lesson plans do not identify individual PSD targets, or assess progress against these, so learning opportunities are missed. The good progress in communication made by PMLD pupils, through feeding plans at lunch times, is not effectively built on in these sessions. Also, in lessons where pupils were to develop knowledge and understanding, for example about recycling materials, there were weaknesses in planning and preparation, and this had the effect that pupils were not engaged as well as they should have been. This led to some becoming bored and restless.

187. At Key Stage 4, teaching and learning are good. Two lessons were seen; one was very good, the other satisfactory. By age 16 the planning for independence, which is central to the programme of personal, social and health education, is having a positive impact on all pupils. Higher attaining pupils take part in 'work skills' week, tidying up, helping with the baking, and enjoying the independence they are able to exercise. A particular strength of teaching and learning at Key Stage 4 is the involvement of mentors, who are supporting certain pupils in improving their learning, or 'doing better' as it is known in the school. This is a fairly recent project which has originated from the school's involvement in the *Success Zone*. Early indications are that pupils are better motivated, and they are certainly developing a heightened awareness of how they can improve. By age 16, all pupils have gained the OCR certificate in 'Life and Living Skills' at introductory grades.

188. At all key stages, support staff are invaluable for the part they play the planned lessons, often taking on the full teaching responsibility for particular pupils. All staff ensure that lessons are rich in communication at all levels of ability.

189. The co-ordinator has worked hard to set up a very broad curriculum for the subject and is clear about the way she wishes to see the subject develop. As yet, her monitoring and evaluation has not ensured consistently good planning of lessons across the key stages. There has not been enough improvement since the last inspection. Many of the targets set from that report have yet to be achieved, though the department file shows good progress in planning against the targets. Improved lesson planning for the subject is the key to raising standards further.

POST 16

190. Since the school was last inspected, provision has been made more inclusive by creating one class with a mixture of students with severe learning difficulties, and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Previously these two groups were taught separately, and those with PMLD did not have a curriculum that was different from that of younger pupils. The intended curriculum is now very broad, balanced, and well suited to students approaching the transition from school to adult life. For example, there are opportunities for all students to sample, through link courses, the sort of provision they may move on to when they leave school. There is also a well

planned programme of careers education, including experience of work for all. Good links with other agencies help to

prepare students well for leaving school. Good assessment and detailed recording ensures that all aspects of the curriculum lead to nationally recognised accreditation, for students of all abilities. However, teaching and learning are better for pupils with severe learning difficulties than they are for pupils with PMLD, because activities and resources are not always suitable for those with PMLD. As a result, standards of achievement, in some areas, reflect these differences. Nonetheless, standards of achievement are satisfactory overall.

191. In the key skill of communication, all students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good; two lessons were seen, and teaching was very good in one and good in the other. All students are set clear targets, and these are reviewed each half term. Students make good progress against these targets. They are keen to do better, and staff involve them well in assessing how well they have done, and what they could do to improve on their performance. Good teaching encourages students to speak in phrases or sentences, and to enunciate words clearly. Questioning is pitched at a suitable level, enabling students to show their understanding of what they have heard. Staff sign, to help students understand what is said, and students who do not communicate verbally respond by smiling, vocalising or making eye contact with adults. Speaking and listening are encouraged well in other areas of the curriculum. By the time they are 19, higher attaining students take part in discussions in a small group. One was seen to volunteer to answer the telephone, which he did with confidence, subsequently passing on a clear, short message to a member of staff. Higher attaining students make good progress by using more complex sentences in discussion, and become more willing to expand their answers to questions.

192. Staff make good use of sensory stimulation to encourage the communication of students with PMLD. When adults are reading stories aloud, others use a variety of resources to bring the story to life. For example, when the story included a bus arriving at school, a horn was sounded, and water was gently sprayed on to students' faces to illustrate a cup of tea being spilled. These stimuli successfully evoke responses from students with PMLD; as actions are repeated, some students begin to anticipate them. Occasionally, opportunities to reinforce the communication skills of PMLD students in other areas of the curriculum are missed. For example, lesson plans other than those for English do not always show communication targets, so although students experience other areas of the curriculum they do not have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in wider contexts.

193. Standards of achievement in literacy are satisfactory. Staff make suitable use of information technology to develop students' understanding of the written word, and to enable students to record. Higher attaining students use their knowledge of letter and word sounds to help them read words they do not immediately recognise. They write, using a neat print and spell correctly words with five or six letters. Teachers select books that appeal to students. For example, the group was reading 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', which is the school production planned for next term. Students enjoy books read aloud, and understand simple worksheets that are constructed with symbols and text. When writing by using a computer, higher attainers correctly use the Caps Lock key and the space bar; they also successfully save and print their work.

194. Standards of achievement in numeracy are satisfactory. By the time they are 19, higher attaining students have sufficient understanding and competence in using money to make purchases, they know basic shapes and units of measurement, and can record their work. Lower attaining students count by rote and match numbers up to five. Students make steady progress towards the targets set for them, and lessons give opportunities to work on these, as well as to introduce other aspects. In the single lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Students tasted fruits, indicating which they liked best, and setting out their class findings in the form of a bar chart. The tasting of fruits was well selected as an activity, as it appealed to most students. All students were involved in making a choice of their favourite because those who could not do this verbally were offered switches, which activated a recorded message. The lesson plan showed individual targets as well as general ones, and the teacher made sure that students had opportunities to work on them. For example, one student who was working on counting numbers to ten was given the opportunity to count how many students liked each fruit. The recording task was suitable for higher attaining pupils, as it involved making a pictorial graph by cutting and pasting pictures of fruits on to a prepared chart. However, this was not a suitable activity for students with PMLD, who were only occasionally involved in the process of sticking, with the assistance of support staff.

195. In personal, social and health education, standards of achievement are good. Students achieve most of the targets set for them. They improve their independence skills and their ability to work with others. They also show increasing responsibility, and higher attainers occasionally show initiative. Teaching and learning were good in the single lesson seen. Here, students were preparing food, either as part of their *Snack Basket* enterprise, or involved as members of a group preparing fruit salad. In the enterprise activity, students take orders from staff for lunchtime snacks, then prepare these. Teaching carefully emphasised hygienic and safe practice, and students followed the guidance well. They were given good opportunities to practise numeracy skills, by counting the number of sandwiches with a particular filling, and then recording them. Students with PMLD, involved in preparing the fruit salad, were given opportunities to taste and feel ingredients. Students were given choices, such as selecting one of two cartons to open. At the end of the session, several students took responsibility for washing up and clearing away. Through similar enterprises, such as car washing, students have improved their ability to plan tasks, work with others, and identify how they can do better. Several show increased self-confidence, by initiating conversation more frequently, for example. Students benefit from the wider social contact they experience during their links with colleges or day centres, and they mix with younger pupils in clubs at school, and on residential visits away from school. They socialise with adults when they visit places of work or undertake work experience, and with the general public when they visit leisure complexes and other places in the local community.

196. Standards of achievement in physical education are particularly good. Students achieve a good range of awards, from swimming certificates to medals in the special Olympics. A particular strength of teaching is the wide range of learning opportunities provided for the students. For the physically fit, there is an opportunity to tackle the demanding physical challenges of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and one student has recently achieved the Gold Award. Students also sample a variety of leisure activities available in the local community. In the single lesson seen, where students were learning to play Unihoc, teaching and learning were very good. Students readily took responsibility for moving furniture out of the way at the start, then entered enthusiastically into the warm-up exercises. Careful demonstration by the teacher was copied faithfully by the students, who

tried very hard to do their best. The more physically able students were challenged well, and rose to these high expectations. They progressed well from controlling a ball, to the more difficult skill of controlling a puck. The teacher and support staff gave well judged support, giving good guidance, time and encouragement to enable students to master techniques, but also supporting them so that all achieved success by scoring goals. All students were energetically involved, and all showed an increase in skills during the course of the lesson. Success was identified well, and celebrated, in the review at the end of the lesson.

197. In other areas of the broad curriculum, standards are satisfactory overall. In some areas, higher attaining students achieve better than those with PMLD, because the latter are not set suitable tasks, and are not engaged or stimulated well for parts of lessons. This was the case in two unsatisfactory lessons seen. For example, in a discussion about people who inspire us, students with PMLD were not included as well as they had been in other sessions, for example through opportunities to press switches to activate Yes and No responses. Similarly, in a lesson which focused on the similarities and differences between the United Kingdom and the USA, students with PMLD were given too few sensory experiences to enable them to develop a wide understanding of the topic. However, they did have opportunities to sample American food, such as hot dogs.