

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Sandfield Park School**

Liverpool

LEA area : City of Liverpool

Unique Reference Number: 130961

Headteacher: Mr John Hudson

Reporting inspector: Rita Kirkwood  
10421

Dates of inspection: 4-8 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708373

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandfield Walk West Derby Liverpool L12 1LH
Telephone number :	0151-228 0324
Fax number :	0151-252 1273
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Pinnington
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Rita Kirkwood, Registered Inspector	Physical education; English as an additional language.	Attainment and progress; Leadership and management; Integration.
Sarah Mc Dermott, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities.	Attendance; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Efficiency of the school;
Gillian Carter	English; Modern Foreign Languages; Music; Religious education; Special educational needs.	Teaching
Andrew Margerison	Mathematics; Science; Design technology; Information technology.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Post-16
Michael McDowell	History, Geography, Art.	Curriculum and assessment; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **What the school does well**

Pupils make good progress overall during their time in school and very good progress in physical education and in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Behaviour is excellent and the attitudes, relationships and personal development of pupils are very good.

Teaching in over two thirds of lessons is good or better and is very good in physical education, history and personal, social and health education.

Arrangements for assessment are good.

The moral and social development of pupils is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is good.

Arrangements for the support and guidance of pupils are very good.

The opportunities for pupils to integrate into mainstream schools are good.

The school has a good partnership with parents and with the local community.

Leadership is very good and is successful in promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of the school's work.

The school generally makes good use of its resources.

### **Where the school has weaknesses**

Information technology is not used effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography and music.

The use of homework is inconsistent and does not sufficiently support learning.

In some lessons support staff are not deployed to assist the learning of pupils effectively.

The playground is unsafe for wheelchair sports activities.

**The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The shortcomings will be addressed in an action plan, which will be prepared by the governors and sent to all parents.**

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. There is now good accommodation for art, design technology, science and food technology, and in addition, the school has recently installed a multi-sensory room. The security of the buildings and the access for transport has been improved. There are no longer any issues relating to hygiene arrangements. The playground has not been resurfaced and remains too dangerous to be used for sport activities by pupils in wheelchairs. Pupils make good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Systems are in place for the monitoring of teaching, which is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching throughout the school. Support staff training has been a high priority for the school. Most of these staff have successfully completed a National Vocational Qualification level 2 in care during the last year. Effective procedures for monitoring and developing the curriculum are in place. There are schemes of work that address all areas of the National Curriculum in most subjects. The school has policies on sex education, special educational needs and attendance, about which parents are informed. In order to meet the need many pupils have, for support and advice from a speech and language therapist, the school has nominated one teacher to be responsible for communication. The provision of speech and language therapy has improved and is now available upon referral for individual pupils. The school is well placed to build upon its strengths and has a good capacity for future improvement.

## Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 16	By 19
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	B
English:		
listening and speaking	B	B
reading	B	B
writing	C	B
Mathematics	C	C
Science	B	B
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A

Key	
<i>very good</i>	A
<i>good</i>	B
<i>satisfactory</i>	C
<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
<i>poor</i>	E

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

Pupils make good progress overall. They make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4 and post-16. Pupils make very good progress in physical education as they develop ball skills, increase their stamina and body awareness and learn to swim, or participate actively in hydrotherapy and gymnastic sessions. The school is successful in national sporting competitions for pupils with physical disabilities, for example wheelchair dancing and athletics. In PSHE pupils develop their independence skills to the best of their ability. They learn about road safety, safety in the kitchen and how to cook and look after themselves. They develop an understanding of society and life in the community. Pupils make good progress in history, art, French and religious education and satisfactory progress in design technology. Progress in information technology, geography and music is unsatisfactory.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
11 - 16 years	Good	Physical education; PSHE; history	Music
Post-16	Good	PSHE	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Very good		

Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection, with fewer than four percent of lessons now being unsatisfactory and over two thirds being good or better. This is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teaching in one third of lessons seen is very good or excellent. There is now no significant variation in the quality of teaching by key stage. Teaching of physical education and PSHE is very good and is a strength of the school. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is excellent, because the school has effective procedures and high expectations of pupils.
Attendance	Overall, attendance is satisfactory and is in line with similar schools. However, punctuality is unsatisfactory due to the frequent late arrival of buses in the morning.
Ethos*	The school has a very positive ethos, which makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
Leadership and management	The headteacher and senior management team give very effective leadership. The governing body provides strong links with the local community.
Curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory, meets National Curriculum requirements and includes a suitable emphasis on literacy. At post-16 the curriculum is particularly relevant to pupils' needs. While generally balanced, the arrangements for the allocation of time do not best promote progress, as lessons are generally too long.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with additional or complex needs make good progress. Most of their needs are met by the adapted curriculum and available therapies.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school strongly promotes pupils' social and moral development. Pupils learn to help one another and to consider others. It provides well for their spiritual and cultural development, which are promoted by the curriculum, especially art, English and religious education.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is a very good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is good and resources are adequate. The resources for information technology are limited and not sufficient to support the curriculum.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The progress their children make.</li> <li>● The support and care given to their children.</li> <li>● Information from the school for parents.</li> <li>● Extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>● The behaviour of the pupils.</li> <li>● The openness of the school and the swift response to any parental concern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● See below.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views of the parents. The school is welcoming to parents and regularly consults them on a range of issues. Most of the concerns expressed by parents relate to issues outside the control of the school, such as the lack of regular access to occupational and speech and language therapy, and overnight respite opportunities for their children.



## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

The governing body and senior management team should continue to improve the quality of education offered by the school by:

- I. ensuring that all pupils make better progress in information technology and use it in all areas of the curriculum (see paragraph 85).

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

This is a new school, which opened in September 1996, following the reorganisation of special education in the city of Liverpool. The school is a mixed, maintained, special school for pupils aged 11-19. It is on the edge of a pleasant park in a residential area and is accommodated in two single storey buildings. The buildings were extensively converted when the school opened, to support the delivery of a secondary school curriculum. The school is registered for 75 pupils. All the pupils have physical disabilities and a range of other difficulties, including serious medical conditions, learning difficulties, visual impairment and epilepsy. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. On entry to the school, the attainments of all pupils are well below the national expectation. Some pupils spend part of the school week in a local mainstream school that is resourced for pupils with physical disabilities.

1. Most pupils live in the city area and at the time of the inspection there were 64 pupils on roll, 40 boys and 24 girls. 39 pupils are eligible for free school meals and three are from homes where English is not the first language. Four pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education or acts of collective worship. Some pupils have overnight stays at the residential unit attached to the primary special school. Pupils are encouraged to stay after school, to take part in extra-curricular activities and to participate in residential visits away from home, organised by the school. Pupils generally transfer to a range of further education establishments when they leave the school at the age of 19.
2. The school's aims are to:
  - provide a happy, safe, secure and stimulating environment, in which pupils can develop their full potential, physically, mentally, spiritually and socially;
  - foster a sense of personal worth and self esteem;
  - produce confident and caring young people, who can take their place in society as independently as possible;
  - deliver a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
  - work closely with parents, and to support them in developing their child's full potential;
  - play an active role in the community, and so enhance greater awareness and understanding of mutual need;
  - liaise with an extensive range of outside agencies to help provide the widest possible experience for pupils;
  - continue to develop and implement the equal opportunities policy.

## 1. Key indicators

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year : 1998-99

		%
Authorised	School	11.3
Absence	National comparative data	11
Unauthorised	School	0.9
Absence	National comparative data	1

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	34
Satisfactory or better	96.3
Less than satisfactory	3.7

## PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### Attainment and progress

2. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom this school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements of special educational needs and in annual reviews.*
3. Overall pupils make good progress. In Key Stage 4 and at post-16 pupils make good progress and satisfactory progress is made in Key Stage 3. The attention the school gives to the pupils with complex special needs assists them to make good progress. The school has responded positively to the issues raised in the last inspection and has successfully addressed those factors that affected the standards achieved by pupils. There has been a significant improvement in the progress made by pupils in English and science. There are effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and for assessing pupils' progress. Schemes of work have been developed and the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils with additional and complex difficulties make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of their needs, work hard to set appropriate tasks and ensure full curriculum entitlement and have good support from the health professionals working in the school.
4. In 1999, two pupils gained grades in Associated Examination Board basic geography and four passed basic communication, three with merit. Fifteen pupils gained grades in Achievement Tests in literacy and fourteen in numeracy. Four pupils passed the Certificate of Achievement in art with distinction and several pupils achieved grades from B to F in GCSE examinations in science, mathematics, art and health studies. In the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses several pupils were successful in the Youth Award Scheme and "Towards Independence" units. All pupils from Year 9 have opportunity to gain certificates in a range of subjects, accredited by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. Last year 179 certificates were awarded to 36 pupils.
5. Pupils make good progress in English and science. They make satisfactory progress in mathematics. In English, lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 follow stories with understanding, taking part by responding with gesture or by eye pointing. Higher attaining pupils read with confidence, using a full range of decoding strategies. Some pupils extend their speaking skills from single words to clearly spoken sentences. All pupils are enthusiastic to communicate and develop good strategies for doing so. Pupils make slow but steady progress in developing writing skills. Some consolidate word-building, spelling and punctuation, while others overwrite or copy. At Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils make good progress in working independently, consolidating their writing and spelling skills. They use reference books to find information and show initiative in carrying out their own research. They plan and draft their own stories. Lower attaining pupils read simple texts and increase their knowledge of vocabulary. Pupils talk confidently and listen well. They begin to take part in class discussions on issues of general interest. In Post-16, higher attaining pupils are very articulate and can discuss their ideas and express their opinions with some justification. They listen carefully to each other and their teachers and respond appropriately to questions and in discussions. The standards of reading of these pupils are in line with national standards. Pupils work slowly at writing tasks, which limits the range of written tasks they experience. The majority of lower attaining pupils respond appropriately to questions, although their capacity for oral communication is very limited. Using a combination of vocalisation and signing they indicate their agreement and opinion to closed questions or choices. Pupils' speaking and listening skills enhance the curriculum and have a positive effect on the progress they make. Reading is used appropriately across the curriculum, but sometimes writing is kept to a minimum, as most pupils carry out writing tasks slowly.
6. In mathematics, lower attaining pupils know 'one more than' and sort and match by colour and size successfully, by the end of Key Stage 3. Higher attaining pupils know the two times table and some

count in tens to one hundred. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils solve basic mathematical problems. They identify factors, calculate simple percentages and higher attaining pupils convert fractions into decimals. Pupils use their knowledge to solve simple problems. Higher attaining pupils in Post-16 apply their knowledge of the use of money to run a tuck shop and the student bank. They go shopping, calculate change and maintain cash records. Lower attaining pupils distinguish between different coins and their relative values. The pupils' ability to handle data to create and read graphs and to use formulae is insecure. Pupils' developing grasp of number supports learning across the curriculum.

7. By the end of Key Stage 3 in science, pupils give examples of adaptations made by animals to their environment, for example a polar bear's fur. Some pupils know the main parts of a plant and have a developing understanding of a fair test. Pupils make predictions and some read a thermometer correctly. Some pupils sample the environment using a quadrat, successfully identifying three plant species. By the end of Key Stage 4 some pupils know the function of teeth and identify the different types in humans. At Post-16, pupils consolidate their understanding of a healthy diet. Some pupils discuss possible sources of information about pollution as part of their study of healthy living.
8. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology lessons, but progress over time is unsatisfactory. They do not develop the full range of information technology skills or the ability to apply them to their work. There is a suitable range of adapted equipment, but classroom computers are used mainly for word processing. This limits the opportunities pupils have to consolidate their skills in handling data or controlling events through modelling programs.
9. Pupils make very good progress in physical education and in personal, social and health education. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities and for older pupils to develop and practise their independence skills outside the school. Pupils make good progress in history, art, French and religious education and satisfactory progress in design technology. Progress in geography is unsatisfactory overall. The good progress pupils make in individual geography lessons is not supported by sufficient allocation of time to the subject. In music, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in developing their recognition of musical instruments and their ability to distinguish pitch.
10. There are no identifiable differences in the progress between boys and girls, pupils of differing attainment, or those for whom English is an additional language or from ethnic minority groups.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

11. The pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Most are keen and enthusiastic in every lesson. A class of Year 7 and 8 pupils really enjoyed experimenting on the electronic keyboards in their music lesson. Pupils show interest in their work and are happy to explain what they are doing, whether to their teacher or to visitors. Many pupils are confident enough to contribute to class discussions. A tutorial lesson on the theme of maturity elicited many interesting ideas from Year 9 pupils, as did a Year 11 survey on local community issues. Most pupils listen well. Year 8 and 9 pupils concentrated very well in a lesson about kitchen safety and consequently made good progress in learning. The majority of pupils are confident in the classroom and do not hesitate to ask for help when necessary. However, some pupils are over reliant on adult assistance and do not persevere when a challenge occurs. Many pupils show pride in their finished work and delight in receiving praise from their teacher or the headteacher.
12. The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting endorsed this view. There have been no exclusions. In the classroom the level of very good behaviour has a strong effect on attainment and progress. On the rare occasions when a pupil is disruptive, the others sensibly ignore the disturbance and continue with the task in hand. Pupils move around the building and grounds sensibly and are aware of the need to manoeuvre their wheelchairs with care to avoid others around them. They behave impeccably when out on trips. A group of Year 9 pupils represented the school very well when they travelled out of school to practise using pelican crossing. The pupils using the local swimming pool were very good school ambassadors. Pupils are courteous and polite. During lunch behaviour is very good. Pupils talk sensibly amongst themselves and with staff. Post-16 pupils engaged in an interesting conversation with the inspectors. Pupils address staff and other adults with respect. There is no litter or graffiti on the school site.

13. There are very good relationships between the pupils. Pupils from all backgrounds work together well in lessons. The whole school applauded heartily and with genuine pleasure after hearing a solo sung by a Year 11 pupil. Older pupils collaborated well to raise money for a range of charities. In their free time pupils chat and laugh together. A group of boys playing football at break time included those who could walk and run, as well as those in wheelchairs. The rapport between pupils and staff is very good. Pupils are keen to please their teachers. Often a shared sense of humour is evident in lessons.
14. All pupils have a very good sense of respect for other people's feelings and values. They listened with close attention to a class assembly on the life and beliefs of the Romans. In the classroom, most pupils listen respectfully to their peers' views. In a post-16 lesson on health, the students were willing to share their ideas and come to an agreed class conclusion on the danger of smoking. When prayers are said, whether during lunchtime, in the class or in assembly, most pupils treat the quiet moment with appropriate respect. In religious education pupils are interested in the different traditions of religion.
15. Pupils take on any opportunities for responsibility with maturity. Class representatives sensibly return the register to the office. The post-16 pupils organise the video club and the tuck shop. They are also a great asset when hearing pupils read or sharing books in the younger classes. The Year 10 and 11 pupils, who staged their Roman class assembly, did so with pride and professionalism. Pupils leave school as mature and responsible citizens.
18. **Attendance**
16. The attendance rate of pupils is satisfactory. It is at the same level as the last inspection. The high level of authorised absence is linked to necessary medical treatment. The absence rate is no higher than schools with a similar intake of pupils with physical disabilities. The school has a comprehensive attendance policy and is working successfully in keeping the rate of unauthorised absence low. Parents respond well to the school's reminders to notify it of the reasons for absence. The satisfactory levels of attendance have a beneficial effect on the progress of all the pupils.
17. The marking of registers meets legal requirements. They are routinely called at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. Some class teachers do not return the registers sufficiently promptly to the office to ensure that there is an accurate central record of pupils on the premises. Absence figures are reported in the annual report of governors to parents and the prospectus, but are not correctly given as a percentage of the number of pupils present.
18. The punctuality of pupils arriving for the start of school is unsatisfactory. Nearly all pupils are transported in local authority buses. Most reach school in time for 9.00am, but often at least one bus arrives after the beginning of the school day. During the inspection week a significant number of buses arrived late, with a few not turning up until after 10.00am. The school is aware of the importance of the prompt arrival of pupils and is quick to check up on poor punctuality. Pupils are swiftly chaperoned off the buses and into lessons once they arrive. However, the late arrival causes disruption to their education and to that of their fellow pupils. Pupils are always pleased to come to school in the morning and exchange cheery greetings with the staff. During the day pupils move purposefully about the school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

19. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Fewer than four percent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory and over two thirds were good or better. This has a positive influence on pupils' progress. Teaching in a third of lessons was very good or excellent. There is now no significant variation in the quality of teaching by key stage. Teaching takes account of pupils' ability to understand, including those from homes where English is a second language.
20. Teaching in English and science is good and in mathematics it is satisfactory. Teaching in religious

education is good, with teachers using a wide range of imaginative multi-sensory approaches. In information technology, teaching of the subject is satisfactory but does not cover all the strands of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The teaching of physical education is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils make very good progress, many participating in a range of national sporting competitions. The teaching of personal, social and health education is very good across the whole school. The good progress pupils make during lessons is reinforced at all times during the school day by the support and example set by staff and older pupils. The teaching of history in Key Stage 3 is very good. The teaching of art, design technology, geography and French is good. Overall, teaching of music is unsatisfactory.

21. The teaching of communication skills is well developed across the whole curriculum, with staff building on the careful groundwork done in the English department, especially for pupils with complex needs. Wherever possible, teachers encourage the use of reading to find out information or to consolidate skills. For example in history, where the teacher often gives new words in a written format and leaves them in the classroom for pupils to practise in her absence. Written skills are used when they are appropriate, but because they are difficult for so many pupils there is a good deal of reliance on worksheets or recording by teachers in many subjects.
22. The quality of teaching in post-16 is good. The teaching and support staff are skilled in working with pupils with complex communication, learning and physical difficulties. Activities are well matched to the pupils' abilities. Significant proportions of these activities are linked to pupils developing independent living skills. For example, work on money and coin recognition, road safety and safety in the home and kitchen. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to undertake extended assignments that often involve a significant element of independent study and research.
23. In the majority of good lessons, planning is careful and thorough and is based on clear whole-school guidance drawn from the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers have good subject expertise and a wide knowledge and understanding of the pupils' learning needs. They assess responses skilfully by careful questioning and know how to move learning forward in a series of small steps. Expectations are often high, and pupils gradually develop the confidence to set themselves high standards and pursue them actively. Most teachers pace lessons well and deliver material in a lively way so that pupils remain on task and enthusiastic. A good example of an exciting lesson was when a teacher demonstrated Moses' flight into the Wilderness and the origins of the Jewish festival of Sukkot by involving the pupils actively, moving along the corridor helping to build a shelter with leaves and branches. All teachers manage pupils well, which results in a quiet and purposeful atmosphere in which learning can take place. Teachers make good use of resources, frequently making them specially to meet the needs of individuals. Examples are teachers enlarging print for pupils with visual impairment or reprinting stories in symbols so that pupils can follow a text more easily. The special needs of all pupils are understood and taken account of in teachers' planning. The school liaises regularly with the local authority's Visual Impairment Support Service.
24. Unsatisfactory features of some lessons include a lack of clear objectives in teachers' planning, an inadequate range of activities on offer to pupils, slow pace and low expectations. In these lessons pupils make little progress and became frustrated by their own lack of success. In a few lessons, the role of the support assistants is not clearly defined and valuable time is lost by support staff doing nothing during a teacher-directed session, or by the teacher having to give instructions during lessons. Health professionals and teachers work constructively together, showing sensitivity and flexibility over matters of timing and access.
25. The use of homework is inconsistent across the school. Although teachers often set work to be done at home, pupils do not generally write down the details or receive written instructions, and not all of them do the work requested. The school is aware of the shortcomings in this area and has produced a draft policy on homework which plans to offer structured guidance for parents and to make clear exactly what the school's expectations are.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

26. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is sufficiently broad and all the subjects required by National

Curriculum regulations are taught at the appropriate key stages. Religious education is provided, as is sex education, and personal, social, and health education, which includes work on the dangers of drug abuse. Within most subjects, the full range of attainment targets is addressed. However, this is not the case in information technology where arrangements are not in place to teach control technology. This is a weakness.

27. There is generally good use of time within lessons. The total time given to teaching is, however, at twenty-three hours per week, approximately one hour short of recommended times for Key Stage 3, and two hours short for Key Stage 4. This was a shortcoming referred to in the last inspection report.
28. The lessons last for approximately an hour. For some subjects, such as French or mathematics, this is too long. While pupils, because of their special educational needs, are slow to complete some tasks, many find it difficult to sustain concentration for sixty minutes. The length of lessons also restricts the approach the school might make to maximise learning in those subjects where two shorter lessons, spaced across the week, would be of greater value than a single long lesson. This is certainly the case for geography. For these reasons, the curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 lacks appropriate balance. The curriculum for post-16 is, in contrast, well balanced. It meets the needs of individuals through flexible arrangements, and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, preparing them well for leaving school.
29. Pupils from Key Stage 4 onwards receive careers guidance and where possible they are given opportunities to undertake workplace visits and work experience. These arrangements are satisfactory. Some pupils have the opportunity to study at a local secondary school. Arrangements for transition from school are good.
30. The curriculum for pupils over sixteen is broad and balanced and is planned to prepare those pupils for life in the community. The curriculum gives good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. The opportunities to develop information technology skills are mainly limited to the use of word processing. Specialist teaching is arranged in science and this has a positive impact upon the progress of pupils. Programmes of study are accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Higher attaining pupils follow the Youth Award Scheme, while others work on 'Towards Independence' units, and there are opportunities for some pupils to follow GCSE courses.
31. The school places an appropriate emphasis on the development of independence skills. The tutor group planning sessions at the beginning of the week make a positive contribution to this. Staff and pupils share any dates, appointments or events that may impinge upon the school week. On a fortnightly basis the post-16 pupils prepare lunch for themselves and the staff. Where possible the pupils are encouraged to get themselves around school and to outside appointments. For example, the school has established good links with a local Information Technology Centre and two pupils travel there independently each week on the train. Members of the local Motability organisation visit the school to give some pupils the opportunity to learn to drive.
32. Individual education plans are now in place. The targets that address learning, especially in literacy and numeracy, vary in quality. While some are quite precise about what is to be achieved, many are not. Overall, individual education planning is satisfactory.
33. Schemes of work within subjects are generally good. They trace out a pathway for learning and facilitate the progression of pupils through the schemes of work of the National Curriculum or through the accredited courses they undertake. Overall, the curriculum is relevant to the aims of the school. It is strongly enhanced by sporting activities and a wide range of well planned educational visits. At each key stage and at post-16, the arrangements made by the school to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum are good. Planning is good and ensures that the needs of all pupils are met.
34. The assessment of what pupils know, understand, and can do, is good. Within each subject, there are detailed procedures by which achievement and progress are measured and recorded. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them, as it is being done. They give clear guidance about what might be done to improve it. Teachers make good use of the information they gain by assessment, to help develop and

plan future work. Statutory requirements for the review of statements are fully met, and in addition, parents receive annual reports of their children's progress. Where it is appropriate to do so, the school enters pupils for the national tests at Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics, and science.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

35. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It has maintained and strengthened the good work noted in the previous inspection report. The school is very strongly committed to this aspect of the development of its pupils. It makes good provision for their spiritual development. Well-planned lessons in religious education, the aesthetic appreciation taught through art, literature, and incidental events in the life of the school, all contribute to this. Pupils are given time to pray or reflect daily. An example of how unplanned happenings contribute to heightening pupils' awareness of things beyond self, was seen during an end of afternoon session, when the school was gathered in the hall. A senior pupil, at the request of others, sang to the school. He did so unaccompanied, in a clear, tuneful voice. This clearly lifted spirits and promoted good feelings.
36. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Pupils learn to do the right thing. They understand that there is a moral underpinning to choice. Much of what the pupils learn derives from the excellent example shown by those who work in the school, and the example set by older pupils. Social learning is seen at its best in the dining hall, where pupils learn to take turns, and to serve others. The school encourages pupils to contribute to charity and to develop a strong sense of loyalty to their class and their school. Relationships between pupils and with staff make an important contribution to the social development of pupils.
37. Pupils encounter their own culture through the curriculum, particularly in literature and art. They study the works of great authors and playwrights, including Shakespeare. They study the art of artists of the past from England and Europe. They have an opportunity to study the art of other cultures and learn from it. In their lessons in religious education they learn about, and learn from, the beliefs and practices of the great faith communities. Provision in this area of the work of the school is good.
40. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
38. The support and guidance provided to pupils is a strength of the school. Many areas of support have improved since the last inspection. The school is very well prepared to provide for each pupil's educational and health needs. The procedures for monitoring the academic progress of pupils are good. Staff carefully track the learning of individual pupils, to ensure that they all benefit from accurate educational support in each area of the curriculum. Pupils receive a very good level of support in their personal development. Teachers, support staff and therapists know the pupils very well. Personal development is carefully monitored in the pupils' individual education plans and at the annual review of their statement of educational needs. Support staff are well trained to give effective care for the mobility and health needs of all pupils.
- 41.
42. An effective team of physiotherapists liaises well with the school. It provides an essential service, with as little disruption as possible to the education of the pupils. Pupils with complex additional needs are well supported in school. Both occupational and speech and language therapy, although limited, are available to pupils on referral. The school benefits from a team of committed and knowledgeable nurses. They cover all daily medical routines, deal with emergencies and contribute to the curriculum in health education lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the lack of therapy was criticised.
43. The pupils are very well guided in their personal, social and health education lessons. Road safety, the dangers of smoking and hazards in the kitchen were some of the very important areas covered during the inspection week. Pupils are prepared very well for life beyond school. All have the chance to practise using the local shops and leisure facilities. They also receive sex education and guidance in the use and misuse of drugs. Students transferring to college are confident and feel able to cope well as they move on.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are excellent. The school has



clear policies on the management of behaviour. Staff and pupils are familiar with the well-established systems. Effective lines of communication ensure that any misbehaviour is treated consistently by all staff. Pupils who display challenging behaviour are monitored well through their individual behaviour plan. Other isolated incidents of poor behaviour are recorded carefully in the central incident book. Bullying is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly and effectively should it occur. The school has an extensive range of rewards to emphasise the positive side to the promotion of discipline. Pupils are awarded individual merits for good work or behaviour and classes can win group merits towards an annual trophy. The Friday assembly is a celebration of all that has been good during the week. The extremely successful promotion of discipline is evident in the resulting excellent behaviour of all pupils.

40. The school has effective procedures to monitor the attendance of the pupils. Registers are regularly marked morning and afternoon. Some class teachers do not return the register sufficiently promptly to the office, so that an accurate central record of pupils on site can be maintained at all times. The headteacher carefully follows up unnotified absences.
41. The school has effective child protection procedures. The headteacher is the person nominated to liaise with the child protection agency. The deputy headteacher has written a thorough new policy and gives good support to the headteacher. All staff know what to do in the event of a potential child protection case. The school has well established links with the social services department, to the benefit of all pupils.
42. Procedures for promoting the wellbeing, health and safety of the pupils are very successful. A well drafted health and safety policy provides a good foundation for safe practices throughout the school. Risk assessments are carried out regularly by the health and safety group. The site manager is vigilant on day to day hazards. Pupils arriving and departing are carefully chaperoned to and from the buses to prevent accidents. Pupils at the school are safe and secure in the knowledge that their welfare is paramount.

#### **Partnership with parents and the community**

43. Parents are very appreciative of all that the school does for their children. Both at the meeting before the inspection and through the questionnaires, parents demonstrated solid support for the school. The new home/ school agreement acts as a good foundation for a successful partnership with parents. The school provides a good quality of information for parents. Regular newsletters inform parents about future events. Parents meet teachers at the beginning of the school year and towards the end, when they discuss the contents of the recently received annual report for their child. Most teachers write unambiguous reports, giving clear descriptions of what pupils know, understand and can do. However, a few reports dwell on attitudes and coverage rather than the vital information on progress. Insufficient formal information is given to parents on what their children are learning in the classroom. They do not receive an outline of topics or curriculum coverage each term to enable them to participate in their children's learning. Parents of pupils with communication problems are given good opportunities to liaise with school through the home/school books. Parents are well informed of their child's progress at the annual review meetings, but the targets set are sometimes not specific enough to involve parents fully in their children's learning. The school is very receptive to parents. Teaching staff always ensure that they are available to speak to parents should the need arise.
44. The involvement of parents in the life of the school is satisfactory. The annual review meetings are well attended. There is no parent teacher association, but social events run by the school are popular. Families are very supportive of the regular discos and enjoy taking part in the summer barbecue. A Maths Fun Workshop attracted a good number of parents interested to learn more about the teaching of mathematics. A few parents accompany their children to school and some come into school to help with outings. There is a draft homework policy, but this is not yet in place and parents are not clear about expectations of work done at home. Any homework set is spasmodic and depends on the individual teacher.
45. The school has very strong links with the local community. Nearby shops and roads are used well to promote skills in independence and road safety. There is particularly good use of the locality for sporting events. The school successfully takes part in athletics, football, hockey and swimming

competitions in the Liverpool area. The hydrotherapy pool at Alder Hey Hospital is well used for therapy and physical education. The school organised a very enjoyable week of activities in the centre of Liverpool, giving the whole school the chance to experience the many attractions of their own city. The profile of the school has successfully been raised in the local community with its representation in the annual raft race in Albert Dock. Pupils have good links with fellow pupils from two local secondary schools, which benefits their personal development. Pupils from one school come and socialise with pupils at break times. A few pupils integrate into another local school on a regular basis. The pupils post-16 benefit from regular visits to the further education college, where the majority of them transfer on leaving school. The school successfully encourages pupils to reciprocate and contribute to their own community. Pupils have raised money for local charities and sent their harvest gifts to help the homeless in Liverpool.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

46. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who has developed a clear educational direction for the school, with the support of the senior management team. The governing body is supportive of the work of the school. Members of the board serve on several sub-committees, including a Finance Committee that meets regularly to monitor the budget. Governors frequently visit the school and are well informed about developments. The school has been successful in addressing the key issues from the last inspection, although the deployment of support staff is still an issue in some lessons. Members of the governing body provide successful links with the local community. The school is well organised and efficiently run, with effective administrative procedures.
47. Clear and effective procedures to monitor both teaching and curriculum development have been developed since the last inspection. The curriculum is effectively co-ordinated by the teachers responsible. Teachers receive regular feedback and opportunities to undertake suitable identified training. There is a clear cycle of development planning. The school has a three year plan, to which staff, governors and parents are invited to contribute. In addition there is a detailed, costed annual development plan, with identified success criteria. The school works successfully towards the targets in the development plan and monitors progress carefully.
48. There is a friendly and open atmosphere in the school, which supports the learning of the pupils. Relationships are very good and all pupils are encouraged to work hard and achieve their best. Success of all pupils is recognised and celebrated. The school is very successful in meeting its aims. Achievement and self worth are valued and a concern for others is fostered. This contributes to the positive ethos of the school.
49. The management of the school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils. The school meets all statutory requirements. The aims and policies throughout the school reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities. All pupils are encouraged to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have a chance to participate in a large number of sports events. There are almost twice as many boys as girls in the school, but this does not prevent girls from having an equal opportunity to be selected for competitive teams. All pupils have opportunities to be entered for national examinations and gain recognised accreditation. The few families of pupils with English as an additional language are given good support. Translation services are available and the school subscribes to a Chinese magazine so it can share in the culture of one of its pupils. Staff provide positive role models to the pupils and keep a careful eye on the achievements of all their pupils to ensure fairness of treatment at every stage.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

50. The qualifications and experience of the teachers meet the demands of the curriculum very well, although the ratio of teaching staff to pupils is lower than is usual in schools of this type. There is a very good match of teachers' qualifications to their subject responsibilities and a significant proportion of teachers have additional qualifications in teaching pupils with learning difficulties. This is an

improvement since the last inspection.

51. The match of the number, qualifications and experience of support staff is satisfactory. The number of support staff is less than is usually found in a school of this type. However, they are appropriately qualified, particularly in the care and welfare aspect of their work, and generally provide skilled and positive support to those individuals or groups of pupils for whom they are responsible. All staff demonstrate skill, care and commitment in their dealings with pupils. Teachers and support staff provide a good role model for the pupils. The school is well served by administrative, maintenance, catering and midday supervisory staff, who make effective contributions to pupils' well being and the ethos of the school.
52. Arrangements for the professional development of teachers are good. Since the last inspection procedures for appraisal and staff job descriptions have been drawn up. The headteacher and deputy headteacher play a pivotal role in working with the staff to develop their expertise in their subject and in the classroom. The opportunities for staff training and professional development, mainly through the local education authority in-service training, are linked to the priorities identified by the school. Support staff have some access to training opportunities. The school has demonstrated a commitment to these staff by providing training in National Vocational Qualifications to level 2 in Care. However, these training opportunities are restricted by contractual arrangements, which limit the school's capacity to organise appropriate events. Procedures for the induction and training of new teachers are in place.
53. The accommodation is good. At the time of the last inspection construction work was still being completed. Since then, the key issue relating to the accommodation has been addressed. There are now specialist facilities for science, design technology and food technology. A multi-sensory room has recently been completed. It is used for music lessons. Post-16 pupils benefit from having their own separate classroom block. The library area is satisfactory, but quite small in area, which significantly limits the number of pupils able to use it at any one time. The previous report referred to structural deficiencies in the buildings such as rotten window frames. The local authority is gradually replacing these window frames, but a number of structural problems still remain and are outside the control of the school to put right. The site manager achieves a good standard of general maintenance and internal decoration. The school is well kept and clean. Classrooms are generally spacious and well appointed and staff use the available space well for teaching and displays. However, the outside areas are unsatisfactory. The surface of the hard play area is very uneven which limits its usefulness both as a play area and as a teaching facility for physical education lessons. In addition, the hard play area also serves as a car park, which limits its use by pupils. Access to the grassed garden area is limited for wheelchair users, but the school has recognised this in the current school development plan. The accommodation for medical and physiotherapy support for the pupils is good. The accommodation for post-16 work is good, although the main door is narrow and is not easy for wheelchair users to open. It is spacious and well appointed. There is ample space for the whole group to meet to discuss issues, have lessons and to hear speakers.
54. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory overall and adequate to teach the planned curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when resources were considered to be generally poor. The library and information technology resources are satisfactory, although the latter are to be shortly enhanced significantly through National Grid for Learning equipment, including Internet access. Specialist equipment to give pupils access to computers and other aspects of the curriculum is satisfactory in range and quality.
59. **The efficiency of the school**
55. The school generally manages available resources well. Educational developments are supported by careful decisions. The well-drafted school development plan is the result of thorough consultation with all the staff and governors. It is a genuine working document. It relates the available budget carefully to prioritised educational improvements. The inclusion of costings and success criteria has been resolved since the last inspection. Co-ordinators are well involved in the direction of spending within their own subject area. They hold regular reviews to ensure that they are achieving the best possible educational value for the money spent. There is a planned overspend of the budget for the next

financial year. This is for essential internal and external refurbishment. It has been carefully planned, by taking advantage of a generous carry over from last year, still leaving the school with a reasonable contingency amount for the next year. The governing body is satisfactorily involved in strategic decisions on the use of financial resources. The finance committee holds regular meetings to ensure that there is systematic budgeting for new educational initiatives. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are conscientious and diligent in ensuring that all planned developments are carried out and carefully linked to the allocated budget.

56. The school makes good use of its resources and accommodation. Since the last inspection both these aspects have greatly improved. The school has a good range of specialist rooms that are well used to the benefit of all pupils. Information technology resources are not yet used to their full potential. Very effective use is made of the teaching staff. Co-ordinator roles are appropriately allocated and the pupils benefit from the expertise in subject teaching. However, the use of support staff is sometimes unsatisfactory. In some classes, support assistants are deployed well to enhance the learning of the pupils. In others they are under-utilised or unsatisfactorily directed. Support staff have had limited training in supporting education in the classroom and teachers are sometimes unclear about how to involve their assistants effectively in the learning process. The deployment of support staff remains an issue from the last inspection. The use of time is generally good. Sometimes the forty minutes set aside for registration and reading at the beginning of the day is not sufficiently rigorously used as an important part of the educational day. The withdrawal of pupils for therapy or medical treatment is organised appropriately in order to balance pupils' health needs with their educational needs.
57. Financial control and school administration are very good. The school administration officer is knowledgeable and well organised. She is well trained in the use of the computer for financial control and management. The finance section of the authority gives a very good level of support to the school. All recommendations from the last audit report have been included in current administration systems.
58. Taking into account the excellent behaviour, personal development and good progress of pupils, as well as the generally efficient use of resources, it is clear that spending is well directed and that the school gives good value for money.

## 63. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### English

59. Pupils make good progress in English, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills, although this is an area of great difficulty for some pupils in the school. Pupils gradually extend their responses from one or two words to longer sentences, clearly spoken, by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils with complex needs learn good strategies for showing response and, by smiles and gesture, show their enthusiasm for communication. In Key Stage 4, many pupils talk confidently and begin to discuss issues of general interest such as euthanasia and enjoy taking part in drama and role-play. Post-16 pupils make good progress. They work well in groups, evaluate their own participation and understand the importance of open-ended questions in gaining information. Throughout the school, pupils with complex additional needs communicate confidently, often showing their enthusiasm for participating and being involved in all classroom activities.
60. Progress in reading gets off to a slow start in Key Stage 3, with some pupils taking time to master basic skills, such as letter and whole-word recognition. They enjoy reading simple texts and begin to develop preferences for certain characters or stories. Pupils with additional needs make good progress through reading symbols alongside text. Reading develops well in Key Stage 4, with many pupils in Year 11 reading confidently for information, as they did in their project about the Romans, or enjoying a range of different sorts of books including horror stories, adventures, plays and poetry. By the time they reach the post-16 department, some pupils read fluently, selecting the main idea and evaluating stylistic devices. Others have developed a useful social sight vocabulary, which enables them to move about the community safely and with confidence. Higher attaining pupils are very articulate and discuss their ideas and express their opinions with some justification. They listen carefully to each other and their teachers and respond appropriately to questions and in discussions. The standards of reading of these pupils are in line with national standards. They read novels and other fiction texts for pleasure fluently and accurately. They extract information from textbooks and leaflets, although their capacity to analyse the information is less well developed. Within the post-16 group the majority of pupils respond appropriately to questions although their capacity for oral communication is very limited. Using a combination of vocalisation and signing they indicate their agreement and opinion to closed questions or choices.
61. Inevitably, the majority of pupils make slower progress in writing than they do in the other English skills. However, they make steady progress. In Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils work hard at acquiring and consolidating basic skills in word-building, spelling and punctuation, whilst others overwrite or copy. A few pupils write at greater length and edit their work to correct their own errors. Progress is good in Key Stage 4, where pupils familiarise themselves with the use of information technology to produce short pieces of written work, often with many errors of spelling and punctuation, but in a range of different formats such as letters, stories and poems. They use drafting and editing to improve the quality of their work. Pupils in post-16 complete the communication units of their Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards and achieve success at levels appropriate to their ability. Some pupils produce cogent and persuasive arguments on topics that interest them and others work hard to produce a series of straightforward questions that could be asked in an interview. Nearly all pupils in the school work very slowly at writing tasks, which limits their experience of the range of written tasks that would normally be appropriate for their age and stage.
62. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work in English. Pupils with the most complex needs show delight and pleasure in sharing books and stories, and all pupils work hard and give of their best in communicating and producing written work that they take pride in.
63. Overall, the teaching of English is good. It was at least satisfactory and over half of it was good or very good in the lessons seen. Teachers plan carefully for their lessons, using the well-designed scheme of

work as a framework, and show great skill in making tasks appropriate to the needs of their pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language. Most teachers assess pupils' understanding and progress constantly, so they are able to rephrase questions or simplify tasks according to pupils' levels of difficulty. A good example of teachers' careful assessment was in a lesson with a group of pupils with complex needs. The teacher kept a detailed record of a pupil's response to learning new letter sounds, so that she could consolidate and repeat any that the pupil found difficult. Teachers often deliver work in a lively way, as when a teacher read aloud pupils' efforts at writing a scary story, using the full range of dramatic effects. In Key Stage 4 and post-16, teachers encourage independence and emphasise the development of self-help skills such as skimming, scanning and working in groups. All teachers manage pupils well, creating a working atmosphere that is productive and positive in lessons. Resources, particularly those purchased recently to support the introduction of the literacy hour, are good, and are well used. Information technology is appropriately used to facilitate pupils' writing skills.

64. Weaknesses in teaching occur when non-specialist teachers leave the pupils to their own devices in reading sessions, rather than providing focussed tasks, which might help them to make more rapid progress. Support assistants do not always have a clearly defined role and valuable time is sometimes lost when they have nothing specific to do, or teachers have to brief them during the lesson. There are no clear guidelines on how progress in reading should be recorded and notes in pupils' reading records are brief and not diagnostic. Whilst there is some parental involvement in terms of hearing pupils read at home, the use of homework is inconsistent between classes and key stages, and not all pupils do the work set.
65. The curriculum is well designed. It allocates themes to each year group, which are then taught according to pupils' level of need or difficulty. There is regular assessment through standardised reading tests, key stage tests, individual education plans, teachers' own assessments and annotated pieces of work kept in classrooms. The amount of external accreditation offered by the school at the end of Key Stage 4 and at post-16 gives pupils something to aim for and is a strength of the school. The English co-ordinator monitors the curriculum by meeting regularly with staff and scrutinising teachers' plans and pupils' work. The co-ordinator provides good support to colleagues who teach the subject.
66. The subject is well resourced with a range of fiction and non-fiction books, an attractive library, course books, dictionaries and thesauruses. A few reading books still in use in Key Stage 3 have poor linguistic content and are not motivating to the pupils using them.
67. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, as they learn to discuss and work in groups, and to aspects of moral development when they discuss issues that arise from their reading of literature. Visits from drama companies and participation in drama workshops also contribute to social, moral and cultural provision in the school.

## **Mathematics**

68. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, as they gain knowledge, skills and understanding in the four strands of the National Curriculum programmes of study. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
69. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics in Key Stage 3. They progress from simple addition of numbers to 10 at the beginning of the key stage, to applying the four rules of number to solve everyday problems, including simple percentages by the end of Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, pupils identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. They use the mental recall of multiplication tables including five, two and ten to make calculations using numbers up to 100. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils recognise three-dimensional shapes and use this knowledge to create computer-based shape mosaics using cubes. They understand the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils identify factors, calculate simple percentages and higher attaining pupils convert fractions into decimals. They are secure in their understanding of place value up to one thousand. The pupils are familiar with the mean, mode, range and median and use their knowledge to solve simple problems. They have an understanding of the properties of common two and

three-dimensional shapes. Pupils extract information from simple bar graphs, but their ability to handle data to create graphs and to use formulae is insecure. Through the use of projects on stocks and shares, time and money, pupils develop an awareness of the importance of numeracy in their everyday lives. Higher attaining pupils post-16 apply this knowledge to run a tuck shop for the younger pupils and the student bank. These pupils go shopping, calculate change and maintain cash records. The lower attaining pupils of this age are developing an awareness of different coins and their relative value, but are insecure in the true purchasing power of individual coins in relation to goods.

70. Pupils' attitudes to work are very good. They listen carefully to their teacher's instructions and are keen to answer questions and to make thoughtful contributions. Higher attaining pupils throughout the school show good levels of sustained concentration and an ability to work on their own with a minimum of supervision and support. They work sensibly and co-operate with their teachers, support staff and each other. Pupils are well behaved and respect the ideas suggested by the other pupils in the group.
71. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good features are evident when the teacher uses good subject knowledge of mathematics and of working with pupils with complex difficulties, to provide activities that are very well matched to the pupils' abilities and capabilities. In one lesson there was a distinct beginning, with a clear introduction followed by an activity session. It ended with a plenary session to recap what had been learnt by the different groups in the class. Generally a secure subject knowledge and sound management make a positive contribution to the pupils' progress. However, in some lessons the pace is slow and the use of teaching time does not enable pupils to benefit from direct teaching. Day to day assessment is used appropriately to check what pupils have learnt and to clarify the understanding of the pupils.
72. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the strands in the National Curriculum programmes of study. There is an appropriate focus upon the development of number skills and the application to everyday use such as money and time. External accreditation in Key Stage 4 is well used to give pupils success and where possible pupils have the opportunity to take GCSE mathematics examinations at the end of Year 11. However, there is no difference in the timetable time allocated to mathematics as the pupils move through the school. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have the same amount of time as the younger pupils which, considering the more complex nature of the subject and the content required to achieve GCSE standards, does limit the potential attainment, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
73. The co-ordinator provides good leadership to the subject. There is a clear direction to the development of the subject as part of the school development plan. The scheme of work has been developed and training has been provided for support staff in the teaching of numeracy. This is a good improvement since the last inspection where no scheme was in place. Satisfactory ranges of assessment opportunities are built into the scheme, including a baseline test at the beginning of each year. This is used to check each pupil's progress and to identify areas that need further development. The resources are adequate to teach the planned curriculum, although the use of information technology within the subject, for graph work and the presentation of results, is limited.

## Science

74. The pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and the acquisition of scientific skills as they move through Key Stages 3 and 4. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. When carrying out an investigation, the youngest pupils use simple equipment effectively, such as a thermometer to read the temperature of water. They know that the level of the thermometer will rise as the water temperature rises. Lower attaining pupils know whether the reading should go up or down. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know the importance of a fair test and suggest ways in which it can be achieved in a particular situation. They conduct investigations and record the results. At the end of Key Stage 3 they know the main groups of animals and plants and use a simple key to identify a particular living organism. Higher attaining pupils have a secure understanding of the relationships between plants and animals and between herbivores and carnivores. They give examples of both.
80. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use a range of materials to investigate specific ideas. For example,

they apply their knowledge of solutions and plant cells to investigate the concentration of cellular solutions using potato segments. When involved in doing investigations they use equipment and handle samples carefully. They write up their investigations, make predictions as to the outcome, evaluate their work and, with help from the teachers, arrive at some logical conclusions. They know about food chains, the structure of plants and the process of germination. The pupils understand that some materials are magnetic and use appropriate vocabulary to describe different materials. They are familiar with the basic functions of the main organs of the body and the different parts of the digestive system. Pupils conduct investigations using solutions of different strengths. They weigh matter before and after the test to get a result. Pupils know that organisms are made of cells and the main constituent parts of a cell. Pupils in post-16 use their knowledge in assignments, as part of their ASDAN award courses. They set questionnaires on healthy living, using prior knowledge to help them determine appropriate questions.

75. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively to describe their ideas and findings in both spoken and written form. Their use of appropriate vocabulary develops well and they learn to record their own results of investigations, with the physical support of staff as necessary. Number skills are developed appropriately, but the use made of information technology to process results, particularly in graphic and tabular form, or to use encyclopaedic software to find information related to a specific topic, is under-developed.
76. Pupils respond well in science lessons. Older pupils discuss their work in a mature way. Pupils work effectively together sharing ideas and materials. They listen to each other and their teachers and take care when carrying out investigations. They take a pride in their work and behave sensibly in the science room.
77. The quality of teaching is good overall. In some lessons seen teaching was very good. In these lessons teachers had very good subject knowledge and high expectations. This helps to give the pupils very good opportunities to use and apply their knowledge, through open-ended investigative activities. These are clearly described so that the pupils understand the purpose of the investigation or activity. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This has a positive impact upon the progress pupils make in lessons. In the best lessons very good use is made of discussion and the information is presented to the pupils in a range of different formats such as visual, video and on paper. This enables all the pupils to learn and to reinforce the ideas involved. Appropriate strategies and equipment are provided, so all pupils have access to the activities and they are well supported by the support staff, when clearly directed by the teacher.
78. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. There is a clear direction to the subject within the school development plan and the co-ordinator checks planning to ensure that the scheme of work is being followed. External accreditation is used well to provide both structure and reward for the pupils in Key Stage 4 and post-16. Where appropriate, pupils are entered for GCSE science examinations, but the curriculum time in Key Stage 4 is the same as in Key Stage 3. This limits the amount of content that can be taught, which affects the progress pupils make over time. The school has a good science policy and scheme of work. The accommodation for teaching science is good, which reflects a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the specialist facilities were in the process of being built. The resources are adequate to teach the planned curriculum, but the range of information technology programs is limited.
84. **Information technology**
79. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time, in developing the full range of information technology skills and in their ability to apply these skills within their work. Pupils' skills in the handling of data, the use of technology to control or model events and the use information technology to research information using CD-ROM, are under-developed. Pupils make satisfactory progress in using and refining word processing skills. Higher attaining pupils progress from inputting and amending simple text in Year 9 to creating more extensive pieces of writing in Year 11 and in Post-16. Higher attaining pupils extract pictures and information from CD-ROM sources. Pupils make limited progress in control technology and have few opportunities to experience controlling events through modelling programs. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use their word processing skills to present their work. For



example, pupils in Year 11 write up science activities. They print out their work, but need some support to save it. With some help they present basic mathematical data in graphic form. Although by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils create graphs from information held on databases and find information from databases by sorting the fields, their ability to create databases and spread sheets to record data from science or geography investigations is under-developed. There is a distinct difference in the progress pupils make in information technology lessons and their progress over time. In lessons they make satisfactory progress within the context of the lesson objectives.

80. The response of the pupils to information technology lessons is good. Pupils are keen on computers. They listen carefully to instructions and follow closely what is happening on the screen. They have good relationships with their teachers and the support staff. They ask appropriate questions, concentrate on their work and share ideas when working in pairs. They treat the computers and other equipment with due respect and behave well in lessons.
81. The quality of teaching in the information technology lessons is satisfactory overall, with teaching in half the lessons seen being good. Lessons focus on text processing skills and the teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to give suitable demonstrations and explanations to the pupils. Planning is satisfactory with appropriate resources and activities are chosen that keep the pupils on task and gradually build on their skills. For example, the use of games to reinforce and to practise basic keyboard awareness gives the pupils good opportunities to develop their familiarity with keyboard positions and function keys. Support staff are used appropriately to work with individuals within the lesson. The unsatisfactory progress derives, not from the quality of teaching in the designated lessons, but from the limited use of information technology within lessons throughout the school. Generally teachers in other lessons do not give sufficient opportunities for the pupils to reinforce and to practise their skills learnt in information technology lessons.
82. The co-ordinator gives good leadership to the subject and has played a significant role in the development of the subject since the last inspection. A commercial scheme of work at two levels of difficulty that covers and reinforces all aspects of the programme of study has been introduced. However, this is a recent development and, as yet, has not had sufficient time to affect the attainment and progress of the pupils. The co-ordinator makes herself available one evening each week to give training and advice to staff and has offered specific training in particular skills. However, the confidence of staff in the use of information technology is still variable. This is reflected in the inconsistency across the school in the use of information technology in lessons. Teachers make insufficient use of information technology within the wider curriculum as an integral part of lessons, either to reinforce skills or as sources of information in research. Each classroom has a computer and software resources available in the school are continually developing. Through the National Grid for Learning the school is to get further hardware that will enable Internet access in the near future. Classroom computers are currently under used. This has a detrimental impact upon the progress that pupils make. Where appropriate, information technology is used satisfactorily to enable pupils with physical disabilities to have access to the computer programs, through the use of specific switches and alternative control methods.

### **Religious education**

83. Religious education has a high profile in the school and pupils make good progress over time. In three lessons out of the five seen, pupils made very good progress. In Key Stage 3, pupils demonstrated their knowledge of the concept of martyrdom, recognised the significance of the life of Martin Luther King, and pupils with complex needs engaged imaginatively with the origins of the Jewish Festival of Sukkot. In Key Stage 4, pupils joined thoughtfully in a discussion about euthanasia, showing that they understood the Christian viewpoint on the matter and learned how Hinduism, Islam and Judaism consider the issue. In post-16, pupils learn about St Francis and consider his sacrifice in giving up his wealth and possessions. In all the lessons, pupils make progress in oral communication skills, and sometimes also in reading and recording. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis in religious education on moral issues such as tolerance and kindness, and pupils of all ages develop mature and reflective attitudes on subjects such as racism or bullying. Some pupils prepare for Assessment and Qualifications Alliance awards in the subject.

84. Pupils are interested in the subject, work hard, and respond thoughtfully to the carefully planned curriculum, which as well as imparting knowledge about a range of world faiths, includes a range of important universal issues for discussion. Pupils discuss well, are confident in putting forward their views and respectful of the views of others. They work well collaboratively.
85. Teaching of religious education is good. In half the lessons seen it was very good or excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In one outstandingly good lesson pupils participated in the Exodus and moved to another classroom, carrying flour, water, fruit and warm clothes, to build a shelter from leaves and branches. Pupils with complex needs responded very positively to the multi-sensory stimuli provided by the teacher, but also benefited from skilful questioning, which insisted that they be constantly reminded of the main teaching points of the session. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the school's supply of resources and artefacts well. There is good cross-curricular linkage to work in literacy, and teachers use language effectively to enhance communication skills and develop understanding.
86. The co-ordinator monitors the curriculum by looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and has some time to act in a supportive role to colleagues. She has worked well to collect a suitable range of resources to enhance the teaching of the subject and has made them easily accessible to all staff.
87. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for pupils, by giving opportunities for reflection on universal issues, using discussion and role play sensitively and offering knowledge and information on major world religions. The co-ordinator acknowledges as a task for the future the need to structure the range of visits pupils make to places of worship, to fit more precisely with the planned curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

88. Pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress in art. Those in post-16 who take the subject are successfully gaining accreditation, generally the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Pupils in Key Stage 4 also achieve accreditation for units of their work. A few pupils study successfully for GCSE examinations.
89. In Key Stage 3, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of art. They come to recognise the work of different artists and to know that, within cultures other than that of the Western European world in which they live, art is made in different forms. They practise and refine their skills in making art. They produce drawings from observation, design patterns, paint in watercolours, print using a screen and make three-dimensional objects in clay. In a unit of work on Art Deco, pupils study the designs of Clarice Cliffe. They come to recognise her characteristic palette of colours and the motifs that are frequently found in her ceramics decoration, such as the rays of the sun. They attempt work in this style, and they produce designs which they later transfer, using ceramic paints, to glazed mugs. They develop their understanding and knowledge more rapidly than their "making" skills, but their progress is positive.
90. In Key Stage 4, pupils come to know the design work of William Morris. They understand that he was an important figure in the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. They know that he used images drawn from the natural world to produce his designs for fabrics and wallpaper, and that he worked in stained glass. The higher attaining pupils reproduce a design of Morris featuring his key ideas for a fabric print. In developing their "making" skills, pupils reproduce some of Morris's stained glass designs, using resin.
91. Pupils in post-16 work towards the Certificate of Educational Achievement and extend the range of units accredited by a regional examination board that they started during Key Stage 4. Designs for masks are being completed and work and imaginative designs based in self-images are in progress. Pupils make good progress in refining their painting skills and in developing a critical eye.

92. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and always behave responsibly and well. They persevere with tasks, refining their work. They enjoy good relationships with one another.
93. Teaching in art at each key stage and in post-16 is good. Teaching is very good in lessons taken by the specialist art teacher. In these instances, the teacher combines extensive subject knowledge with a very good rapport with pupils. Expectations are high and these are duly rewarded. Good demonstrations of techniques reveal very well developed technical skills. Explanations are clear and pupils are encouraged to look critically at their own work. These strengths in teaching serve to develop the confidence of pupils and ensure their progress. The scheme of work is good and maps out a good plan for the progression of learning across the age range. The subject is very effectively co-ordinated.
99. **Design technology**
94. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in gaining skills and knowledge of the design and technology process as they move through the school. The youngest pupils discuss ideas and use simple tools to cut and shape materials such as clay. Those pupils who need help to do the physical activities know what it is they want to make and can direct the support assistants to select specific cutters and tools. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have developed their ability to use simple tools to cut and shape materials and higher attaining pupils have an understanding of scale and measurement. They know the uses of a range of woodworking tools, although not all pupils are secure in the names of the different tools. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use tools such as files, drills, scissors and saws to cut and shape wood and textiles. In food technology the pupils weigh ingredients, follow recipe instructions and use a range of tools and equipment. They develop their understanding of texture and colour to select appropriate textiles within a design to convey an idea such as a shimmering material as the main element when making a 'fish' cushion. Pupils provide more detail in their designs as they move through the school. They draw simple pictorial plans to fulfil a specific design brief. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils use a ruler to draw their designs and add instructions and lists of materials needed to construct the models. Pupils' capacity to evaluate the success of their designs and models is appropriate to their ability. They develop a good awareness of the importance of safety in the workshops and food technology room and of safe and unsafe practices.
95. In design technology lessons the response of the pupils is very good. They are industrious and work hard. Pupils persevere, although the tasks are frequently physically demanding. They try really hard to do what is asked of them. When discussing their work, pupils are enthusiastic and interested. They are keen to contribute to discussions and to explain how they designed and made their models. They talk about the processes involved and older or higher attaining pupils explain the rationale behind specific design features of their models. They are attentive to the teachers and have a pride in their work, as shown by the detail and care taken to finish and decorate their projects.
96. The quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. During the inspection, most of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least good and in the food technology lessons very good. A strength of the teaching, particularly in food technology, is the management and control of the pupils, which keeps pupils' attention on the task and reinforces the clear expectations of behaviour. Support staff are used very effectively to work with individual pupils or small groups, so that all the pupils are consistently on task and occupied. Expectations are very high and the pace of these very good lessons is brisk. Occasional unsatisfactory features occur when the pace of lessons is slow and pupils have to wait too long for help. Resources and tasks throughout the school are consistently appropriate to the pupils' abilities and are well matched to individual lesson objectives. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the design processes but, currently, insufficient use is made of information technology to support either the design or making strands of the programme of study.
97. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership to the subject. There is a subject policy and a broad-based scheme of work that gives adequate guidance in planning the curriculum. External accreditation is well used in Key Stage 4 to provide focussed activities within a structure, and due emphasis is placed upon the importance of health and safety. The co-ordinator maintains the resource stock effectively and is available to provide advice for colleagues. Since the last inspection significant progress has been made in the accommodation and resource base. The accommodation is now very good with a

designated workshop and food technology room. Resources are adequate for the teaching of the curriculum, although there are shortcomings in the equipment available for the older pupils to use motors and control technology within their designs.

## **French**

98. Given the fact that many pupils have difficulties with communication, the overall progress they make in French is good. By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils exchange simple greetings, know a range of everyday vocabulary, especially to do with food, know basic colour and number words and conduct simple transactions such as ordering a drink or a snack. In some cases, their knowledge is not very secure, and they may need reminding at the beginning of lessons. Nevertheless, they do gradually build up a range of material that they can perhaps understand, even if they cannot produce it spontaneously. They also read the words they need to access material, such as menus. By the end of Key Stage 4, some pupils participate in a piece of dialogue, using whole sentences and even continuous prose. The range of situations in which they participate increases, as does their vocabulary. A few pupils write simple descriptions of themselves and the amount of written work they produce increases sufficiently for some to prepare Assessment Qualification Alliance units in the subject or, from this year, accreditation by the Birmingham Comenius Scheme.
99. Pupils are uniformly enthusiastic about the subject. One pupil with very complex needs expressed her approval of the lesson by responding by raising her foot and smiling every time she heard the word 'pied' when she was learning body parts in French. Most pupils gradually acquire confidence and are keen to try out their skills. The prospects or experience of a residential trip to France greatly increases their commitment to the subject as well as extending their cultural experience.
100. Teaching of French is good overall. Lessons include a range of lively activities including drama, role-play and producing real food and drinks in a lesson on the café. The pace of lessons is lively and the interest of pupils is maintained. The teacher's limited knowledge of the target language and subsequent lack of confidence sometimes allows a topic to be abandoned before pupils have mastered it.
101. The curriculum is appropriate and is carefully planned to tie in with National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are good and include a range of attractive photographs, worksheets, course materials, tapes and videos.

## **Geography**

102. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography at Key Stage 3. Progress improves during Key Stage 4 and, in the limited range of work that is done, it is satisfactory. There is good progress made in individual lessons at Key Stage 3, and satisfactory progress in developing knowledge and skills in the unaccredited work undertaken at Key Stage 4. However, the time devoted to work in the subject is insufficient to ensure progress in all aspects of the subject and progress overall is unsatisfactory.
103. In Key Stage 3, a single lesson is offered to each class weekly. This does not allow enough time to undertake even limited fieldwork. Pupils who have difficulties in retaining information find it hard to recall their previous learning from one week to the next. In these circumstances, there is a tendency to base the work on a narrow range of resources and to make considerable use of worksheets. Atlases are used to an extent, but there is comparatively little work that is based on first hand observation, investigation, or survey. Generally, there is little evidence that pupils have fully covered the work envisaged for the key stage, or made sufficient gains in what they know, understand, and can do. Where good progress was observed in lessons, it was where the teaching had made use of the local environment to bring to life work for pupils with additional learning needs. These pupils are beginning to learn about eco-systems. Here pupils play a part in gathering leaves, seeds, and sprays of berries. In the classroom, they use them as prompts, as they try to remember the part played by plants in the environment. In Key Stage 4, the pupils link their work in geography to that in modern foreign languages. They learn facts about France or Spain and something of the culture and influence of these countries. The work has practical benefit as it supports the preparation for a trip to France that is being planned.
104. Pupils behave well in their geography lessons and try hard to answer questions or to contribute. Those at Key Stage 4 really enjoyed using a teaching aid that tests their knowledge of the Americas.

105. Teaching is good. While little was seen at Key Stage 3, the quality of that observed was high. Good planning was in place and the present tasks were strongly rooted in the previous work. Pupils with additional learning difficulties were skilfully led to recall what they had done before and to link their learning in science to this task. At Key Stage 4, teaching is also good. The relevance of tasks that are strongly linked to work in modern foreign languages is high. Lessons are planned taking account of the individual needs of pupils. In Key Stage 4, teaching is effective in conveying interest and enthusiasm for the study of places. The scheme of work being followed is not an accredited course. The content focuses on European countries, France, and Spain. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about these countries and about their influence in the wider world and to practise their skills in reading and interpreting maps and in using atlases.
106. Geography is planned to meet the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 3, but in practice, too little time is given to it to ensure good learning outcomes. The co-ordinator is aware of this and geography appears as a subject for development on this year's whole school plan.

### **History**

107. Pupils make good progress in history at both key stages. During the inspection, it was possible to observe the teaching of history only at Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 3, pupils study history themes and topics drawn from the National Curriculum programmes of study for the Key Stage. Younger pupils learn about the Roman Empire. They notice similarities between their own town and Roman Verulamium, and significant differences. Their knowledge of the everyday facts of life in Roman Britain grows. They come to understand that while things taken for granted in the present day, such as electric power, were unavailable, there were alternative technological solutions to the problems of life. Older pupils working on the topic of Britain since 1750 look at and handle artefacts that characterise the development of the textile industry. They come to know that the eighteenth century was a time of change in which ordinary people were sometimes required to choose between the declining prospects of life in agricultural communities and the promise of prosperity living in towns and working in factories. They make their own "choices" about what they might have done, and revise these in the light of further information they receive about the hardships of millwork. Those engaged in a unit of work about World War 2, envisage what happened to evacuee children. They formulate and ask questions of a visitor who was evacuated as a child in 1939. Because of particular difficulties experienced by the pupils in recording their ideas by handwriting, the volume of written work they produce is slight and does not fully reflect the gains in knowledge and understanding that are apparent in lessons. In Key Stage 4, pupils undertake work on the topic of the First World War and the development of modern Britain. They are successful in gaining accreditation for units of work that is awarded by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.
108. Pupils make a very positive response to their lessons in history. They listen carefully, volunteer their ideas, ask sensible questions, and work hard. Their behaviour in lessons is generally excellent. A good feature is their ability to recall elements of their previous learning and use these to help them with their present understanding or to reason inductively. For example, in a lesson based on Roman artefacts, a pupil was able to infer that if the Romans used oil lamps they could not have had electricity.
109. Teaching in history is very good, where it was observed at Key Stage 3. On occasions, lessons are of an excellent standard and they are never less than of good quality. The teacher is enthusiastic about the subject and strongly communicates this to the pupils. Imaginative use is made of sources, artefacts and witnesses to history in compiling lessons that capture pupils' imagination, and stimulate learning. Planning is good and tasks are matched to the capacity of individuals. The recording of what pupils know, understand, and can do, based on accurate assessment, is thorough.
110. The scheme of work for history at Key Stage 3 is very good., which is an improvement since the last inspection. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum fully. The subject is very well co-ordinated.

### **Music**

111. It was not possible to see any music post-16, but pupils' progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is

unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 3, pupils struggle to identify high and low pitch and to recognise the characteristic sound of orchestral instruments. They benefit from experimenting with the keyboards and finding out how to vary the sound, but they find it difficult to play a tune from simple notation. A few pupils in Key Stage 4 manage to work out how to play a tune on the keyboard, but they benefit more from recognising and matching the letters on the keyboard and the score than from reading the score. Although they have done previous work on listening to the sound and texture of a range of instruments, they can recognise very few and cannot identify high and low pitch any better than pupils in Key Stage 3.

112. Although pupils generally do not misbehave, they do not concentrate well, especially when tasks continue for too long or are too difficult. When they were listening to a compact disc, in order to identify the sounds of instruments, they became bored and restless and talked to each other.
113. Teaching is unsatisfactory. The pace of lessons is often slow and pupils' interest is not easily maintained. The range of activities on offer during the inspection was very limited. However, there are good features. For example, pupils are encouraged to be independent in using the keyboards, learning to find the controls and switches on their own. The teacher has adequate subject knowledge, an excellent acoustically engineered room to work in and good resources. However, the activities set do not always match the learning objectives for the lessons, as for example, when pupils listened to the full range of orchestral instruments on compact disc, rather than trying to learn to identify them one by one and then consolidating their knowledge before moving on. Pupils' difficulties, for example their problems with manual dexterity, are not always taken into account when tasks such as playing the keyboards are set.
114. There is a music policy in place, but no scheme of work that maps the curriculum coverage year by year. The attainment of individual pupils is assessed during lessons, but this information is not used to guide future planning. The subject is coming up for review on the school development plan this year and consultation with colleagues as to how best to take the subject forward and make full use of the new multi-sensory room is planned.
115. Pupils have some opportunity to listen to great musical works, but they do not participate in musical activities with other schools or in the community, despite the fact that some pupils display real musical talent, especially in singing. There is some whole-school musical involvement in Christmas and Easter services and a choir which meets weekly for singing, but this does not prepare for any sort of performance.

### **Physical education**

116. Pupils make very good progress in physical education over time. When they enter the school, many pupils show little self-discipline when taking part in physical education lessons. By the end of Key Stage 3 the more physically able pupils have good ball control skills when playing adapted hockey. They understand the rules of the game and know the reasons for warming up. They move about the floor with increasing awareness of safety and developing self-control. The pupils with more physical limitations improve their stamina and catch and throw a ball with increasing accuracy. They understand and follow instructions carefully and take part in team games. They continue to better their last best performance. For example, during a swimming lesson one pupil jumped into the pool independently for the first time and another swam a length for the second time in his life. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils exert themselves vigorously and continue to increase their fitness and strength. They know the rules of safety and are adept at avoiding collisions between wheelchairs during a game of basketball. They take part in developing team tactics during a game and bounce, pass and shoot with increasing confidence. In post-16 lower attaining pupils continue to develop awareness and control of their bodies, sustaining good sitting balance for increasing lengths of time. They make particularly good progress in developing confidence and self-esteem. Although no wheelchair dancing was seen during the inspection, achievement in this is something in which the school takes justifiable pride. The team from the school is representing the North of England in the national championships this autumn. The school team also represented the North West in the National Junior Athletics Championships.
117. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are keen, enthusiastic and brave. They are very pleased with their own

and each other's achievements, often stopping to clap when someone has done something special. They have a well developed sense of fair play and understand the need for specific adaptations to accommodate pupils' physical situations. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Pupils pay attention and generally listen carefully to instructions.

118. Teaching of physical education is always very good or excellent. The enthusiasm and expertise of the specialist teachers encourages and gives the pupils confidence. Individual targets and a very good understanding of each pupil's needs ensure that they make progress. Lessons are well planned and enhanced by the very good liaison with the physiotherapists. Teachers have high expectations and support staff often play a very active role in the lesson. However, there is insufficient time for teachers to brief support staff before lessons start. This has to be done during the lesson, which takes time.
119. The curriculum is broad and balanced. All areas of the National Curriculum are covered, with many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities, such as wheelchair dancing, polybat, boccia. Pupils swim, either in the local pool or the hydrotherapy pool in the local hospital. The time given to physical education during the day limits the range of activities, particularly at Key Stage 4. Pupils take part in an annual sports day and swimming gala. They also have the opportunity to spend a week on outdoor and adventurous activities at the Calvert Trust in the Lake District. Visiting professionals have provided basketball coaching and a dance workshop. Continuous assessment ensures continuity and progression for all pupils, regardless of gender or disability.
120. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. Resources are good overall, although the uneven playground surface makes it unsafe for outdoor sports activities. This is the only weakness in what is otherwise a significant strength of the school. The use of the local swimming pool helps prepare pupils for adult life.



## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

121. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors, who were in the school for a total of 23.5 days. They observed lessons, registration, tutor times, assemblies, break and meal times and the start and end of the school day. The school provided documentation both before and during the inspection. The team looked at all documents, including pupil and teachers' records. 82 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed and samples of pupils' work were reviewed. A number of pupils were heard reading. About 76 hours were spent in lessons, evaluating work and in discussion with pupils. Pupils were also observed when they were taking part in activities off the school site.
122. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, both formally and during lunchtime. There were discussions with members of the governing body who visited the school during the inspection. Discussions were held with members of the senior management team, subject co-ordinators, administrative, ancillary and maintenance staff, support assistants, therapists and medical staff. An examination of the building and site was carried out and learning and teaching resources were reviewed.
123. A meeting was held before the inspection with parents, which was attended by seven parents. The responses to the parents' questionnaire were analysed.

## 124. DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	64	64	N/A	39

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	11.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.5

#### Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week	361

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	86.5
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Average teaching group size:	Key Stage 3	7
	Key Stage 4	7

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998 - 99
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	£
Total Income	563,817
Total Expenditure	550,754
Expenditure per pupil	8,345
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,051
Balance carried forward to next year	59,114

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

64
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Number of questionnaires returned:

26
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**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	24	68	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	68	28	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	38	63	0	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	40	60	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40	60	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	56	8	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	48	48	4	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	36	60	4	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	44	48	4	4	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50	46	4	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	80	16	0	4	0