

INSPECTION REPORT

GRANGE SCHOOL

Rusholme, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105622

Headteacher: Mrs A. Fitzpatrick

Reporting inspector: Dr D. Alan Dobbins
27424

Dates of inspection: 8th – 12th October 2001

Inspection number: 216796
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special (Complex learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders)
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	77, Dickenson Road Rusholme Manchester
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms A. Rushton
Date of previous inspection:	September 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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27424	D. Alan Dobbins	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology History Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language Special educational needs	The school's results and achievements. How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13762	N. Shelley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well the school works in partnership with parents?
27960	J. Reed	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17681	R. Sharples	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Modern foreign language Religious education	
16198	S. Hunt	Team inspector	English Geography	
27474	S. Joy	Team inspector		Provision for monitoring pupils' academic progress.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Grange School is a county day school for pupils who have complex learning difficulties, including those with autistic spectrum disorders. The school provides for 47 full-time pupils from age 4 to 19 years. Eighteen pupils have complex learning difficulties, nineteen pupils are considered to have autistic spectrum disorders. The other pupils have severe learning difficulties. Forty-two pupils are boys and five are girls. Eight pupils are from black ethnic minorities, nine pupils are from Asian countries and nine are learning English as an additional language. Twenty-six pupils are eligible for free school meals. The registered admission number is 48. Pupils are admitted from all of the Manchester Local Education Authority. Currently, two pupils are from a neighbouring authority. All pupils travel to school by minibus or taxi. As a result of their learning difficulties, pupils' attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Grange School is an improving and effective school. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are good overall. For the younger pupils, they are very good for speaking and listening and reading and for all pupils very good for mathematics. Since the last inspection, the very good work of the headteacher, well supported by the chairperson of the governing body, the senior management team and all staff, has resulted in a much improved curriculum that is more relevant to pupils' needs and abilities and better reflects, but doesn't fully meet, National Curriculum (NC) requirements. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school is well placed to continue its good rate of improvement. The cost per pupil is marginally higher than for many similar schools. It offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good overall. This contributes to pupils being good at their learning. They make a considerable intellectual effort and in lessons in physical education a considerable physical effort to learn, to please themselves, their teachers and LSAs.*
- Promotes good and very good standards and progress for many pupils in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and in the way they use computers.
- The relationship between pupils and all staff is very good.
- Promotes good standards of behaviour and ensures that pupils are well cared for.
- Is very well led and managed by the headteacher, who is fully supported by the senior management team.
- Has made a good improvement since the last inspection.

* LSAs are learning support assistants.

What could be improved

- The curriculum, to better reflect the needs of pupils and NC requirements, especially in art, design and technology, geography, history and a modern foreign language for pupils at Key Stage 3.
- Make better use of the information gained from assessing pupils' work.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators.
- The match between tasks, learning objectives and pupils' needs and abilities in some lessons.
- The role of the governing body in fully acting as a 'critical friend' to the school.
- The windows and panelling of the south elevation of the building.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection (September, 1999) when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in its provision. Most of the Key Issues for Action identified then have been met in full.

- The progress of pupils at Key Stage 4 and of post-16 students has improved considerably. Now the progress they are making is good. Both were judged unsatisfactory last time.
- Standards have considerably improved in information and communication technology (ICT). The development of the dedicated computer suite and the training of teachers on nationally accredited courses have contributed to the good standards pupils are now achieving.
- The curriculum is now closely based on Equals units. These better reflect the Programmes of Study for the subjects of the NC and religious education. The units act as schemes of work for each subject. They help support the planning of lessons and provide information for setting targets for pupils.
- The requirements of the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs are now met in full. Appropriate targets are set for annual reviews. Transition plans are well formed for pupils who are older than 14 years.

In other areas, the quality of teaching has improved, especially for pupils at Key Stage 4 and for post-16 students. Pupils are better as learners and have a greater commitment to their learning. The standards they are achieving are now better in many subjects and are being recognised by an increasing range of nationally accredited awards. The potential for further developing the work of the school is good.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 2	by Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	B	C	B	Very good	A
Reading	A	B	C	B	Good	B
Writing	B	C	C	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B		

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

The standards students achieve in Years 12 and 14 (the post-16 students) and the progress they are making are good over the full range of a curriculum that is thoughtfully designed to prepare them well for life after school. The school's statutory targets are appropriate. Pupils' individual targets set at their annual review represent good challenges for work for the next year. Through the IEPs they provide good help in the planning of many lessons. The increasing range of accredited qualifications act as good targets to demonstrate pupils' learning over their time at school. The standards achieved in speaking and listening, reading

and mathematics and the way in which they use computers are commendable for pupils with complex learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Over all the school, pupils achieve good standards in science, ICT and religious education. They achieve satisfactory standards in art, the food technology element of design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Key Stage 3 pupils have insufficient opportunity to learn a modern foreign language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils quickly become good learners. They enjoy achieving success in their lessons, not only for themselves but also to please their teachers and LSAs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Mostly, pupils are polite. They behave appropriately and comply with the instructions, guidance and expectations of their teachers and LSAs. When, because of the complexity of their learning difficulties, they fail to sustain self-control they quickly respond to the school's procedures in returning to acceptable behaviour, most often without disrupting the learning of others in the class.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and all staff are very good. Pupils quickly relate to and co-operate well with adults. Their learning difficulties require that they take much longer to establish meaningful relationships with each other.
Attendance	Very good.

Pupils work hard in their lessons. Within the constraints imposed by their learning difficulties, they behave well. By helping them communicate, the Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS) contributes to the very good relationship they have with all staff. Pupils achieve good standards and make good progress in their personal and social development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11	Post -16
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching, including the quality of the work of the LSAs when they support their teachers in lessons and when they take banded groups themselves, is good overall. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. At that time 14% of teaching was unsatisfactory. The very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching that now operate have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching overall, including reducing unsatisfactory teaching to 5%. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers' very good use of PECS, their proficiency with the procedures for the treatment and education of autistic and communicationally challenged children (TEACCH), their use of music, rhymes and ICT to promote learning help ensure that in most lessons all pupils are fully included in all lesson tasks. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons, insufficient attention to planning requires pupils to undertake tasks that are too difficult for them, or to complete tasks they have previously learned. Both act to limit the progress they are making. Many pupils, because of the complex nature of their learning difficulties, sometimes find that learning can be very tiring. Even when this is the case, they regularly

make a considerable intellectual effort and in lessons in physical education a considerable physical effort to achieve their best work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The implementation of the Equals curriculum has substantially increased the range of experiences available to pupils. In most subjects, the relevant Programmes of Study of the NC are taught in full. This is not the case for the resistant material element of design and technology or for a modern foreign language for pupils at Key Stage 3. The post-16 curriculum is beginning to prepare pupils well for life after school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The good attention of teachers and LSAs ensures that they are fully included in all the work of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The quality of care and the arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The procedures for monitoring and supporting behaviour are very good and are effective in maintaining appropriate behaviour. They are good for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development.

Parents play a satisfactory role in the life of the school. They are generally happy with the work of the school but some wish for closer links, to be informed more frequently about pupils' progress and for a more understandable policy about homework. The curriculum has substantially improved, but can improve further, to better reflect the requirements of the NC.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, fully supported by the senior management team, has identified directions for development very well and has worked very hard in leading the good improvement seen since the last inspection. They and all staff share a commitment to high standards and further development.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Since her appointment immediately before the time of the last inspection, the chairperson of the governing body has provided strong personal support, advice and encouragement to the headteacher. Nevertheless, the small number of governors, and their difficulty in taking up training opportunities, acts to limit the governing body's role as 'critical friend' to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures for evaluating teaching and learning are very good.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The use of the Standards and Capital funds are well directed towards the intended purposes.

There are sufficient teachers and LSAs for the delivery of the curriculum. Learning support assistants have considerable experience. They work well with their teachers and make a significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. But, over the full range of the Programmes of Study in science, art and design and technology achievement is made difficult by the absence of specialist teaching rooms. The condition of the windows and panelling of the

south elevation of the building is very poor. Good procedures ensure that the school's money is spent well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That their children like school.• That the school is well led and managed.• That they feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns.• The good quality of the teaching.• The attitudes and values promoted by the school.• The continuing improvement of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standards that pupils attain.• Information about the progress their child is making.• The standard of behaviour of some pupils.• The use of homework.

Inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents. Given the complex nature of their learning difficulties, pupils achieve well and behave well. In most classes, the home-school book is used well to ensure two-way communication between school and parents and carers for pastoral matters. It is not as well used to report academic progress. The policy for homework does not work effectively with all parents and carers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment and achievement take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.

2. Overall, the standards pupils achieve are good. There are no differences in the achievement of pupils with complex learning difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorders or between boys and girls. The small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language also achieve well. This is a result of the attention given by the teachers and LSAs to fully include all pupils in all the activities of lessons at all times.

3. Since the last inspection, the good thinking of the leadership and management in making learning more of a visual challenge for pupils, and the very good work of teachers and LSAs in implementing the PECS and TEACCH procedures, have resulted in the very good improvement in the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making in speaking and listening skills and in reading. The good implementation of the principles of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are also helping. As a result, pupils' better communication abilities helps them in all of their learning and is making an important contribution to the better standards they are achieving and the improved progress they are making in many of the other subjects. This is especially so for mathematics. Pupils are achieving better standards in science, geography, ICT, physical education and religious education.

4. In speaking and listening, pupils up to 6 years of age are achieving very good standards and are making very good progress. They make good progress up to 11 years of age, satisfactory progress from 11 to 14 years of age and good progress thereafter. In reading, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making is the same. In both these aspects of English, they gain a very good start when they enter school, which is consolidated as they make their way through the school. The reduced emphasis given to writing results in the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making being lower. These are good for the younger pupils and satisfactory for the others. Post-16 students focus on applying their skills in English in the adult world. The lowest attaining students recognise pictorial symbols, for example for male and female toilets, directional signs and others such as those to do with safety such as road crossings, poison and electricity. When they leave school, the highest attaining of the post-16 students are socially literate and have gained accredited qualifications in English, which appropriately reflect the overall good progress they have made over their time at school.

5. In mathematics, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when they were judged satisfactory for pupils up to 14 years of age and unsatisfactory for those between 14 and 16 years of age. Pupils are getting off to a quick start. By the age of 6 years, the highest attaining pupils recognise and write the numbers from 1 to 5 and can apply these, for example to match with and count objects such as sweets. By age 11 years, they have progressed to sorting objects by colour, shape and size. They draw shapes such as a square, circle and triangle. They count forwards and backwards in 10s to 100 and to 25 in single units. They are beginning to recognise consistency in number through making rows

and columns of different sizes using the same number of blocks, and realising that whatever combinations they create they use the same number of blocks. The very good progress continues for pupils between 11 and 14 years, so that by the time they are 16 years of age the highest attaining pupils count confidently, use the four rules very well, especially when they use calculators. They apply these skills with very good accuracy in manipulating money, time and distance. Also, they use number to help make decisions, for example when they develop graphic representations. Post-16 students focus on applying their mathematics skills, for example to calculating costs of a shopping trip to the nearby store and use their knowledge of time to organise an evening of television watching. The very good progress pupils make over all their time at school results in the highest attaining post-16 students leaving school functionally numerate and well placed to use their mathematics skills and knowledge to help organise their lives.

6. In science, over all the school, pupils achieve good standards in lessons, but make satisfactory progress over the full range of the subject. Even given that the subject is, generally, well resourced, the lack of a specialist teaching room for science makes difficult the full presentation of the subject, especially for the older pupils. This acts to limit the progress they are making over the full range of the subject. The focus of science is on learning about living things, materials and physical processes. Pupils begin learning science by studying what is around them. For example, younger pupils learn about forces by recognising why vehicles move and why some materials float and others sink. As they get older they learn about more abstract concepts such as why the sun, earth and moon are different in size and how this affects day and night. They know what materials are attracted by magnets. Through their continuing study of living things they have learned the names of parts of a plant, such as stalk, petals and flower. By the time they leave school, the highest attaining students know, for example the difference between a carnivore and a herbivore and the reason why diet and exercise are important for a healthy body. Improving communication between pupils and adults, especially through PECS, allows pupils to gain a good understanding of the use of hypotheses to guide the collection of data in an experiment and in using the data to help provide an answer to a question.

7. In the other subjects, the standards achieved in ICT, religious education and in the food technology element of design and technology are good over all the school. They are satisfactory in art, geography, history, music and physical education, although the standards younger pupils are achieving in swimming are good. They are unsatisfactory in the resistant material element of design and technology because the lack of an adequate teaching room results in the absence of basic resources such as benches, holding equipment such as vices, and a wide range of hand and power tools sufficient to give pupils a suitable experience. Pupils between 11 and 14 years of age have an entitlement to study a modern foreign language. The standards pupils are achieving are unsatisfactory because the planning documents for the subject do not sufficiently reflect the requirements of the Programme of Study.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' good attitudes towards school, improved since the last inspection, can be seen in their approach to their work. In a fifth of lessons pupils' attitudes are very good or better and in four fifths they are good or better. Only in the occasional lesson do pupils not attend to their learning satisfactorily well. Behaviour is good and they are making good progress in their personal development.

9. Pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good. This is reflected in their level of attendance, which is very good. Upon arrival at school, they greet members of staff with pleasure, go to their classrooms without hesitation and become involved in well-

established routines, quickly and positively. They are mostly polite, conduct themselves in an orderly manner and comply with the instructions, guidance and the high expectations of their teachers and LSAs. Pupils make good progress in developing mature and appropriate behaviour. Sometimes, because of their learning difficulties, they fail to sustain self-control and inappropriate behaviour occurs. When this is the case, it is dealt with by teachers or LSAs swiftly, appropriately and most often without disrupting the learning of others in the lesson. Pupils' behaviour in the dining hall is usually calm and they eat their meals together sociably. In the playground, they use the facilities in a responsible manner including, for example taking turns well on the equipment. There is no evidence of any deliberate bullying or oppressive behaviour in the school. Relationships between pupils of all ages and backgrounds are very good. Pupils are tolerant towards each other. They often listen with interest to what others say and are frequently quick to applaud the efforts of other pupils. Although they generally mix well and co-operate well with adults, they take much longer to learn to relate with their peers. It is only when they are older that some pupils develop friendships with other pupils.

10. Younger pupils especially find difficulty in fully comprehending the effect of their actions on others. Their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others takes time to develop. Nevertheless, because of the patient and caring way in which teachers and LSAs deal with pupils and the very good relationship they have with them, many pupils do make good progress in recognising the needs and concerns of others. The ethos of the school, the lessons in personal, social and health education, the very good role models of all adults in the school, as well as the regular opportunities pupils have to visit the facilities of the local community to practise their emerging social skills, all contribute to the good progress they are making in their personal development. Pupils readily accept every opportunity to take modest responsibility, such as taking messages or going to the office with the class register.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. Over the last inspection, the quality of teaching was good for pupils up to 11 years of age. It was unsatisfactory for the older pupils. Fourteen percent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Now, it is good for pupils at up to 11 years of age, satisfactory for those between 11 and 14 years of age and good for the older pupils. Five percent of teaching is unsatisfactory. These judgements reflect a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

12. Even though class sizes are small at six or fewer pupils in each class, the complex nature of pupils' learning difficulties means that the range of their attainment, needs and abilities is substantial. The challenge to teachers is to meet this very wide range of needs with appropriate lesson tasks that match the objectives for learning over the full duration of each lesson. Generally, they achieve this well for all pupils including those with the most complex of needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. In a small number of lessons this challenge is not met in full.

13. Teachers are required to teach many subjects. In some, they do not have specialist training nor do they hold specialist knowledge. However, they and their LSAs have a very good knowledge of their pupils. They know them very well as individuals and this helps in selecting lesson tasks appropriate to their needs and abilities. Planning for lessons is good over all the school, except for lessons for pupils from 11 to 14 years of age where planning is satisfactory. The Equals scheme, which has been adopted as the curriculum for most subjects, provides a solid foundation for long and medium term planning. The units give good and detailed support for teaching. Generally, teachers deploy their LSAs very well and they are very effective in helping pupils make progress. In English and mathematics, in order to limit the range of needs, two classes are combined and banded into three classes of three or

four pupils of roughly equal ability. This allows teaching to focus more on the group as a whole rather than on individual pupils. This strategy is successful in promoting very good standards and progress over each of the three groups, the high, medium and lower ability groups. The very good relationship that all staff have with the pupils and their very good knowledge of pupils' personalities and behaviour allows staff to manage pupils well.

14. Increasingly, the use of ICT is providing good support for teaching and learning. This is particularly so in English, where programs such as Nursery Rhyme Time, Wellington Square and publishing and word-processing software are routinely used, and in mathematics through the use of Maths Explorer, Mr Tickle Teaches Maths and Heinemann Mathematics. The use of Dazzle and Music Ace provide equivalently good support for teaching and learning in art and music.

15. The good quality of teaching and the very good relationship which all staff have with pupils makes pupils want to do well at their learning. In a fifth of lessons learning is very good or excellent. In seven tenths of lessons it is good or better and is satisfactory or better in just over nine tenths of all lessons. In most lessons pupils make a considerable intellectual effort to learn. In lessons in physical education, when they dance in the hall or learn to swim in the local pool, they make a considerable physical effort. Especially in the lessons in dance, the use of music and musical nursery rhymes promotes a freedom of movement and emotions that makes a considerable contribution to the social development of pupils. In the small number of lessons when learning does not proceed at a satisfactory or better rate, the very great difficulty which pupils have in fully attending to their work or in controlling their behaviour results in them being unable to sustain their learning. When this occurs, teachers and learning support staff act quickly and appropriately according to the behaviour management plan for the pupils, most often with little or no disruption to the learning of others in the class.

16. For most subjects, the procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils are not sufficiently well linked to the elements of the Programmes of Study, reflected through the Equals units. Nor are they precise enough to recognise the small steps pupils make in their learning. Both contribute to a difficulty in recognising what pupils know, understand and can do in the subjects and this limits continuity and progression in their learning within and between the key stages. Individual education plans identify targets for learning in most subjects. In many lessons these work well. However, sometimes the targets constitute too large a jump in learning to be useful in the planning of future lessons or are stated in a fashion that does not allow the easy recognition of success. In general, too little use is routinely made of this assessment information to guide lesson planning. As a result, in some lessons the match between lesson tasks and pupils' needs is not always well made. Pupils are sometimes required to undertake tasks that are too difficult for them and in other lessons required to complete tasks that they have learned before and can easily do. For example, in an unsatisfactory lesson in English, the material presented to pupils was not age-appropriate, the planning was not detailed and paid little regard to targets identified in pupils' IEPs. Consequently, the lesson tasks were not well matched with pupils' needs and abilities and all pupils were not included in all aspects of the lesson. In this lesson pupils made too little progress. In the best lessons, for example in a lesson in religious education for older pupils, the teachers' detailed planning, his very good knowledge of the subject, of the pupils levels of attainment and the very good deployment of the LSA, resulted in lesson tasks being very well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils were fully included in all aspects of the lesson and the highest attaining pupils learned of the five obligations of the Muslim faith, the requirements for prayer, and demonstrated their learning with the aid of a prayer mat.

17. In most lessons, the good quality of teaching results in pupils wanting to do their best and very often achieving it. Since the last inspection the improved quality of teaching has led

to improvements in pupils' attitudes to their work, their better behaviour in lessons and the better progress they are making in many subjects.

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

18. The curriculum provides a satisfactorily broad and balanced range of relevant learning experiences. It now includes opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their learning over their time at school through gaining appropriate nationally accredited awards. The curriculum has considerably improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. The adoption of Equals units that has resulted in the provision of a framework to enable subject co-ordinators to complete medium term planning, gives more organisation to pupils' learning than was hitherto the case. This is so for most subjects. However, further development is required in art, the resistant materials aspect of design and technology, geography, history and a modern foreign language before these subjects can contribute fully to the curriculum.

19. All NC subjects are taught, including religious education, personal and social education, sex and relationship education, drugs education and citizenship. Too little teaching of a modern foreign language occurs for the relevant statutory requirements to be met.

20. The principles of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well. They are effective in promoting pupils' good and very good skills in literacy and numeracy.

21. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is taught as a discrete subject and also permeates the whole of the curriculum. Issues relating to sex and drugs education are dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate fashion. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities during the school day for them to practise their personal skills. For example, they collect milk for their class, take messages and help tidy up after lessons. The use of PECS during break and lunchtimes enables pupils to make choices. All lunchtime staff, including mid-day meal supervisors, know pupils' targets for their personal and social development, their diet and their recreational interests. This helps in making the lunchtime arrangements an effective part of pupils' overall curricular experience.

22. Careers education and guidance provided by the staff is good. At this time, pupils have the opportunity to participate in work experience only within the school, although the co-ordinator is keen to develop opportunities for pupils to gain work experience in the local community. Their mini-enterprise activities include a weekly café and bicycle repair and provide good experience of work practices within school.

23. The provision for a range of extra-curricular activities is very limited and contributes too little to extending pupils' curricular experiences. The recent introduction of lunchtime computer and physical education clubs is a good development.

24. Good links are enjoyed with other institutions. For example, pupils from the nearby grammar school visit as part of their programme of community service. The school is involved in a joint project with a primary school in which pupils benefit from working with mainstream pupils on computer equipment. When the need is required, good liaison occurs with other schools to support inclusion initiatives for individual pupils.

25. The links with the community are good and contribute well to the quality of learning and pupils' personal development. Local facilities are well used for field trips to support teaching and learning, for example in science and geography. Recent visits have included museums, a recycling centre, the public library and the local swimming pool. Visits to bowling

alleys, shops, the market and restaurants contribute effectively to the development of pupils' social awareness and their skills of communication. Close links with families of the Muslim faith, some of whom take part in assemblies, help foster spiritual and cultural awareness. A theatre company visits the school to convey moral messages and contributes to the development of literacy skills through performance.

26. Good provision is made for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Since the previous inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved. The social and moral development of the pupils is an integral part of everyday activities. For example, staff take every opportunity to develop skills in sharing and turn taking. In a good lesson in food technology for younger pupils, they were encouraged to use their PECS cards to ask for the food they wanted and to show an awareness of the needs of others in the group. Moral issues are frequently discussed during many different activities. In an assembly, pupils were questioned on the reasons why food is collected for the poor and needy at harvest time and why it is important to donate to charities. Lunchtimes are especially well used to promote the development of social skills. Pupils sit in class groups with members of staff. Conversation can be on wide ranging topics because pupils are very confident of and trust their staff. Good table manners are expected and pupils are required to help serve and tidy up. The annual award for the most helpful pupil promotes good social attitudes and helps pupils recognise what is right and what is wrong.

27. Time for quiet reflection is built into the lessons for the younger pupils. This has a positive effect on their spiritual development and their thoughts for their fellow pupils. Prayers are said in assemblies, sometimes in lessons and at lunchtime. Occasionally in lessons, pupils gain a sense of awe and wonder, as was the case in a science lesson for younger pupils, who saw the crescent shape of the faint moon in the daylight sky.

28. Cultural development is well promoted in the lessons in many subjects. This is especially so in religious education. For example, in an excellent lesson for 15 year olds they were asked to name the faiths that have one God. Their answers provided the teacher with a splendid opportunity to further develop their cultural awareness. The culture of Muslims is well known to pupils, in part because of the frequent visits that are made to the local shops that sell traditional goods.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The quality of care and the arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The procedures for monitoring and supporting behaviour are very good and they are good for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. These findings represent a significant improvement since the last inspection.

30. The policy and procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are very effective. Child protection procedures include risk assessments that are regularly reviewed. The arrangements for fast response to crises are very effective. As part of its responsibility of care, the school liaises very closely with specialist education, health authorities and social services. The provision as outlined in pupils' statements of special education needs is met, although pupils would benefit from more effective speech therapy. The arrangements for first aid are satisfactory.

31. The system for monitoring behaviour is very good. All staff are fully aware of pupils' behaviour targets and the procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and LSAs are very good at directing, controlling, guiding, supporting and encouraging pupils to improve behaviour. Reward and praise are also used well.

32. Attendance is satisfactorily monitored. The arrangements when pupils arrive and depart from the school are good. The one-way traffic flow system of transports works well and ensures pupils' safety.

33. Pupils' personal development is monitored and supported well. The good ratio of teachers and support workers to pupils ensures a very high level of care and attention. The school's ethos includes fostering independence. Routinely pupils are provided with opportunities to make choices and decisions, they are encouraged to do things for themselves and they are invited to express a view or explain their feelings. A small number of visitors come into the school to share their interests, experiences and lifestyles with the pupils. The very good quality of the relationships that all adults develop with pupils creates an environment that supports the pupils very well and enables them to feel secure and valued.

34. The procedures for recording pupils' attainment are good. Although recording is good, assessment information is not well used over all the subjects to recognise the progress pupils are making or to help in planning lessons. Pupils' annual reports are comprehensive, their annual reviews are well organised and are very well informed by judgements against past targets. The procedures followed are considerably better than was the case at the last inspection. The very good use of computers for record keeping allows the sharing of information in a systematic and effective way. Teachers and LSAs have easy access to comprehensive information on pupils' achievements in all the subjects, as well as those to do with personal and social development. Detailed, well-annotated reports make effective use of photographs and other evidence to record experiences, attainment and to a lesser extent show progress.

35. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been compared to national data through the Equals system. This is helpful only in part as the attainment of a sizeable percentage of pupils is beyond the top end of the Equals scale. Nevertheless, the information has been well used to identify pupils to bands of more or less equivalent ability in English and mathematics. This represents an important first step for the school in determining its effectiveness against outside criteria.

36. The link between the good recording of attainment, pupils' targets and lesson planning is, generally, not wholly effective. Assessment information is not as well used as it might be to recognise progress over the duration of a term or key stage or used effectively enough to identify pupils who in some lessons require additional support. The assessment procedures do not always effectively guide lesson planning. This results in some lessons in the tasks selected for pupils not being well matched with their needs and abilities. IEPs have improved, although they do not provide sufficient, precise and smart information for best planning or teaching. This is because learning objectives are not prioritised or broken down into measurable, accurate steps. Also, the preferred approach to teaching is not identified.

37. English and science are the two exceptions. In these subjects, the co-ordinators work very well in recognising attainment and in tracking progress. They are beginning to use the information they gain to inform their own planning and to further develop their subjects across the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has an effective partnership with its parents, which is steadily improving. This is similar to the findings of the previous report.

39. Parents are generally happy with the work of the school, but some wish for closer links, to be informed more frequently about pupils' progress and for a more understandable

policy about homework. Parents have supportive attitudes towards the school and all confirm that their children like coming to school. They appreciate the quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.

40. Parents, generally, are well informed about the life and work of the school. The annual report provides adequate information about pupils' attainment and progress but does not report attendance. Annual review meetings are well organised. Most parents attend. The school's representation is detailed and leads to comprehensive discussion. All relevant agencies are contacted. Some parents would like to receive an update each term of pupils' progress against the agreed targets. This is sensible and good practice. A home-school book is used well for daily communication between school and parents on pastoral matters at home and school. It is not as well used for reporting academic gains. The provision for homework is satisfactory.

41. Parents are not easily able to offer support to the school because the majority live a considerable distance from school. Nevertheless, when arrangements have been made for them to join afternoon classes, on a weekly or fortnightly basis, many do so. Parents provide good support for the annual sports day, festival celebrations and for Christmas production. A friend of school association has ceased to function because of lack of support. It successfully raised funds, a substantial amount of which is unspent and is earmarked for further play facilities when the playground is improved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

42. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is very well supported by the senior management team. They, and the chair of the governing body, have a clear and agreed vision for the future of the school. Each has worked hard, and successfully, to improve the effectiveness of the school from the low baseline identified at the last inspection. The sensible use of outside consultants has helped provide direction and specific advice. The better standards pupils and students are achieving and the better progress they are making is a direct result of the implementation of a more relevant and balanced curriculum, and the better quality of teaching and learning.

43. The school's aims are precise and detailed. They are clearly identified in the four-year development plan. The procedures and success criteria linked with these aims are reasonable and appropriate. The main aim is to include all pupils in all the work of the school and prepare them for inclusion in as many activities in the adult world as is possible. This aim is being achieved through the continuing development of the curriculum, by making teaching more effective, and learning easier by making the learning environment more visual.

44. The good improvement seen since the last inspection reflects the shared commitment of all staff to succeed. Day-to-day this is seen through the high standards they aspire to, the organisation and leadership skills of the headteacher and those on the senior management team and the clear recognition of what is required for further improvement. All adults, including the LSAs and others such as the site manager, share a significant commitment to further improving the school's effectiveness. The good improvement made since the last inspection reflects the capacity of the headteacher and the senior management team to further develop the work of the school.

45. The delegation of duties by the headteacher is designed to empower staff and to improve the effectiveness of the school. In this she is successful in part, but the role of the subject co-ordinators needs to be further defined and developed so that they confidently lead,

monitor and evaluate all the work in their subjects. For many subjects, the co-ordinators have been recently appointed. Additional guidance, support and training will allow them to fully meet their responsibilities for subject leadership. Since the last inspection, the implementation of Equals units as the first step toward developing a curriculum which best fits pupils' needs and abilities and pays due regard to statutory requirements has been satisfactorily completed. Policy documents and appropriate schemes of work have been written for all curricular areas. However, the curriculum needs to be more cohesive and to link better with pupils' requirements, including that of being as well prepared as possible for life after school. The practice of teaching some subjects, such as art, as part of topic work makes it difficult to track what elements of the Programme of Study are being taught. This makes planning learning so that it is continuous and progressive very difficult, as is recognising the progress pupils are making. Subject leadership needs to be further developed in most subjects.

46. The governing body is small in size and some governors have not received training in any part of their work. The chairperson of the governing body is committed to the success of the school and wholehearted in her support for the work of the headteacher and senior management team. She has a well-judged overview of the school's effectiveness and has played a full part in supporting the headteacher in improving the school since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the small size of the governing body acts to limit its effectiveness in fully meeting all of its statutory requirements, and in acting as a powerful 'critical friend' to the school. By operating more formal procedures for monitoring all the work of the school the governing body will be better informed and better placed to advise, and support, future developments. This is especially so for the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, the progress pupils are making and the management of finances.

47. The procedures for recognising the quality of teaching and learning are very good. They have made a significant contribution to improving teaching since the last inspection. The monitoring protocol is closely based on the OFSTED model for judging teaching and learning. Introduced immediately after the last inspection, the procedures are now well established. Teachers are seen teaching by either the headteacher or the acting deputy headteacher at least once per term. They receive a formal report, which identifies the strong elements in the lesson and those that require further development. Analysis of the monitoring reports can result in whole school in-service training (INSET), for example when teachers followed the nationally accredited course on the use of ICT. They visit the lessons of others whose skills are further developed in a particular aspect of teaching, for example in using PECS, or they take part in INSET activities offered by outside providers such as the Manchester Local Education Authority School Improvement Service. In this way the procedure not only monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning but, importantly, provides directions for further developing the skills and competencies of individual teachers.

48. The induction process requires additional development so that newly appointed staff can become quickly effective through knowing the requirements and procedures of the school.

49. The strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. The headteacher's targets have been set. Targets for the two members of the senior management team have been set by the headteacher following the national model for target setting for headteachers. Each teacher has annual targets, which most often are linked with the areas for further development that have been identified through the procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. These work very well. They provide a focus for improvement for all who teach in the school. As is the case for the national procedures for headteachers, the targets for those on the senior management team and for individual

teachers are reviewed annually. This information is available to support any performance management decision. The very effective implementation of these procedures, closely linked as they are to those for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, have contributed significantly to improving teaching and learning since the last inspection.

50. The school's statutory targets have been appropriately set. Targets for individual pupils, written in their IEPs work satisfactorily well in informing the planning of lessons, although in some lessons this is not the case. They are well presented at annual reviews and form the basis for the targets for the following year. They play an important role in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

51. There are sufficient teachers and LSAs to present the curriculum over the full age range of pupils. All staff are experienced in dealing with pupils with complex learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Some have additional qualifications in special educational needs. Learning support assistants have considerable experience. They work very well with their teachers and make a significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making. This is especially so in the banded lessons in English and mathematics when they are assigned the full responsibility for teaching a small group of pupils. The deployment of LSAs is good.

52. The accommodation is satisfactory for presenting the school's curriculum and has improved since the last inspection. The new ICT suite contains a sufficient number of current model computers, linked to the Internet. It is an attractive room, which is well used by pupils and staff alike. The music, soft-play, multi-sensory and food technology rooms are good. The library is satisfactory and additional rooms such as the parents' room and the changing and showering facilities are good. However, there continues to be a lack of specialist facilities for science, art and for work with resistant materials in design and technology, which act to limit the full presentation of the relevant Programmes of Study and the standards pupils, especially at Key Stage 3 and beyond, can achieve. The accommodation is very clean. The site manager and cleaning staff continue to take great pride in their work.

53. Much of the exterior of the building is showing signs of considerable neglect. The windows and panelling of the south elevation of the school constitute a high risk for pupils. The headteacher and appropriate representatives of the local authority were informed of this during the inspection. The one-way system for transport at the front of the school secures the safety of pupils when they arrive and depart.

The efficiency of the school

54. The financial planning and delegation of the budget is the responsibility of the headteacher who reports on a regular basis to the governing body. Expenditure is well linked to the school improvement plan. The governing body does not have a sub-committee for finance, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. This means that the budget is not sufficiently monitored by them. Consequently, they do not consider issues of fair funding and best value in sufficient depth. The most recent audit report of the local authority identifies the need for more involvement by governors in the financial management of the school. Day-to-day office procedures are good.

55. The school makes satisfactory use of new forms of technology. The headteacher and the administrator have a linked computer system to access any budget information. Staff prepare lesson plans and reports on computers. The database for pupils is good and is helpful to staff in recognising what they know, understand and can do in subjects. The recent

availability of a computer suite has increased the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and to extend their knowledge in different subjects, for example by using the Internet. However, there is limited access to computers in lessons because of the lack of computers in the classrooms.

56. The school monitors closely the use of the Standards and Capital funds and these grants are well directed towards the intended purposes. However, the school does not effectively evaluate its use of these grants and of the money used to promote other developments to judge if spending in specific areas, for example the purchasing of resources for subjects, is improving standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. The governing body and the headteacher should:

- continue to develop the curriculum so that it better reflects the needs of pupils and NC requirements especially in art, design and technology, geography, history and a modern foreign language for pupils at Key Stage 3; (Paras 7, 18, 19, 52, 86, 92, 97, 101, 108, 109, 113, 123)
- further develop the policy for assessing pupils' attainment in all subjects so that it
 - takes account of the special educational needs of pupils,
 - records progression within and between key stages,
 - informs teaching, learning and the development of the curriculum, and
 - allows recognition of the effectiveness of the work of the school; (Paras 16, 34, 35, 36, 85, 90, 123)
- further develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they lead, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their subject; (Paras 45, 72, 90, 96, 99, 103, 108)
- continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that lesson tasks routinely match with learning objectives and pupils' needs and abilities. (Paras 12, 15, 16, 70)

58. The governing body working with the local education authority should:

- increase the number of governors and their level of training so that the governing body can fully meet its statutory responsibilities for all the work of the school, but especially that to do with
 - curriculum planning,
 - the quality of teaching and learning,
 - the progress pupils make, and
 - the school's finances; (Paras 46, 54)
- attend to the windows and panelling of the south elevation of the school to eliminate the high safety risk to pupils. (Paras 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	30	15	3	0	0
Percentage	1.7	17.0	50.2	25.1	5.0	0.0	0.0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point. Fifty-nine lessons were graded for teaching, two lessons were not graded because they were taught by others not on the school staff. The percentages for teaching are calculated from the 59 lessons graded for teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	47
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.7
Average class size	5.6

Education support staff: Y1 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	644

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	822436
Total expenditure	803472
Expenditure per pupil	16739
Balance brought forward from previous year	-23677
Balance carried forward to next year	-4713

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	45
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	46	15	4	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	42	12	4	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	32	8	32	14
The teaching is good.	38	46	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	28	20	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	42	8	0	15
The school works closely with parents.	46	31	15	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	65	19	0	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	24	12	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	44	4	0	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

POST – 16 PROVISION

59. The provision for post-16 students is good. Students achieve good standards and are making good progress over all curriculum areas. They are being prepared well for life after school.

60. The curriculum emphasises literacy and numeracy. This is in order to make students as socially literate and numerate, so that they can be as fully included as possible in life after school. The range of relevant experiences has much increased since the last inspection. Careers education extends over three years. Work experience within school includes mini-enterprise activities such as candle making, bicycle repairing and cafeteria work. Students have opportunities to study current affairs, science, food skills and the key words of foreign languages such as Spanish, French and German, as well as music and physical education. Personal and social skills continue to be fostered well. The increasing range of nationally accredited courses of the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) now enables students to demonstrate their achievements in, for example English, mathematics, ICT, music, citizenship, media studies and in many areas of personal and social development. This is good. No accredited qualifications were available to students at the time of the last inspection.

61. The quality of teaching is much better. At the last inspection it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Now, it is good. It is characterised by good planning; the good use of LSAs to match lesson tasks to pupils needs and abilities; the high expectations teachers and LSAs have for pupils' learning; and the good use of ICT in supporting teaching and learning, especially in English, mathematics and music. The very good relationship between adults and students helps make them confident learners. Students are happy to attempt solutions, give answers to questions and to ask questions when they are not sure. They take instructions well. Teachers and LSAs know their students very well. They also know the effect their learning difficulties have on the way they approach their work. Humour is well used as encouragement. Good work or effort is routinely reinforced with praise, but teachers and LSAs know when a student needs quiet time. As a result lesson time is well used to enable all students, even those with the most complex learning difficulties, to achieve the same good standards and make the same good progress.

62. The post-16 unit, which is separate from the main school, provides good accommodation and a more adult environment that helps the presentation of the curriculum. It is well resourced, with a good kitchen and bathroom, developing library, computer facility, teaching rooms and a general lounge.

63. Post-16 provision is well led. It is continuing to develop rapidly. For example, plans are well advanced to foster closer links with a local college that offers specialist courses suited to the needs of students, in order to further extend the curriculum and to increase the range of possible placements for students after they leave school. This will benefit students by making the transition to educational programmes after school that much easier.

64. A relevant curriculum; the good accommodation; the good quality of teaching; and the good attitudes students have toward their learning contribute to the good progress students are making in preparing themselves well for their lives after school.

ENGLISH

65. The good standards pupils achieve and the good progress they are making in Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The very good use of PECS, TEACCH and Makaton signing, but especially PECS, contributes to making communication more of a visual skill. For pupils whose speech is very limited this enhances their ability to communicate through augmented speech so that they learn well. As a consequence they are making commendable gains in speaking and listening and this helps them to make effective progress over all the work of the school.

66. For example, pupils starting school aged 5 with little or no language, have learned by the end of their second year to sing together and to recite the words of a song, including filling in the missing words. Through good use of their PECS timetable they learn of the sequence of the day and can select the appropriate symbol to show what they want, or to help understand the purpose of an object. The highest attaining pupils look at photographs to stimulate conversation. For example, they tell about who is in the photograph and where the photograph was taken. Their listening skills also develop quickly. For example, in a lesson when teacher read 'Hairy Maclary' from a big book, two pupils read the pages after her. One pupil pointed out that in the classroom '...they were safe from the fierce cat'. Those with the most complex learning difficulties also listen attentively to stories read to them. They are fully included in lessons. When the teacher was reading 'The Farm Concert', three pupils made 'quack quack' noises at the appropriate time on their Big Mac, and used spiders as objects of reference to join in the story through actions when 'Incy Wincy Spider' was read to them. There is less emphasis on writing. This results in pupils making satisfactory progress when they trace letters and make marks using sand, water and paint.

67. By the time they are 11 years of age, pupils have learned to use PECS very well, for example in identifying fruit they wish to have. Those with better speech name a range of fruit, including apples, bananas and grapes. During shared reading, they have learned to track text from big books. They make satisfactory progress with writing. By this time, the best writers write their own name and, independently, fill in answers to their book called 'This is me'. The less accomplished writers make marks within shapes and complete dot-to-dot drawings with satisfactory accuracy.

68. By the time they are 14 years of age, even those with the most limited speaking skills are well used to communicating their basic needs and opinions with the support of PECS. The most proficient speakers engage in meaningful conversations with visitors to the school. They listen well and give directions, for example to the headteacher's room. They easily tell their timetable for the rest of the day. The progress pupils make in all the elements of English between 11 and 14 years is satisfactory. This is because in some lessons, lesson tasks are often too repetitive. For example, in a lesson for mostly 13 year olds, pupils were so familiar with the sound cards in the game of word lottery, they matched them before the sound had been played on the tape. As a consequence, no new learning occurred because pupils were being asked to repeat what they had already learned. Also, work presented over the range of Key Stage 3 is too often not age-appropriate. For example, in one lesson pupils listened to a story about a tiger coming to tea. They were given objects of reference much too young for their age. The story line required that they put the tiger to bed. In a lesson to mostly 14 year olds, the highest attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged as learners when they named the four seasons and were required to sing a nursery harvest festival song 'Dig Dig' holding plastic fruit and vegetables up at the appropriate time. In writing, the best writers identify capital letters and write their own address from memory. All pupils overwrite and underwrite. The poorest writers match letters to their names and make circular movements with accuracy using finger paints.

69. Pupils, between 14 and 16 years of age take AQA awards for the first time to demonstrate the gains they have made in aspects of English over their time at school. This is a very good development and provides a focus for using their English skills in, for example shopping expeditions. They learn about the importance of language by knowing how commentators describe events and by role-play. In one lesson, their understanding of how speech describes events was enhanced through the gentle criticising of the performance of others and by deciding whether it is better to watch football without sound or with the commentary. By age of 16 years, the highest attaining pupils are good at using ICT to present their written work. The lowest attaining pupils continue to rely on pictures and symbols, supported by two and three letter words to record their work.

70. The very good and good progress made in aspects of English results from good quality teaching based on the very good choice of teaching strategies. Thirteen lessons were observed. Teaching was very good in one, good in seven, satisfactory in three and unsatisfactory in two. In the good lessons, the tasks match well with pupils' needs and abilities. Conversation is very well supported by augmentative systems. Pupils fully understand the use of these and enjoy initiating simple conversations, especially through using PECS. Teachers and LSAs manage the behaviour of all pupils well, including those with the most complex and challenging behaviour. The relationship between staff and pupils is very good and, by making pupils comfortable and confident as learners, this contributes to the overall good quality of learning. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the lesson tasks and the resources are not age appropriate, planning is unclear and work is not adapted suitably to meet the needs of all the pupils. Consequently, some pupils are not fully included in all the lesson tasks and their learning is compromised.

71. English has been a focus of development. Classes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are all banded into ability groups to limit the wide range of needs and abilities seen in most lessons. This works well and allows the teachers and LSAs to choose whole class teaching strategies that require pupils to work with each other. This especially, benefits the development of their speaking and listening skills. The schemes of work, and assessment procedures, are based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) documents supported by baseline assessment and curriculum targets from Equals. Long, medium and short-term planning is closely linked to Equals. Targets in pupils' IEPs are identified termly. These work well enough, but less well for pupils between 11 and 14 years of age because they are often not precise or smart enough to give good help in planning future lessons.

72. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed. She is working hard and has so far concentrated on re-organising the subject for the younger pupils. However, her role needs further development if she is going to be fully effective in leading, monitoring and evaluating the work in the subject over all the school. Too few teachers have been involved in training in the principles of the National Strategy for Literacy, although these are well implemented in most lessons. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 resources to support teaching and learning are good. More age-appropriate resources are required at Key Stage 3 to provide equivalent support. Lessons in English make a good contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. Their enhanced communication skills and their good use of PECS allows better access to all the work of the school, than was hitherto the case.

MATHEMATICS

73. Throughout the school, the very good standards pupils are achieving and the very good progress they are making represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The successful introduction into lessons of the principles of the National Strategy for Numeracy, the practice of grouping pupils by ability and the consistent use of visual

learning approaches are each making a good contribution to the improved performance of pupils.

74. For example, by the age of 7 years, pupils recognise the numbers 1 to 5. They use these skills in many practical situations such as when they match and count the number of sweets on a digit card. The highest attaining pupils are beginning to understand the concept of adding on and add on one more up to 5. They write numbers 1 to 5 on request and some are able identify their mistakes. For example, when a pupil was asked to write the number 2, he very quickly realised that he had written the number 5. The lowest attaining pupils show an interest in number games and songs and are curious about cause and effect with familiar objects and toys.

75. When they reach the age of 11 years, they have learned to sort and make sets of objects by colour, shape and size. Most pupils name, select and draw shapes such as square, triangle and circle. The highest attaining pupils count forwards and backwards in tens to 100 and to 25 in ones. They construct their own number squares and some are able to understand that the highest number is the same as multiplying the number of rows by the number of columns. They are beginning to understand the concept of odd and even numbers.

76. By the age of 14 years, the lowest attaining pupils have progressed to understanding the order of numbers up to 11 and they rote count to 20. They have learned that 0 is the lowest and 20 is the highest number on a number line. The best at mathematics are beginning to recognise 10s and units patterns, times tables and when using a number board can apply the rule to move up and down by 10s. Concepts such as less than and more than are well known, as is the number before and the number after. They now sort shapes by more precise characteristics such as edges, faces and corners. For example, the highest attaining pupils know that a cuboid shape has rectangular sides. Most measure accurately by weight, height and distance and have a very good knowledge of time.

77. By the time they are 16 years of age, they can relate their mathematical knowledge to practical situations. The highest attaining pupils develop the use of numbers, for example the time taken to finish a race, and order them from the 1st to the 10th. The lowest attaining pupils have learned to use a number line to add and subtract and can reduce larger numbers into 100s, 10s and units. When handling data, the highest attaining pupils make predictions such as the number of times they can write their name in a minute. All pupils make good progress against their individual learning targets.

78. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory only for those below age 14 years of age. Of the nine lessons observed in this inspection, one was very good, seven were good and one was unsatisfactory. The strength of teaching in mathematics is the consistent use of the routines and strategies of the national strategy. This is supported by good teamwork between teachers and LSAs. Also, teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils' needs. A baseline assessment procedure is used to set initial targets for pupils and to provide information from which progress can be judged. This is helping teachers recognise the skills of pupils and most are using this information well in planning their lessons. In the best lessons, the good use of each of these results in lesson tasks being very well selected for all pupils. This ensures that pupils are fully included in all aspects of lessons. As a consequence, they are very effective learners and achieve very well, despite the complexity of their learning difficulties. Also, they are well managed and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly, most often without affecting the learning of others in the class. Resource support is good and in many lessons is well targeted to help meet pupils' needs. In one lesson, coin worksheets had been differentiated for each individual pupil, resulting in

well-motivated pupils being fully included in all aspects of the lesson. The computer suite is used well to support learning in mathematics, for example through creating bar charts to present the results of surveys. However, the lack of computers in individual classrooms, limits their easy access as a support resource for teaching and learning.

79. The mathematics co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the policy document is current and the schemes of work effective in helping teachers plan their lessons. Progress in mathematics is reported very well in pupils' annual reports. Parents and carers have a clear indication of what their child understands, knows and can do.

80. Mathematics is well promoted in lessons in other subjects. For example, in a lesson in religious education emphasis was placed on recognising the shapes in an Islamic mosaic and relating them to previous learning in mathematics. The subject also contributes well to the pupils' moral and social development through activities such as turn taking and thinking about the needs of others.

SCIENCE

81. Over all the school, pupils are taught a full range of facts about living things, materials and physical processes. The good quality teaching promotes good standards in lessons. However, the lack of a specialist teaching room with even the most basic of resources, such as a gas supply, limits the progress pupils are making over full range of the subject, which is satisfactory. Nevertheless, this represents an improvement in both standards and progress since the last inspection when the work of older pupils was judged to be unsatisfactory.

82. Pupils' interest in learning about science is stimulated by teachers' good use of practical investigations. By the time they are 6 years of age, pupils have had a good start in learning about science. They do well to distinguish the different sounds that instruments make and can say if the sound is high or low. As part of their programme of knowing and understanding the world, they have learned about the texture and use of materials, for example when they handle plastic creatures during water play sessions. They have discovered the ways that vehicles move. Exploring push and pull forces on playground equipment extends their understanding of forces and motion. By the time they are 11 years of age, they have built well on their knowledge of materials. They know that some are good at keeping out water and wind and others are not. In their continuing study of forces and motion they are good at predicting which objects will float and which will sink.

83. By the time they are 14 years of age, they have learned that the earth, moon and sun are different in size. The highest attaining pupils do well in describing the features of the moon and the earth. For example, they know that the large area of blue seen on the surface of the earth when photographed from space is water, and the surface of the moon is dry and dusty. In living things, they name many parts of a plant, for example stalk, petals and flower and can name many parts of their own body. The highest attaining pupils recognise what can and cannot be attracted by magnets. By the time they are 16 years of age, their knowledge of living things has been extended to recognising the eating habits of different animals. The highest attaining pupils can use technical terms such as 'carnivore' and 'herbivore' to help in their explanations. As part of the mini-enterprise project on making candles they describe how wax changes when it is heated.

84. The good quality of teaching promotes good quality learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching in science was judged to be satisfactory. Now, teachers plan well. In a lesson with mainly 13 year olds, pupils were quickly into their lesson task, which was to make a model of the sun and moon. They did this because the objectives were clear to them and the teacher's good preparation before the lesson meant that the

materials and equipment required were ready to be used. Interesting lesson tasks is characteristic of lessons in science. For example, pupils enjoyed discovering for themselves the objects that sink or float in a water tank. Also, through the good use of videotape, they recognised the different features of the moon and earth. In the good lessons, they are made to think by the good use of open-ended questions. Teachers and their LSAs use praise well and this helps pupils to produce their best learning. Gaining enjoyment from their lesson tasks and the good help of the LSAs, allows pupils to attend for long periods and, routinely, to behave well. Consequently, lesson time is well used and the standards pupils achieve reflect this. Teachers have high expectations for learning. For example, they expect pupils to give answers using the correct scientific vocabulary. Each helps to promote the good knowledge pupils have of science, even though this may be over a curriculum limited by the absence of a specialist teaching room. The computers in the computer suite are well used to support teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the absence of computers in classrooms results in the loss of teaching time, in moving to and from the computer suite and in loading and preparing for use the appropriate software program.

85. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the planning documents, including the schemes of work. The good links between medium and short-term planning are reviewed each half term. They provide good help in the development of lesson plans. Each has helped to make learning a more continuous experience for pupils and by so doing promotes the better levels they are achieving. The co-ordinator is keen to develop baseline assessment information as the first step in recognising the progress pupils are making in the subject and to develop assessment procedures that better inform lesson planning in order to further increase further the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Resources support is good.

ART AND DESIGN

86. Pupils' standards in art are satisfactory throughout the school, but over a curriculum that provides only a limited range of art experiences. This judgement is based on an analysis of pupils' work, displays around the school and a discussion with the co-ordinator. In addition, information was gained from lesson observations in other subjects in which learning about art was a feature. Only one art lesson was observed during the week. Older pupils learn about art as part of topic work in other subjects such as science, geography and history. This approach makes it very difficult to recognise the elements of the Programmes of Study that have been covered, and the continuity and progression in what pupils learn.

87. Nevertheless, by the age of 7 years, pupils have learned of the tactile qualities of a range of materials such as pasta, plastics, corn flour and fabrics. They have explored the textures and shapes of these materials and made collages, which emphasises colour, relief and shape. They use a glue spreader without help and stick a range of materials on to paper. They have learned to make prints and have made impressions from rubbing onto paper. The highest attaining pupil paints from memory and imagination, for example good approximations of Bart, Maggie and Marge Simpson. By the time they are 11 years of age, they will have used only a limited a range of materials such as paints, crayons and felt-tip pens. Their experience of 3D work is limited, although they have produced class and school displays by making models out of scrap materials on which they experiment using colour, shape and texture. By the age of 14 years, their experience of the full range of artwork is still narrow, their topic work only requiring them to use tissue paper, crayon, felt-tip pens and paint on collage displays. One group of pupils has worked on a project based on the artist Gustav Klimt. They have observed and commented on his work and evaluate it by saying if they like it or not. By this time almost all pupils use scissors accurately enough to cut circles from cardboard in copying Klimt's approach to his murals. By the time they are 16 years of age, they have contributed to whole school displays such as a tactile wall, on which there is a

range of materials for all pupils to explore. They make good use of computers to produce pictures and images, for example symmetrical images using the Dazzle program.

88. Displays around the school show the good contribution art makes to learning in other subjects. Numeracy is promoted well through measurement charts and graphs, for example showing the heights of pupils. Favourite number songs such as Ten Red Apples form a colourful interactive display. The apples being removed from a velcro strip as pupils sing the song.

89. In the one lesson observed, the teaching of art was good. The lesson was well planned and organised. Pupils rotated around three different activities that were well matched with their skills and abilities. The good deployment of LSAs ensured that pupils were fully included in all the activities. The good range of resources was appropriate to the learning objectives of the lesson. The relationship between staff and pupils was very good and was routinely reinforced through regular praise and encouragement for the quality of pupils' work and the effort they made. Inappropriate behaviour was managed well, according to pupils' behaviour management plans and procedures. It is very difficult for teachers to plan for continuity and progression in pupils learning over the full range of the Programmes of Study when art is taught in lessons in other subjects.

90. The co-ordinator is a well-qualified and experienced teacher, who has worked hard to integrate the teaching of art into teaching and learning in other subjects. Those without specialist qualifications or experience in teaching art are well supported. The system for recording and assessing the attainment of pupils is insufficiently precise and does not help teachers clearly recognise pupils' gains in the subject or in the planning of future lessons. The co-ordinator's role needs to develop further in order for the subject to fully contribute to the curriculum.

91. The facilities and resources for art are unsatisfactory. The lack of a dedicated art room restricts the curriculum the school is able to offer its pupils. For example, few resources are available to support the teaching of screen-printing and 3 dimensional work, such as pottery. Pupils' knowledge of art is beneficially extended by visits to local art galleries.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making in food technology are satisfactory. In this element of the subject pupils over all the school are developing a range of appropriate independence and creative skills. Since the previous report there has been no real improvement in pupils' opportunities to develop their skills in design and making in resistant materials. This area of the design and technology curriculum remains unsatisfactory. There is no specialist teaching space where pupils can use large work areas, hand tools or power tools or devices to secure materials for cutting, or where incomplete work can be stored. As a consequence, the range of materials that the pupils work with is insufficient for them to have appropriate experience of different kinds of construction.

93. In food technology, pupils aged 6 years visit a local supermarket to buy the food they prepare and eat. Initially, they make simple food such as toast. The period at the end of the lesson when they eat the meal they have prepared, promotes social development very well, for example when pupils take turns in waiting for the jam to spread onto their toast or help to share a pizza. By the time they are 11 years of age, the highest attaining pupils peel and cut vegetables to make soup. By the time they are 14 years of age, they weigh and mix ingredients following a recipe to make, for example banana-flavoured muffins.

94. In resistant materials, photographs in pupils' records show that they have used construction kits to design and make models. By the time they are 6 years of age, they have learned to build a model car from magnetic blocks. Twelve-year-old pupils are creating a mural in the style of Gustav Klimt. They are gluing string and tissue paper onto a cardboard base to make a relief picture. Pupils who are 13 years of age draw the plan of a house and construct it using Lego blocks. The oldest pupils are designing and making candles as part of their mini-enterprise project.

95. Only lessons in food technology could be observed during the inspection. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons teachers and LSAs provide ongoing support, advice and encouragement to enable the pupils to work as independently as possible. For example, when the younger pupils set the table for the rest of the class, or when they follow the directions of a recipe. When pupils are working in the food technology room appropriate emphasis is placed on hygiene and safety procedures. Pupils know full well that they need to wash their hands thoroughly before they prepare or cook food. Teachers use the local shops well, as they did when the youngest pupils visited the local supermarket, to increase their knowledge of different food types, such as fruit, vegetables, cereal and meat. Pupils enjoy lessons in food technology. They concentrate well and work hard at their tasks.

96. The co-ordinator has very recently been appointed. The curriculum has changed to Equals units and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, in the time since the last inspection there has been no other significant development in the subject. The new co-ordinator has proposed a number of areas for further development. These include the better use of assessment to monitor the attainment of pupils and help in planning of future lessons, and the provision of increased opportunities in resistant materials, especially for pupils at Key Stage 3, that closer reflect their entitlement. Considerable development in leading, monitoring and evaluating work in the subject needs to be accomplished before pupils can be presented with good learning experiences and achieve increased standards over the full range of the subject. Resources to support teaching and learning in food technology are good. They are unsatisfactory in resistant materials.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in geography. It is now taught as a single subject. The curriculum is better organised. The long, medium and short-term planning and the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are firmly rooted in the Equals system. These adequately reflect the relevant Programmes of Study of the NC. The subject is on a rolling programme with history. Geography is taught during the Autumn and Summer terms of each year. Only a small number of lessons were observed over the time of the inspection, but an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning documents and lesson evaluations, displays and annual review reports show that pupils' achievement in geography is satisfactory, as is the progress they are making.

98. By the age of 7 years, pupils identify familiar classroom objects and their usual location. They are knowledgeable of places within the school and its grounds and can be easily directed to these. They know about different types of weather conditions, use weather symbols to illustrate their work and know the link between the weather symbols and the best clothes to wear. Teachers use the local park and shopping centre very well as places to explore direction and distance, such as close to or far away. By the time they are 11 years of age, through field trips they have seen a good range of natural habitats, visited a natural history museum, and have learned that maps and their symbols represent real places and real features such as lakes, towns, roads, railway lines and bridges. The highest attaining pupils draw maps of the school to good scale. They have also learned to follow a map to a spot in the local shopping centre or park. By the time pupils are 14 years of age, they

compare and contrast their own city of Manchester with that of Stresa in Italy and tell which place they like best and why. Their learning about mountains is made more real through a field trip to the highest hills in the Lake District before comparing them with a high mountain range. Pupils age 14 years, are learning about the differences between sea water and river water. In a practical activity in their lesson by tasting sea water and plain water they learned very quickly of the salt content in sea-water. By the time they are 16 years of age, their knowledge of the weather has substantially increased. They know about the basic routines of weather systems and the benefits and disasters that weather can bring to localised areas. Over their time at Key Stage 4, they gain equivalent levels of knowledge about the water cycle, people, the environment and locational geography.

99. The quality of teaching is good. To make topics real for pupils, teachers make especially good use of field trips, to the local community and elsewhere to have pupils see and experience first hand features such as mountains, lakes, rivers and the different numbers of people in cities and in the country.

100. The co-ordinator has led the considerable improvement in the subject well, since the last inspection. However, the role needs to be further developed to include aspects of leadership such as helping teachers without specialist knowledge or experience in geography in their teaching, increasing the limited resource base to better promote learning over all aspects of the subject and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. The carousel method, which results in pupils having no lessons in geography in the Spring Term is not helpful in promoting steady gains in learning. Through the content of lessons geography makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

HISTORY

101. History is taught in the Spring Term only, as part of the 'rolling programme' with geography. Since the last inspection Equals units have been adopted as the curriculum in history. History was not taught over the time of the inspection. Analysis of the planning documents, discussions with staff and scrutiny of annual reports and of teachers' evaluations of teaching and learning show that pupils are achieving satisfactory standards and are making satisfactory progress. The subject has not developed since the last inspection.

102. By the time they are 7 years of age, pupils' concept of time is being refined through studying 'Me as I now am'. All pupils identify personal belongings, such as their coat. The highest attaining pupils are able to recognise photographs of themselves. They are beginning to recognise that life in the past was different through, for example trying on the clothes children would have worn in the past during a visit to a local museum. By the time they are 11 years of age, their concept of chronology has been advanced by the study of their family. The highest attaining pupils know that many aspects of life change over time through looking at the photographs of the generations of their family. Their knowledge of young and old is good and they sequence photographs of children and adults in an appropriate order. They know of past and present, but even the highest attaining pupils have only a little understanding of the effect of the past on the present. By the time they are 14 years of age, they have learned to tell about the past. For example, they know of famous people including William Wilberforce, the Pankhursts and Nelson Mandela. By this age, the highest attaining pupils have a good understanding the near and distant past and a satisfactory understanding of how events in the past contribute to life at present.

103. Teachers' planning is firmly based on the relevant Equals units. Teachers' evaluations show that all pupils are fully included in lessons, notwithstanding their level of ability or learning needs. The co-ordinator requires time before the role of leading, monitoring and evaluating all the school's work in the subject is fully achieved. The range of resources to

support learning in history, for example artefacts, videotapes and CDROMs is insufficient to provide satisfactory support for teaching and for learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are good over all key stages. Since the last inspection, the school has created a very good computer suite, with a suitable number of good computers and associated hardware. Teachers have taken advantage of nationally available training. The range and quantity of software matches well with the needs of pupils. Each has contributed to the very good improvement made in all aspects of the subject, including the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making, since the last inspection. Also, in the way in which ICT supports teaching and learning in other subjects, most especially in English and mathematics.

105. Pupils' abilities in ICT vary considerably. Most attain at levels lower than that expected for their age. However, the pupil who is most knowledgeable of computers and their capabilities is 10 years of age. His range of skills and knowledge is better than that expected for pupils of his age in mainstream schools. He is computer literate. For example, he creates a data base of up to ten fields; analyses and presents data in various graphic forms; uses most of the facilities of word processing programs; enters, searches and downloads from the Internet; creates, copies and merges files. He quickly learns how to operate most software programs new to him, especially those that produce artwork. Alternatively, an older pupil with movement difficulties requires the use of a modified keyboard to be able to control the screen. Most pupils, by the time they are 14 years of age, feel confident in using computers. They use a variety of programs such as Word and Publisher to present written work, and spreadsheet programs to analyse and present numbers. By the time they are 16 years of age, the highest attaining pupils understand the power of the Internet. They are effective users. For example, they use it to recognise the up-coming weather through presenting the 5-day weather forecast and, more creatively, in support of their own learning when they recover information, for example in finding out why a ship floats.

106. Pupils enjoy learning ICT. Teachers are good at dealing with the wide range of pupils' abilities. Their good knowledge of the subject and of pupils' abilities, the very good facilities of the new computer suite and the good use of LSAs that often results in one adult supporting one pupil, all contribute to pupils being fully included in all lesson tasks. Consequently, pupils work hard to complete their tasks. Lesson time is well used and only rarely are they reminded of their responsibilities as learners. The good quality of teaching realises good progress in pupils' learning

107. The curriculum follows Equals units. Given the low level of development of the subject at the last inspection, this is acceptable at this time. However, for the highest attaining pupils at each key stage this is unsatisfactory as they are insufficiently challenged by the requirements of the Equals units. The subject co-ordinator, who is overseeing improvement in the subject very well, recognises that the continuing development of the curriculum needs to incorporate more opportunities for extension work, well beyond the Equals levels.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

108. The provision for modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. It does not meet statutory requirements for pupils at Key Stage 3.

109. No lessons were taught over the time of the inspection. The only example seen of planning to teach a modern foreign language was as part of a lesson in geography for pupils 13 years of age that compared Manchester with Stresa in Italy. This involved the pupils learning a few Italian words and phrases.

MUSIC

110. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards and are making satisfactory progress. The quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. The issue of inadequate accommodation that disadvantaged the standards pupils achieved in the recent past has been overcome. The recently modified music room is now providing good accommodation and should act as a good base to promote improved standards over a wider ranging curriculum than was hitherto the case.

111. By the time they are 7 years of age, pupils are able to use their PECS cards to select a musical instrument to play. They respond well to cue cards of 'red, amber and green', which relate to "stop, wait and go" and this assists them with their turn taking. Pupils are able to take turns and make sounds into a microphone, which helps promote self-esteem and confidence. They also use their PECS cards to choose their favourite song, which is then sung by the class complete with supporting actions. At 11 years of age, they are able to choose an instrument, play in turn with others and stop and start on a given command. They are able to identify long and short notes and can produce them with their voices and instruments. By the age of 14 years, they are able to compose a simple tune through the use of a computer program. They explore ways of playing and listening to basic rhythms, for example when presented through a drum, which they copy satisfactorily well. By the time they are 16 years of age, a number of pupils will have taken part in steel band sessions. They are able to read the notes written in letters on a card and at the appropriate times match these to the panels of the drum.

112. Teaching and learning of music is satisfactory over all. Music plays an important role in many lessons. Songs are used to mark the end and start of the school day and pupils are familiar with this routine. At other times music is used in a science lesson when pupils take it in turns to bang a drum and experiment with a range of instruments to make different sounds. Dance, most often to music or rhyme makes an important contribution to the curriculum in physical education. Teachers use a wide a range of strategies to include all pupils in the lesson tasks. The deployment of LSAs is good. This, especially, helps pupils with the most challenging behaviours to make consistent progress.

113. The subject is satisfactorily led. The co-ordinator, who has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, has produced a satisfactory policy statement and a scheme of work but is aware that certain aspects of the curriculum need extending further. For example, there are limited opportunities for pupils to work on composing skills and in appreciating music from a range of cultures. The subject makes a good contribution to other subject areas such as English, mathematics and physical education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are satisfactory. Younger pupils are making good progress in swimming. The emphasis given to dance within the physical education curriculum enhances pupils' social development and effectively allows them to explore movements they are unlikely to experience without the support of music and rhyme. The subject has made good improvement in its organisation and the range of activities available to pupils has increased since the last inspection.

115. Pupils enjoy lessons in physical education. Most delight in being active, even when they have difficulties in fully controlling their movements. In gymnastics, by the time they are 7 years of age, the highest attaining pupils create and perform a series of actions of varying speed and direction to a controlled finish. They benefit physically and socially by working with each other to find solutions to simple problems, for example in moving through a hoop. In athletics, they are beginning to learn rules, such as not to run before being touched in a relay race. By the time they are 11 years of age, their increased strength, better co-ordination and balance underpins more complex work in gymnastics. The best gymnasts control their weight in a variety of balances and in jumps to good finishes. Their good work on the skills of games such as football, and hitting games such as Kwik Cricket and short tennis, helps them enjoy competition against each other either as individuals or as members of small teams. In most lessons, whether they are in the hall or the swimming pool, they work hard physically and most often try to do their best. By the time they are 14 years of age, in gymnastics and dance they are using a wider range of movements and show good expression, including an awareness of mood and emotion in their movement. They especially enjoy dance and feel a sense of security when moving to music and repeating patterns of movement, for example when they dance up the hill with the 'Duke of York'. In one good dance lesson a girl acting as Cinderella danced with a boy acting as the Prince and made voluntary eye contact for the first time in any situation. This represented considerable progress in confidence and social development for the pupil whose learning difficulties seriously inhibit her showing her emotions and feelings.

116. Pupils routinely behave well in lessons and pay due regard to safety. Older pupils have learned the rules of the main winter and summer games. They generalise their notion of rules by quickly learning those of new games, such as boules that are played in the hall. They know of the need for warming-up and warming-down and can do these with the minimum of adult involvement. They have learned of the beneficial effects of exercise on their body. Increasingly, they take part in activities, which they can continue after they have left school, especially aerobic activities. Only the younger pupils swim at this time. They adhere well to the safety rules of the local swimming pool and gain confidence from changing, drying and dressing themselves for and after swimming. The lowest attaining pupils are water safe with flotation support and are water-confident. The highest attaining pupils swim all four strokes with satisfactory style and speed.

117. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned. The combining of classes to make groups of greater than twelve is effective because it allows pupils to play team games and take part in activities not possible for single classes of six or fewer. Teachers and LSAs know their pupils very well. They use this information to encourage, praise and motivate pupils, for example to complete tasks or to learn the movements of a new dance. Most lessons are characterised by a good level of activity. The limitations of the hall, in which the indoor lessons take place, are managed well by teachers, but compromise the standards pupils achieve. The hall is used for assemblies and as a dining room for lunch. It is walked through regularly by staff and pupils moving from one part of the school to another. Having to set-up and re-place equipment at the start of and the end of lessons limits what can be offered to pupils. They are naturally curious to see who is passing through the hall and this

sometimes interrupts their learning. The lack of a grassed surface and the small size of the outside area severely restricts pupils' opportunities to practise team games and athletics.

118. Teachers are well aware that taking part in dance routines provides an excellent opportunity for those pupils with the most complex of learning difficulties to participate fully in whole class activities. They plan the dance lessons very well to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the lesson. Pupils with the most complex of learning difficulties gain considerable social benefit from this.

119. The co-ordinator has a specialist qualification in physical education. He is leading the subject well. Since the last inspection a long-term plan based on the NC Programmes of Study, which takes regard of key skills documentation, has been written. This guides medium-term planning very effectively. Learning through Landscapes money has been gained to try to make the outdoor area better suited for teaching and learning. Small resources, such as balls, bats and racquets are satisfactory in range and quantity.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. The standards pupils achieve in lessons observed over the inspection are good. From analysis of completed work, planning documents and discussions with teachers and pupils, the progress they are making over time is satisfactory. The range of learning activities and good quality teaching in lessons in religious education has a beneficial effect on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

121. The youngest pupils are developing awareness of their emotions. They are learning about turn-taking and developing their thoughts for others. The good use of appropriate background music adds a feeling of relaxation and comfortableness to lessons, which helps pupils to focus their thought on others. In a lesson for pupils aged 8 years, they tasted different fruits as part of their learning about harvest time. The lesson ended with a prayer when pupils said 'thank you' for the food they ate. In this key stage, they begin to learn of different faiths, for example Buddhism. They have learned about the routines of a family in the Jewish faith. Most pupils know that the Bible is a special book and that it tells stories of a special person called Jesus, as well as stories about others, such as Adam and Eve. By the age of 14 years, their knowledge of other faiths has increased. This term they are learning about the customs associated with Islam. In an excellent lesson for 15-year-old pupils, they learned of the five obligations of the Muslim faith. They used a prayer mat and followed the directions for prayer, including pointing to the East. The highest attaining pupils know that Arabic is an important language of followers of Islam. The oldest pupils talk about relationships and consider moral issues, such as their responsibility to the environment. Common themes in lessons include sharing, caring and belonging as part of a group. As a consequence, pupils' social, moral, cultural development as well as their spiritual development is well promoted.

122. In lessons, the quality of teaching is good over all, and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. This represents an improvement from the judgements made at the last inspection. Role-play is very well used, as it was in an excellent lesson where the teacher dressed in the costume of a Muslim. Pupils were very motivated because their learning was exciting and relevant to them. Artefacts, including a prayer mat, and the use of videotape brought their learning to life. The teacher who has travelled extensively in India used his personal experiences very well to make relevant to the pupils the important concepts of a faith, which was new to them. Lessons are characterised by frequent opportunities for pupils to have open discussions, for example about rights and wrongs that have accompanied the development of religions.

123. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is working with representatives from other special schools to modify the content of the local authority agreed syllabus to make it more accessible to pupils. A number of modules are presently on trial in the school. As yet, the methods used to assess pupils' attainments and the resources available to support teaching and learning do not match well with the new modules. Consequently, lesson planning is not always successful in meeting the needs of all pupils. This is the reason why the progress pupils make over time is not as good as the standards they achieve in individual lessons.