

INSPECTION REPORT

WYVERN SCHOOL

Weymouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113958

Headteacher: Helen Mackenzie

Reporting inspector: Tom Smith
21044

Dates of inspection: 26-29 September 2000

Inspection number: 223602
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be

made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	307a Chickerell Road Weymouth Dorset
Postcode:	DT4 0QU
Telephone number:	01305 783660
Fax number:	01305 770965
e-mail address	office@wyvern.dorset.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Kenwood
Date of previous inspection:	11 th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tom Smith 21044	Registered inspector	Art Physical education	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Shirley Watts 9957	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mary Last 17171	Team inspector	Information technology Design and technology Personal and social education Under-fives education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
Kathleen Cannon 27058	Team inspector	Science Geography Special educational needs Post-16	
Maureen Bailey 23707	Team Inspector	Mathematics History Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Colette Gribble 31914	Team Inspector	English Music Modern foreign language Equal opportunities English as an additional language.	

The inspection contractor was:

Baker-Phillips Inspection Services

The Croft
Brierley Way
Lydney
Gloucestershire

GL15 4NE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wyvern School is an average size, maintained day school for up to 60 pupils aged 2-19 years. Currently there are 50 pupils on roll, of whom 27 are boys. It provides education for pupils who collectively have a range of special and complex needs, including severe and profound learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders. The latter represent some 12 per cent of the school roll – a figure above the national average of 4 per cent. Pupils travel to the school from a wide area of Dorset. They are, predominantly, of white, European background. Almost one quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals. On entry all pupils have low or very low attainment and are the subject of a statement of special educational need. Since the last inspection the structure of the classes has been changed and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD) are now fully included in the activity and learning of the school. No pupil uses English as a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wyvern is a good school in which all pupils make good and very good progress. This is the result of high levels of good teaching. The governing body and headteacher use the resources both effectively and efficiently and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching throughout the school is of a good standard and this contributes significantly to the good progress made by all pupils.
- The practice of including all pupils in every activity is effective in developing their personal and academic needs.
- Provides effectively for the needs of pupils with particular special needs, especially those with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Staff encourage and enable pupils to take a full part in their learning.
- Procedures for the care and protection of pupils are good. Staff provide good levels of high quality care and concern.
- Provides effective opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development.
- Provides a good curriculum and opportunities for post-16 students that enable them to become mature young adults.
- Offers a good range of learning opportunities to pupils and students. Among these are good quality residential experiences that improve pupils' social competence.
- Forms flourishing links with other institutions, that increases the range and quality of educational opportunity.
- Encourages and values positive links with parents that are to the benefit of pupils and students.
- Everyone involved with and working in the school is united in a wish to provide the best opportunities for pupils and students.

What could be improved

- Enable co-ordinators to be more effective in managing their subjects.
- Review the role of the senior management team, together with other key roles and responsibilities, that would enable curriculum leadership to be both focused and pro-active.
- The assessment and evaluation of pupils' work in such a way that it will enable pupils' progress to be tracked with greater certainty and provide better quality information for parents.
- Offer a wider range of national accreditation opportunities for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Improve the accommodation for science, design and technology, and pupils with autism. This is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996 and it was judged to have serious weaknesses.

Subsequent visits were made by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Since the last inspection the school has made significant and effective improvement in key areas. These include management, financial planning, curriculum, class structure and accommodation.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good	A
reading	B	B	B	B	good	B
writing	C	B	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	B	A	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	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 targets set at annual review of pupils' statement of special need, as well as those contained within IEP's are challenging and realistic. Children within the Foundation Stage make good progress in their ability to communicate and achieve well in other areas of their learning and personal development. Pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders make good progress. Pupils in Key Stages 1-4 make good progress across most areas of the curriculum. Progress in design and technology and science is less secure because of restrictive accommodation. Achievement in personal and social education is good. The greatest achievements relate to pupils' ability to communicate and develop their personal independence. Achievements, in both literacy and numeracy, are good. This is assisted through the school's adaptation of the respective national strategies. As pupils become older they make very effective use of their learning in literacy and numeracy. Students at post-16 are provided with an appropriate curriculum that enables them to become mature young adults. When compared to prior attainment pupils and students make good progress. In common with other similar schools Wyvern School is developing the use of P-scales to indicate the measure of progress. There is no reliable data against which performance can be measured against other such schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are industrious and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and on frequent visits to places within the wider community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop a 'try anything' approach because of the positive relationships they have with staff and other pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Much of the absence is caused by medical conditions of individual pupils.

Because of their positive attitudes to the school and the enjoyment they take from lessons pupils become more and more independent as they move through the school. Behaviour in lessons is very good. This contributes to an atmosphere in the school that can best be described as a 'hive of industry'.

Where possible pupils are challenged to take appropriate levels of responsibility, either in assisting at lunchtimes or clearing away after lessons. All pupils successfully learn to carry out these tasks.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the Foundation Stage all areas of learning are effectively taught. Work is prepared individually for these pupils. Pupils' work is well related to special needs targets and they become fully involved in learning. Throughout all key stages and post-16 the standards of teaching are good

Strengths within the teaching include the planning that is done for individual pupils. This ensures that each pupil is effectively challenged. A range of methods used by teachers ensures that pupils become fully involved as learners. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach. The structure provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies has been well adapted by teachers in a way that takes full account of pupils' needs. All pupils have full access to the whole of the National Curriculum, but where some subjects are not taught as a distinct unit they are skilfully included within a topic-based approach. Teachers are very skilled at managing disruptive behaviour. Because of this pupils realise that high standards of behaviour are required of them. 98 per cent of teaching was judged as satisfactory or better. High quality teaching was seen across the school, with no significant variation in standard between any of the key stages. As a result of this pupils remain busy and work both purposefully and effectively in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good at all key stages and the Foundation Stage. The curriculum for post-16 students is very good and particularly relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The provision for moral and social development is good. The provision for cultural development does not sufficiently help pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are effective procedures in place to ensure child protection. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory.

The school has effective links with parents, which it fosters and maintains through regular contact. In written responses to the questionnaire, circulated prior to the inspection, parents expressed positive appreciation of the way in which the school keeps them informed. Parents signify this support through a full attendance at review meetings held for their children. Links with the local community are good. These include businesses, local secondary schools and colleges as well as other community resources. These extend the range of opportunity for pupils and in the case of science at Key Stage 4 make up a shortfall in school facilities. The school provides well for the moral and social development of its pupils. Pupils can tell the difference between right and wrong. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory but there is insufficient emphasis on the richness and diversity of other cultures. There is good provision to alert pupils to the risks of drug misuse. These are included in personal and health education at appropriate stages of their personal development. Assemblies include an appropriate period for individual reflection as well as an appreciation of the effort of others. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are under-developed and need further work before they become effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she receives good support from her senior management team. Monitoring by subject co-ordinators is unsatisfactory.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body has a detailed knowledge of the school and diligently carries out its role as 'critical friends'. It ensures that standards continue to rise.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors systematically monitor the performance of the school. In their planning they set realistic but challenging targets aimed at raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funding is appropriately allocated to meet both the targets of the school development plan.

Despite considerable effort and investment by the governors, with the support of the local authority, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The building is welcoming and well maintained but key areas of the curriculum cannot be taught effectively. These include science and design and technology. There is no grassed play area. Resources for learning are satisfactory. There is sufficient staff to teach the full range of both the formal and informal curriculum.

The headteacher, governors and staff, with the local authority, share a common commitment to raising standards and ensuring that pupils make good progress. The best value principles are applied in the school's management and use of resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They can see the improvement in the quality of what their children can do.• They feel fully included in a dialogue with the school. They think their children benefit from this.• When their children arrive home from school they can see that they are happy.• The way in which the staff care for their children.• The links the school has with the mainstream secondary school.• That additional meetings are set up to discuss their concerns.• The improved arrangements for allocating pupils to classes. These are now age appropriate and give their children more opportunity to learn.• It is "less of an 'institution' than it was" because of the redecoration that has taken place and staff are more welcoming• Their children are encouraged to make choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standard of the accommodation.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents and believes the school is deserving of their support. Parents have the right opinions about the unsatisfactory aspects of the accommodation. They recognise that the governing body and school management has done much to improve it.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When pupils are admitted to the school, before they are aged five years they have poor communication skills. As a result of the relevant and good quality curriculum and the consistently high level of good teaching they make good progress. By the time they enter formal education at Key Stage 1 they are well prepared to take advantage of the opportunities offered. Many pupils have significant communication difficulties; higher attaining pupils can say individual words. The staff are diligent in their approach to developing this skill, using both sign and gesture, and as a result pupils make good progress. For example, at the start of the day the teacher uses sets of cards to indicate activities the pupils will undertake. Their responses, particularly from higher attaining pupils, indicate a good understanding of the process. Pupils make good progress in language and literacy through the use of symbol cards. This is, quite appropriately, a major focus in their learning. Higher attaining pupils recognise when cards are removed from sight and understand that an activity will change as a result.
2. Mathematical development within the Foundation Stage is not yet as well developed as language. Pupils' progress in understanding number is satisfactory but their use of number is weak. They are developing a good understanding of the passage of time and know when the school day is finished and it is time to go home.
3. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their understanding of the world around them. They respond well to the movement of lightweight fabric over their heads to signify the movement of a river. They focus on moving toys and retain concentration on these for significant periods. Pupils make good progress in developing their sensory abilities and higher attaining pupils make particularly good use of these new-found skills and understanding. For example, they relate very effectively to stories through feel or smell of objects connected with them.
4. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to ensure a good grounding in pre-reading and reading skills for pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make excellent progress in pre-reading skills. They respond enthusiastically when stories are read to them. They identify with characters in the stories. Higher attaining pupils recognise individual letters and make successful attempts to write these. Pupils within this key stage make very good progress in speaking and listening. While this is, in the case of lower attaining pupils, augmented by the use of symbol cards, all pupils are developing an awareness of speech and how it is used for communication. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue this good progress by developing and using an appropriate range of phonic skills. Pupils learn to write by tracing and copying letters. Higher attaining pupils in this key stage, independently, write individual words, phrases and simple sentences.
5. At Key Stage 3 pupils make excellent progress in speaking and listening. They enthusiastically take part in the music, dance and drama and from their responses, both verbal and non-verbal, they show that they understand story lines and events. Follow-up work is recorded in work books. By the end of this key stage all pupils have made very good progress in their ability to communicate.

6. At Key Stage 4, all pupils, including those with profound communication difficulties, make very good progress in their understanding and use of language. Pupils using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), make particularly good progress. Through the use of this system their understanding of the world is increasing. This improved communication enables them to take more effective part in lessons. Parents are very pleased with their children's progress and they commented on this at the pre-inspection meeting.
7. Students aged over 16 years (post-16) use their communication skills very effectively and make very good progress. They successfully research information on the Internet, and complete tasks that depend on an ability to communicate. For example, they go shopping and complete design work that needs both speaking and writing skills. Students with more complex needs also make very good progress because of improved communication skills.
8. In mathematics, pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. They successfully learn skills, such as simple counting. Lower attaining pupils also achieve well, for example, by correctly recognising a number shape and touching the correct number associated with it. By the time they have reached the end of Key Stage 2, at age eleven years, higher attaining pupils put numbers in sequence by correctly counting both forward and backward. Within the Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils use number skills in solving simple problems and telling the time. They have learned to recognise simple geometric shapes and match these correctly to pictures.
9. Pupils in all key stages make good progress in science. In Key Stage 1, for example, they show a good understanding of the world around them. They know the difference between hot and cold and understand how important the sun is to life on earth. Key Stage 2 pupils develop this understanding by carrying out simple experiments, such as growing seeds under controlled conditions. From this they understand the importance of food and water to living organisms. Progress and achievement for pupils at Key Stage 3 slows down because of the lack of suitable facilities for science. Even so, pupils make good progress in understanding concepts such as the 'fair test'. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have weekly access to a local mainstream school laboratory and as a result they make good progress in this subject. They understand the need to make predictions in experiments and test these appropriately.
10. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well in art. Achievements for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are satisfactory. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the knowledge and use of colour is well used and by the end of Key Stage 2 at aged 11years, pupils successfully blend colours and use these in attractive paintings and 3-D displays. Achievement of pupils in design and technology is good, however this is across a narrow range of the curriculum. Progress in skills, other than food preparation, is limited because of the unsatisfactory accommodation. Opportunities for older pupils, at Key Stage 4 and post-16, are better because they attend lessons at a local school and college where they learn graphics and textiles skills.
11. Geography and history are taught as themes within other subjects. Pupils in all key stages develop a good understanding of the concepts of both time and location. In geography, for example, Key Stage 3 pupils constructed a very effective pictorial map of a local shopping facility. In history pupils have a good understanding of 'past' and 'present'. Higher attaining pupils correctly arrange picture cards, that show the types of food available through history, in correct chronological order. Pupils' achievements in information technology (IT) are satisfactory throughout the school. The youngest pupils

understand the cause and effect of manipulating the computer 'mouse' and seeing the response on screen. Pupils with more profound learning difficulty successfully operate remote control switches, for example, those that cause different responses within the sensory room. The quality and range of the switch and additional communication devices is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities and this affects their progress.

12. Achievements in French and music are good. Older pupils, in Key Stages 3 and 4 participate in effective role-play that enables them to have basic French conversations with each other. Music is used throughout the school in many lessons. Pupils develop a good understanding of rhythm that enables them to play percussion instruments very effectively. The specialist music therapy, available to pupils with particular special needs, It enables these pupils to address anxieties and translate their energy into musical expression and composition. Standards of achievement in religious education and physical education are satisfactory. Religious education is taught alongside other subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2 and often included within the personal, social and health education provision. Pupils have an awareness of religious festivals of other faiths and show a developing awareness of the spiritual dimension to their personalities. Achievement by pupils in physical education is satisfactory. This is across a narrow range of a curriculum. Provision for physical education is unsatisfactory because accommodation is poor. Because the school has a hydrotherapy pool swimming is a particular strength. Pupils, even those who cannot swim, show very good confidence in the water. Pupils with profound difficulties make good progress, when compared with previous attainment.
13. When considering the evidence of attainment and progress, as identified within pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEP), it is clear that they are set very challenging targets across the curriculum. This is particularly the case within the main subjects of English, science and mathematics. Overall, there are no significant weaknesses in pupils' achievements when considering their prior individual attainment. There is no difference in the attainment and progress of boys or girls. By the time pupils leave the school they have become effective learners and have benefited considerably from their use of the many opportunities presented to them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

14. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic and show interest in the variety of learning experiences provided both in and out of the classroom, such as responding to the teacher in French in Key Stage 4, and visiting Portland Castle in Key Stage 2. Pupils show pleasure and delight in their achievements, seen in such activities as school assembly. Their self-esteem and confidence is raised significantly. Throughout the school pupils and students throw themselves into their tasks with great energy and application. Little time is wasted in developing their attainments, whether these be physical, emotional or academic. Simple acts, such as walking down a corridor, are occasions to practice not only the act itself, but also for discussion with support staff.
15. The behaviour of pupils in lessons, around the school, at lunch-time and when on educational visits is consistently very good. When on these visits, pupils and students rehearse social skills they have learned in school and through their responses bring credit to the whole school. Pupils are polite and courteous and there is no bullying. Most pupils understand rules and routines and respond positively. The best behaviour is seen where teachers have high expectations and apply the school's behaviour policy

consistently. The PECS system makes a very positive contribution to the behaviour of pupils with more challenging and complex needs. There have been no exclusions from the school.

16. Pupils respond well to opportunities for personal development and they develop positive and friendly relationships with staff. The mutual warmth, evident in these relationships, is indicative of the respect that pupils hold for all staff. As a result of these, pupils and students are willing to try their best at all tasks, because they know that they will experience only encouragement. Pupils and students are willing to take responsibility for tasks such as setting out the chairs for assembly, and enjoy being involved in a classroom routine such as washing up after the morning drink. Students within the post-16 unit contribute fully to the daily routine and chores that are part of living as members of a community. In this way they are developing a sense of responsibility and maturing into young adults. Some pupils show initiative and courtesy by opening doors for adults without being asked. Pupils' relationships with one another, with teachers and other adults are excellent; this facilitates learning and encourages good behaviour. Some pupils can work collaboratively, for example in mathematics, where pupils in Key Stage 3, work on a task that involves counting and taking away coins.
17. Attendance is satisfactory, with absences normally being the result of pupils' individual medical conditions. Punctuality in arrival at school is good, with any lapses being the result of local traffic conditions. Lessons start on time and having begun, pupils waste little or no time.
18. Since the last inspection a positive improvement has been made to the composition of classes. As a result, pupils with profound difficulties are fully included in age appropriate groups. Consequently, they make very good use of the opportunities for their own personal development and play a full part in the hurly burly of school life. Parents commented favourably about this at the pre-inspection meeting. Improvements to parts of the accommodation, specifically double doors that are held open by magnets, increase the range and quality of their independent movement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in only 75 per cent of lessons. This fact, in part, contributed to the 'serious weakness' judgement that was subsequently made about the overall provision by the school.
20. The quality of teaching now observed, throughout the school, is of a consistently high quality that results in good and very good progress by pupils. During the course of the inspection teaching was judged to be excellent in 15 per cent of lessons, very good in 39 per cent and good in 35 per cent. Overall, teaching standards are satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. There is no significant variation, in the quality of lessons, between each of the key stages. However, those lessons observed for pupils in the Foundation Stage as well as those students in the post-16 unit were of consistent high quality. Examples of excellent lessons were observed in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3. These figures, and the reality they portray, represent a significant improvement since the last inspection. Parents also, through their replies to the questionnaire and comments at the pre-inspection meeting, agreed that the teaching is of high quality and an aspect of the school's work they are most pleased with. A comment made at the meeting indicated that, although parents felt that the school was good at the time of the last inspection, they now realise how much more their children are capable of because

of the rise in standards they are experiencing.

21. The rise in the quality of teaching standard has been brought about by several factors. Throughout the school the quality of planning, both for lessons and with longer term intentions, is significantly better. Teachers now indicate clearly what will be taught, with detailed consideration given about how opportunities will be utilised. Through this planning they ensure that learning is achieved across a wide base and it is relevant to the needs of individual pupils. The level of detail contained within lesson plans is considerable, indicating that teachers have a detailed knowledge and understanding of both the academic and personal needs of their pupils. As a result, lessons have a clear focus and intention.
22. In their lesson introductions, teachers lay out their expectations of the pupils. This ensures that pupils have a real understanding about their part in the learning process. For example, in a geography lesson for Key Stage 3 pupils (a follow up lesson to a morning visit) the teacher drew from the pupils an understanding of what they had already observed. Through skilful and imaginative role-play he engaged the pupils' enthusiasm into an understanding of what the task was going to be. In explaining why shops have doors that are wider than house doors he encouraged three pupils and himself to try, simultaneously, to get through a gap representing a house door. The result of course was, not only humorous, but also effective in enabling the pupils to a better understanding. The outcome to the lesson was that pupils fully utilised the data they had collected and constructed simple and effective maps of their 'shopping street'.
23. The commitment of both teachers and support staff is an important factor in ensuring the progress and achievement of pupils. The good quality of the relationships and a high degree of professional expertise result in lessons of high quality that extend pupils' skills and understanding. Although many teachers are providing lessons in subjects for which they have little formal training, and which are outside of their main area of expertise, they craft lessons that are both stimulating and challenging for their pupils.
24. All lessons are based upon good planning. This includes a range of methods as well as work targeted to specific need of individual pupils. In this regard the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are well considered. They receive help and challenge through the work of special support assistants (SSA) and this is enhanced by the use of carefully chosen resources. For example in a Key Stage 1 physical education lesson, the teacher enabled a PMLD pupil, unable to move independently, to choose whether he should be carried by the teacher or towed across the floor on a blanket. He chose the blanket.
25. An influential factor in the improvement of teaching standards has been the monitoring procedures put in place and carried out by the headteacher. Through these she has identified both strengths and weaknesses in the provision. She became aware that both formal and informal assessment and recording of pupils' work was unsatisfactory. Since then this aspect has become a feature within the school development plan. Currently, assessment practice within lessons remains unsatisfactory but the school management is actively dealing with this issue.
26. Teaching in the core curriculum subjects of English, science and mathematics is very good. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has brought a sharper focus to the way in which English is taught but the subject forms part of the much wider communication provision. Teachers use Makaton signing and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) to enable individual pupils with particular needs to take effective part in lessons. In science lessons teachers use imaginative methods to

introduce concepts, such as the irreversible change in materials when subjected to heat. These lessons are well prepared and include many elements from other subjects, such as religious education, design technology and art. Key Stage 4 pupils benefit from attendance at a local comprehensive school, where they use that school's science laboratory as well as taking part in lessons alongside mainstream pupils. Mathematics teaching is very good throughout the school. These lessons follow a common pattern that includes a 'warm-up' exercise in which pupils are challenged by questions fired at them by the teacher. This has the effect of gaining and keeping their attention. Within the body of the lessons teachers provide a good mix of methods and activities that are well paced, thus ensuring that pupils' levels of concentration remain high. Lessons conclude with a 'plenary', in effect a question and answer session in which pupils confirm what they have understood.

27. All teachers manage behaviour very successfully and this is a major contributory factor in enabling pupils to make good progress. Where pupils present challenges to the good order in lessons their behaviour is confronted and dealt with in a quiet and constructive way. For example, in a Key Stage 3 geography lesson, a pupil became distracted and banged on her desk to gain attention. The teacher quietly explained what he required from the pupil, to establish good order once more, and at the same time challenged the pupil to take a more effective part in the lesson by diverting her behaviour and focusing on the task. In this he was successful and the lesson was completed without further interruption. While not common, interruptions are a fact of classroom life, particularly so where challenging behaviour is a symptom of pupils' individual conditions. Where pupils present a more robust challenge, such as the class for pupils within the autistic spectrum, they are well managed by all staff and their individual needs are sensitively handled. These pupils are also subject to the same high expectations evident in other classes and the work done by the staff of this provision is to be admired for its level of professionalism.
28. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in lessons. This is because lessons are interesting and engage the enthusiasm of the pupils. It was very evident that because teachers individually target pupils' learning, the pupils respond effectively to these challenges. A good example of this occurred in a food technology lesson for post-16 students. Here the overall objective was to produce a simple meal. Pupils were given tasks appropriate to their capability, these included washing the lettuce leaves in a colander, grating cheese or slicing cucumber. They all approached the task with obvious enthusiasm and as a result produced an attractive and enticing meal. What they had learned encompassed knowledge about nutrition, safety, presentation of food, hygiene, and the benefits of working together. Learning is enhanced through the good role models that teachers and other staff present to their pupils. These relationships are very good and enable pupils to adopt a 'try anything' approach without fear of failure or embarrassment.
29. Pupils have adopted very good working practices and it is evident that when in lessons they fully expect to take a full part in their own learning. This may be the biggest single factor in the very good progress made by pupils. Teachers insist that pupils make choices wherever possible and encourage them to access their own needs, such as selecting pencils or paintbrushes. In a Key Stage 1 art lesson, for example, pupils were required to choose a yellow item from a background of other colours. While this technique was also used as part of an assessment process it engaged the pupils in the lesson through their active participation.
30. Weaknesses in teaching, and its consequent effect on learning, centre mainly on the reluctance of teachers to fully use the services of special support assistants. The skills

of these assistants are underused and in some lessons they, occasionally, play a passive role. They could be more actively involved if teachers made clear, beforehand, precisely what is the lesson intention and make use of these staff appropriately. Their work could become more effective if they were required to work either at a specific task or learning objective within a lesson. Equally, they could make an effective contribution to the assessment of the work done by pupils.

31. Information technology (IT) is not consistently used to help pupils in their learning. Some lessons, such as a Key Stage 4 art lesson, are exceptions to this, but generally the use of IT is not fully considered in teachers' planning or exploited as an aid to pupils' learning.
32. Use of assessment, within lessons and over time, is unsatisfactory. There are examples of good practice within the school but assessment procedures are not used consistently or effectively. Where assessment is done well this usually takes the form of a plenary, or question and answer session, at the end of lessons. On such occasions the results are not formally recorded and the evidence of progress is therefore lost. Where pupils are unable to respond verbally suitable methods of recording have yet to be devised.
33. Few teachers teach the subject of their initial qualification but they have developed good expertise across a wide range of the curriculum. Where teachers have the initial subject qualification the quality of their lessons is better. They challenge pupils appropriately and have at their disposal a good understanding and knowledge of the different ways in which a topic can be taught. This enables them to challenge pupils at an appropriate level.

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

34. Despite some weakness, the school provides pupils with a good curriculum at all key stages and a very good curriculum for students over 16. The curriculum is effective in meeting the pupils' interests, attitudes and special needs. For pupils in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is also good and, whilst not yet fully covering the statements outlined in the new Early Learning Goals, the school is currently on course to do so by half term. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are provided.
35. The wide range of educational need within the school is effectively met by close attention to pupils' targets. Since the last inspection the school has introduced effective schemes of work for each subject and these provide a good framework for teachers' planning. A good range of lesson and learning activities are derived from them. The school has introduced improved provision for teaching literacy and numeracy as a response to the National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies. These are helping the school to focus more clearly on developing pupils' basic communication, reading, writing and numeracy skills and ways of using these more effectively in all their work. However, the school has yet to identify relevant ways of identifying the progress that pupils make as a result of these initiatives. Evaluation and assessment opportunities need further development.
36. At all key stages, the provision of National Curriculum subjects is enhanced by additional provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). For the youngest pupils in school, this programme helps develop their social skills, interact with other pupils and find to their place within the school community. As pupils get older they

learn to assume responsibility for carrying out simple tasks and be involved in making decisions about how well they have worked in lessons. As part of the PSHE programme pupils learn what is expected of them. They have a clear understanding of the school rules and the differences between right and wrong. The provision also includes effective work on drugs education and sex education. The latter was a focus of very recent in-service staff training in order to include issues important to pupils and their families.

37. The school effectively meets requirements regarding the annual reviews of the pupils' statements and the Code of Practice. Annual reviews are both well organised and attended by parents. Individual educational plans show good insight into the pupils' needs and provide clear targets in English, mathematics, personal social and health education. For other subjects, targets are added as applicable for individual pupils. Information and advice is regularly sought from other agencies such as the social worker, the educational psychologist and the speech therapist. These skilled professionals play an important part in advising parents and teachers on the management and care of pupils and students. Their advice is incorporated into individual education plans that help staff focus their work and promote progress in their pupils.
38. The school has satisfactory arrangements for careers education for the oldest pupils and benefits from the services of the local careers advisers who provide support and advice at pupils' Annual Reviews when they are fourteen. They also work regularly with the post-16 students by helping them with interview skills and information about future opportunities. The oldest students in the school have good opportunities for developing their understanding of the world of work and preparing for their lives after school. For example, some former pupils have been employed at a local supermarket as a result of their vocational work, visits and occasional work experience. They benefit from a curriculum which recognises their adult status, whilst continuing to promote improved standards in basic skills. At this stage the students' work is certificated through the Accreditation for Life and Learning (ALL) scheme which provides them with an acknowledgement of their progress and a portfolio recording their work and achievements during their final years at school.
39. There are no opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 4 to gain accredited qualifications. This is a weakness within the curriculum, as pupils' achievements at the end of compulsory schooling are not recognised by formal certification. Currently, the school is considering the introduction of the certificate of achievement for core subjects but at the time of inspection this was not in place.
40. There are very good arrangements for extra-curricular activities, which effectively promote pupils' appreciation of their own cultures and those of others. As well as regular visits to local places of interest, some pupils are able to participate in regular residential visits with pupils from a local mainstream school. Visits regularly include Dartmoor and have also included visits to France to provide pupils with a taste of French life and culture. This very beneficial relationship between the schools enables pupils to mix regularly for residential visits – an initiative that has been in place for six years. One benefit of this exercise is to enable Wyvern pupils to work alongside and build relationships with pupils from this mainstream school. Additionally, these activities help pupils to understand something of the nature of learning difficulties and have influenced the career choice for some of them. For example, in conversation with one pupil it became clear that she was planning a career as a teacher of pupils with special needs as a direct result of her experiences during residential visits and work within Wyvern School.

41. Year 11 pupils have good opportunities to study design technology and science in partnership with the mainstream school once each week. Post-16 students also extend their learning by weekly attendance at a local college of further education. They have a choice of topics, such as pottery or graphic design, and these opportunities provide students with valuable experience of life in a busy college, as well as preparing some for a future place at the college when they leave the school. These opportunities are very valuable in making up for the deficiencies in the school's unsatisfactory accommodation. However, only a small number of pupils benefit from such integrated placements. Currently, the school is seeking to re-establish formerly useful links with additional mainstream schools and colleges which were discontinued due to time-tabling difficulties.
42. The school makes good use of other community resources such as shops and supermarkets, sports centres, museums, libraries and the beautiful natural coastline nearby. Visits to such places are well planned and enrich pupils' learning. For example, during the inspection, a group of post-16 students visited a local superstore as part of their 'world of work' programme. They were able to see behind the scenes of a store that was familiar to most of them and to ask the manager questions about his job and the running of the shop. Follow up work showed they had learned much about the management of a large store, such as the placement of security cameras and stock control.
43. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and provides these young children with a good quality introduction to the school community. At Key Stages 1 to 4 the curriculum shows a good balance of subjects through the week with opportunities for pupils to make good gains in their knowledge and undertake tasks of responsibility, such as taking the register to the office or counting and giving out drinks at break time. The curriculum for post-16 students is very good because it focuses on developing independence and ensuring that students deepen their understanding of the community and their place within it. It effectively builds on students' previous achievements and is distinct from other provision, due to the emphasis on maturity and preparation for life after school. The curriculum includes very good opportunities for students to undertake well-planned challenges for their accreditation for learning and life portfolios.
44. Provision for all subjects is at least satisfactory, but the lack of appropriate accommodation limits the effectiveness of the curriculum for science and design and technology. At worst, the presence or absence of facilities skews the emphasis of the curriculum. For example, teaching of design and technology is largely influenced by the presence of a food technology room. However, as this facility is unsatisfactory the opportunity for pupils to develop a wider range of skills is correspondingly restricted. There is no specialist technology room and the layout and facilities of the food technology room restrict pupils' opportunities to be actively involved in cooking. There is only one cooker and too little space for larger groups to be accommodated safely.
45. The provision for information technology has improved significantly since the last inspection, mainly due to a major investment in computers. However, as much of equipment is new, staff are not yet fully familiar with its operation and pupils do not therefore use technology to best effect in their work. Although staff have received initial training and some initiatives are working well, such as the use of symbols to support pupils' reading and writing, there is insufficient planning for inclusion of information technology in other subjects. The insufficiency of dedicated switches, screens and other specialist equipment limits the opportunity of some pupils to make full use of information technology in their learning.

46. The school plans effectively for pupils' spiritual development through its policies for religious education and collective worship. The teachers and other adults in the school value pupils' ideas. Pupils are encouraged to make choices, for example, of drinks or an activity where this is appropriate. Collective worship takes place on two days a week and there is, in addition, a weekly assembly to celebrate pupils' achievements. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the meanings and relevance of what is contained in these. Each class takes responsibility for the presentation of an assembly and through this means pupils become more closely and actively involved. One assembly, about a 'Hat seller', took audience participation to its limits of enjoyment, resulting in a very effective understanding of the underlying theme of consideration for others. Secular understanding of spirituality is also developed well during many educational visits made by pupils. These include visits to historic sites where pupils gain an understanding of what it was like to live long ago.
47. The school's provision for the moral development of pupils is good. Staff ensure pupils know what is expected of them, and that they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are effectively taught to show respect and consideration for other people and to behave well. As a result, deliberate mis-behaviour in the school is a rare event because pupils internalise the values they see around them and practice these, both with their friends and staff. Pupils' progress in moral development is effectively acknowledged through praise and rewards. Collective worship and religious education lessons give clear guidance to pupils' moral development.
48. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. For example, pupils, when in lessons, sometimes work in pairs, and those with more complex needs are integrated into classes with more able pupils. Their social development is also promoted by the good links with local schools and colleges that enable some pupils and students to take part in joint lessons or activities. Good use is made of the local swimming pool and leisure centre to increase pupils' social interaction within the local community. Residential experiences, including a visit to France and weekend stays on Dartmoor, are very valuable experiences for pupils. They learn to become independent, as well as working alongside other pupils and students. Other opportunities include the summer activity week, when pupils take part in such activities as kayaking and rock scrambling with pupils from other schools. Visits to shopping centres, beaches and castles are used effectively, not only to increase pupils' understanding and knowledge but also to enable them to practice the social skills they learn within the school.
49. The provision for pupils' cultural development, although satisfactory, does not yet fully reflect the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the wider community. However, the religious education and collective worship policies promote the knowledge of other faiths. For example, pupils at Key Stage 4 are learning about the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashannah. Parts of the curriculum make a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development, such as the study of other countries in geography, and the making of Chinese pancakes in food technology. French culture is particularly well covered with the residential trip to France, work in art on French Impressionist painting and French baking. Other visits to enhance cultural development included one to Portland Castle, but further activities are needed for pupils to appreciate the diversity of their own culture and that of other nations. The weakness within the provision is the lack of opportunity for pupils to appreciate the rich ethnic diversity of the United Kingdom.
50. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection because the schemes of work now in place are designed to enable pupils to build on what they already know, understand and can do. However, the identification of these steps of learning are not

assessed regularly in relation to what has been taught. Whilst assessment of pupils' progress in relation to their IEP's is good, other aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory. Few subjects have a consistent system for effectively assessing what pupils have learned in lessons. This weakness is partly due to the fact that subject co-ordinators do not yet play a full role in managing their subjects. Several are new to their roles, and some to the school and are still familiarising themselves with their task. Nevertheless, the lack of overview and monitoring both by subject co-ordinators and by the overall curriculum co-ordinator is a significant weakness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, as well as their protection, are good. These are based, by all staff, upon a detailed knowledge of the pupils and genuine warmth towards them. Records held by teachers indicate a depth of knowledge encompassing both medical and social needs. Additionally, the school works closely and effectively with visiting professionals who contribute information and advice that is then incorporated into the provision for individual pupils. Where the school perceives an additional need, such as music therapy for pupils on the autistic spectrum, the governors and senior management ensure that the cost of this is covered from other sources, such as generous donations made by a local public house.
52. The aims of the school are effectively carried out by all staff, whatever their role. For example, kitchen staff, in addition to providing a range of nutritious and attractive meals, are learning the Makaton signing vocabulary so that they can more effectively communicate with a wider range of pupils. When serving meals they complement the basic skills of pupils, through such simple methods as encouraging pupils to count the number of plates they have been given.
53. Since the last inspection the toilet and changing accommodation for all pupils has been significantly improved. This now affords appropriate privacy and ensures the dignity of pupils, particularly that of pupils who are dependent on staff for intimate personal care. Concern was raised at the last inspection about the lack of seat and safety restraints on the school transport. Despite the fact that this was largely out of the control of school governors, they have done effective work to ensure that school transport now complies with requirements.
54. Close scrutiny of attendance figures is good and ensures that adverse trends by any individual can quickly be identified. This is done, not only through the keeping of registers in a way that fulfils statutory requirements, but also through the use of information technology in the school office. Although the education welfare service is available to support the school in this matter, their services are rarely called upon. The school has procedures by which parents are immediately contacted if any absence by a pupil is unexplained. The outcomes to this monitoring, are not only satisfactory attendance by pupils but also an ethos within the school that enables pupils to understand their attendance is valued. It adds to their enjoyment of being there.
55. There are good and effective strategies used by all staff to monitor and manage challenging behaviour by pupils. While unsatisfactory behaviour by pupils is not a significant factor in school life and there is no evidence of systematic bullying, pupils are fully aware of the demands made on them with regard to good behaviour. Classes have clear procedures and expectations and whilst they are applied well throughout the school, they are particularly effective within the class for pupils on the autistic spectrum.

56. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. The school is already aware of this and they have put in place an appropriate response. Currently, the practice cannot ensure that the academic progress of pupils forms a cohesive picture, as pupils move through the school. Assessment and evaluation of lessons, as well as what has been learned within them, is inconsistent. Thus, the school cannot gain an effective picture of the success of its effort. For example the opportunities for accreditation, particularly at Key Stage 4, are too few and these pupils could leave the school without the results of their effort being fully recognised. Individual education plans are valuable in their present form and contribute much to the understanding of staff about their pupils. They do not, however, provide the detailed knowledge that can be used to plan future lessons or provision for pupils.
57. Every pupil in the school has an appropriate Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN). The practices within the school ensure that the individual needs, identified within the statement, are provided effectively. Such needs can include additional music therapy. Recently, and as a result of monitoring carried out by the headteacher, it became apparent that physiotherapy, recommended for some pupils, was not being provided. As a result of her correspondence with the local health trust these needs are now met fully. The overall provision by the school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Parents appreciate this.
58. Throughout their time at the school, pupils are provided with information relating to sex and anti-drug education. The teachers ensure that the degree of knowledge provided is appropriate to the need and maturity of the individual pupil. In this the school nurse supports them. In order to ensure that mistakes are not made in the administration of prescribed medication, the school has adopted the practice, known locally, as the 'medical box'. Essentially, this system allows the medication of individual pupils to be stored separately from others so that they cannot become confused. In addition, clear instructions are included about what each dosage should be and when it needs to be administered. The system is as safe as it reasonably can be.
59. Careers provision for older pupils is good. Within the post-16 unit students have the opportunity to make valuable visits to local businesses in order to widen their knowledge of the world of work. Year 11 pupils also benefit from this practice but the provision for Year 9 and 10 pupils is unsatisfactory. Although the careers officer attends the Transition Review for pupils aged 14 years, her work does not begin to take effect until pupils are aged 15 years or older. Year 9 pupils should also benefit from her services through introduction to the world of work and a consideration of what they could possibly achieve in the future. Work experience or work shadowing is not a common feature of school practice and this, too, is an area that could be developed.
60. There is much evidence within the school of a successful activity week that the school jointly arranged with local comprehensive schools. For the duration of this, staff ensured that pupils were exposed to a range of opportunities that helped to develop their characters. Activities as diverse as canoeing, rock climbing and walking as well as sharing domestic tasks were shared with pupils and students from local schools. The mutual benefits that accrue from this cannot be under-estimated and discussion with students who attended the week indicates how much they enjoyed it. An additional benefit to this, was that parents also enjoyed a brief respite from the twenty-four hour care of their children. The meeting prior to the inspection emphasised the value of this and underlined how little respite care is available to parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents' views are very positive. They enjoy constructive relationships with the school. Responses to the parental questionnaire, as well as attendance at the pre-inspection meeting, indicate the good will and warmth that parents hold for the school. They are particularly appreciative of the effort made by staff on behalf of their children. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting represented a range of pupils, some of whom had been at the school for the whole of their school life. These parents could compare the standards experienced at the time of the last inspection to those that they see now. Overwhelmingly, they stated how much improved the provision now is. As evidence of this, they frequently mentioned how much more their children are capable of and how they never thought that what they see now could ever be achievable. Parents admire the work done at the school and recognise that the quality of the school leadership has been instrumental in this improvement.
62. When pupils are admitted to the school, parents enter into a home-school agreement. This identifies, clearly, the responsibilities each group has to the other and the way in which it is framed emphasises the spirit of partnership. Contact with the school is assured on both a formal and informal basis. Telephone calls to the school, requesting information, are promptly responded to and parents commented about the ease of talking to staff about their children. Particular mention was made about the quality of information provided through the 'home-school diaries'. Even when challenged about the difficulty for teachers of filling in these at the end of a busy day (and e-mail might be more appropriate where possible) parents were politely adamant that they enjoyed the more personal style and content of the diary.
63. Considering the constraints of travel difficulties from a wide area, parents effectively support the work of the school through their attendance at parents' evenings, by full attendance at the review meetings for their children and attendance at occasional coffee mornings. In the latter case, a recent coffee morning for parents of primary children, and held during the school day, attracted an attendance of 20 parents. The parents have a 'Friends of Wyvern' group that raises funds for various projects within the school. This group acts as a valuable link between the parents and school. They request that the school, for example, provide sessions for parents of instruction in Makaton or picture exchange communication system. As a result of this, the work done by parents in their home is more effective, because of the increased awareness of communication opportunities available to their children. At the pre-inspection meeting one parent described this increase in his knowledge as "...like opening up a new world for my child. Suddenly I can understand what he wants."
64. Newsletters sent out by the school are informative and represent a good link with parents who do not have the opportunity to visit the school on a regular basis. The prospectus and 'welcome pack', also provided, include the required information for prospective parents. They set out very clearly the expectations that parents might have of the work of the school. The annual governors' report to parents fulfils statutory requirements and provides an accurate picture of the work done in the school for the previous year.
65. At the last inspection, parental links with the school were described as "supportive". This sentiment was confirmed at the meeting prior to this inspection. However, to this must now be attached the description "active". Parents are more actively involved in the decision-making processes that affect their children and are overtly appreciative of the work done by staff, governors and headteacher. They form this opinion from a secure base of more detailed knowledge of the activity of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The headteacher leads the school very effectively. Her vision and professional expertise has enabled the school to raise its standards and make significant progress in key areas. Prior to her appointment and consequent on the last inspection, the school was judged to have 'serious weaknesses'. Since her arrival she has, in conjunction with the senior management team, brought cohesion and direction to the work of the staff and in so doing has made the school a more purposeful organisation. For example, classes have been structured in such a way that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are now fully included in the work done by the rest of the school. Provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum (ASD) is more clearly targeted and, where possible, they too are included in the general activity. The decline in standards, noted at the time of the last inspection, has now been reversed and the current situation is that of a school making significant improvements, resulting from good quality leadership. The senior management team, along with governors and staff share a common commitment to improvement. It is evident from the work already done that the school has the capacity to further improve.
67. The headteacher has not been alone in the effort to raise standards. In this she has been ably and effectively supported by an active and knowledgeable governing body. The way this group is now structured and the manner in which they pursue their responsibilities is a significant improvement over that found at the last inspection. Collectively and individually the governors show a commitment to the school that results in rigorous monitoring of all areas of its activity. For example, individual governors have a commitment to membership of a sub-committee as well as responsibility to oversee the standards within an individual subject of the curriculum. Through this means they retain a well-informed overview of the work of the school and ensure that standards are continually rising. Governors are more than simply 'critical friends' of the school, although this role too, they carry out effectively. Their monitoring procedures are both rigorous and effective.
68. The work done by the headteacher is ably supported through the effort of her senior management team. Collectively, they carry out their roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm and expertise. There is, however, a weakness in the management of the curriculum. The monitoring of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. In effect the school has six 'key stages' and the level of detailed knowledge required, to effectively direct the effort of staff is not being provided. The entitlement of pupils to the curriculum is not monitored effectively. As a consequence, the effort made by subject co-ordinators is not well directed and much of the work they do is carried out without appropriate reference to other key stages.
69. The chair of governors is very active in the life of the school. Discussions with her indicate a detailed knowledge of the life and work of the school and a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. A criticism contained in the last report indicated a lack of confidence on the part of governors in facing their responsibilities. This latter point was not helped by the absence of procedures, by which they could monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The situation that now prevails is very different. Under the direction of the headteacher the governors have constructed a very effective school development plan based on well targeted elements designed in order to raise standards. For example, personnel development has the 'responsibility of subject co-ordinators' as one of its targets. Alongside all targets, there are budgetary implications and criteria by which success will be measured. The latter are both challenging and relevant.

70. There are a sufficient number of qualified and experienced teachers to enable effective teaching of the curriculum to take place. Support staff, also, are sufficient in number and meet the requirements recommended within the latest Department for Education and Employment Circular 11/90. They have considerable experience which they use effectively, but their level of qualification is less than that found in schools of similar size and type. All pupils are taught in appropriate sized groups. The school has planned a thorough programme of joint in-service training for teachers, support assistants, governors and parents, and a good start has been made on this.
71. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. This criticism made at the last inspection, remains essentially true despite enormous effort by staff and investment by governors and the local education authority. Although space in most classrooms is adequate for the number of pupils, there are no specialist facilities for teaching science, art, and design-technology. The building, as a whole, is used intensively but it retains 'rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul' characteristics. Improvements in one area inevitably lead to loss of opportunity in others. For example, the accommodation for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is inadequate. Attempts by the school to provide quiet and screened working areas for these pupils has resulted in the loss of recreational facilities for older pupils. Currently, the school is considering moving autistic spectrum disorder pupils into the room presently used as a library. Should this happen, the library will be moved back into a corridor location that is wholly unsuitable and unattractive. The result could be that opportunities, for all pupils to discover the fascination of books, will be lost.
72. Since the last inspection, the entrance to the building has been enhanced by the provision of a new reception area that improves security. This improvement meets a Key Issue in the last report. Automatic, double, fire-safety doors, designed to be in the open position during the normal school day, enable easier mobility for pupils in wheelchairs and enhances their range of independent access. A new, temporary, classroom block provided by the local education authority allows better quality and more appropriate facilities for post-16 students. There is a well-equipped and intensively used hydrotherapy pool. The accommodation has been recently redecorated. It provides a welcoming atmosphere and stimulating environment for pupils and students. There has been a small library created and there are plans to develop an additional sensory therapy room for pupils with more complex needs.
73. The deployment and condition of learning resources, including books, is satisfactory. Provision for information technology is good, although there remains a need for a greater range of switch devices to enable pupils and students, with more complex needs, to take a full part in the curriculum. Some of the software that the school has purchased, for example to support Key Stage 4 art, is very good. The fact that this software provides spoken backup, in response to pupils' choice of icon, is both relevant and helpful where such pupils have poor language skills. Learning resources for history, geography, religious education and French are unsatisfactory in both range and quality. Facilities for food technology are poor. They do not provide adequate learning opportunities for the number of pupils in most groups. Storage space within classrooms is inadequate, so that teaching and consumable resources are stored in cupboards located throughout the building.
74. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. There were concerns over the absence of a written long term budget plan. While value for money was satisfactory in considering the pupils' achievements against their capabilities, it was, at that time, considered unsatisfactory for pupils with complex special needs.

75. The budget is now well considered. It is prudently costed and the priorities are linked to the school development plan. The governing body's finance committee meets regularly to monitor expenditure and takes great care in applying the principles of best value, by ensuring that money is allocated appropriately for the purchase of resources and equipment. The recommendations of a recent audit report have been fully met. Long term and projected budget planning are now strong features of the school. For example, the school's very small overspend during the last financial year is being well managed within the current year and projected budgeting for the next year shows a nil balance. This is the result of careful management by the headteacher and the governing body, and indicates a clear understanding of the school's financial health and good management. The school's administrative officer, who has developed effective monitoring systems, efficiently manages day to day finance and provides detailed information for governors that enable them to make informed decisions. Expenditure per pupil falls within the average range, when compared with similar schools and additional grants and donations are used well to improve standards to support learning of all pupils' including those with additional and complex needs. The school now provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the improvements made since the last inspection and to ensure the quality of education for pupils, the governors and headteacher should:

1. Continue to raise standards and the overall effectiveness of the curriculum;
 - By ensuring that curriculum co-ordinators have sufficient subject knowledge to effectively fulfil their responsibilities.
 - Enable these co-ordinators to undertake the full responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their subjects through provision of adequate time and opportunity.
 - By requiring them to develop and introduce effective and systematic assessment procedures that link what is taught to the progress made by pupils. (Paragraphs 50, 68, 110, 130, 135, 141)
2. Continue to work with the local education authority to improve the facilities for the subjects of science and design technology. Within this context, and without detracting from facilities for other pupils, consideration should also be given to providing effectively for the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. (Paragraphs 9, 10, 12, 41, 44, 71-73, 104, 113, 143.)
3. Improve the management of the school curriculum by re-designating responsibility into clearly defined areas, such as age-related phases or key stages. (Paragraphs 50, 68.)
4. Introduce a whole school approach to assessment and evaluation of pupils' work and their progress. This should enable subject and curriculum co-ordinators to objectively consider the progress made by pupils. In addition it should supply parents with indicators of what their children understand and can do. (Paragraphs 25, 32, 35, 50, 56, 103, 121, 130, 141, 147.)
5. Raise standards of achievement at Key Stage 4 by offering a wider range of nationally recognised accreditation opportunities. (Paragraph 39.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15.25	39.0	35.5	8.4	1.6	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Figures may not exactly total 100% because of rounding.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	50
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.42

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Attainment by pupils at the end of all key stages.

Although the school takes part in National Standardised Assessment Tasks and Tests (SAT) the number of pupils at each stage is below the recommended figure that requires governors and school management to publish data. This data is available to parents of individual pupils.

Comments within the report, particularly relating to subjects and also in the section about the 'School's results and achievements', give an account of what pupils and students understand and do, in relation to their prior knowledge.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YF – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6
Average class size	8.4

Education support staff: YF – Y13

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	650

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
----------------	------

	£
Total income	583,466
Total expenditure	597,409
Expenditure per pupil	9,957
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,187
Balance carried forward to next year	32,224

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

49

Number of questionnaires returned

24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	29	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	38	13	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	58	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	60	20	5	5
The teaching is good.	52	43	0	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	42	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	38	0	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	48	9	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	36	14	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	42	0	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	30	15	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	17	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

Parents did not raise issues of common concern either through their letters or during attendance at the pre-inspection meeting. Of those parents who attended the meeting the overwhelming majority were pleased with the work of the school and the way in which it is improving the quality of life experienced by their children. One parent, significantly, indicated that although he felt the school had always been "good", he now realised the quality of provision was significantly better. He based this opinion on his long contact with the school, the responses he now gets from his child and the many more opportunities available for learning. He exemplified the latter by indicating the number of opportunities that pupils and students have to join with the wider community, "Where they will live when they leave school".

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good quality introduction to school life in the Reception class. On entry to the school their levels of attainment and physical functioning are very poor. The curriculum is under review as staff plan their response to the newly introduced Early Learning Goals; nevertheless the range and content of activities is effectively matched to the children's needs and helps them make good progress in the early steps of learning. They are well prepared to join formal education at Key Stage 1.

Personal, social and emotional development.

77. Children enjoy coming to school. They have good relationships with staff who ensure that they are well acquainted with the children's needs through regular discussion and good planning between the teacher and his team of support staff. Parents are regularly consulted through formal procedures and the use of home school books. Children learn the routines of the day and understand when they should work quietly and sit still. At the time of inspection, pupils very new to the school were already settling quickly to work on arrival at school and sitting in a group waiting their turn for a drink. Most children need help with dressing and undressing but they co-operate well with staff. Those who can, indicate when they need the toilet through gesture, sign or use of a symbol card.

Communication, language and literacy

78. The level of learning difficulties is such that children are unable to use speech as a routine form of communication. However, some higher attaining children can say one or two individual words. The staff are rigorous in their attention to communication. They use a range of methods including sign and gesture. For example, in a music and movement lesson, the children were able to 'clench and unclench' their hands when following signs. Pupils' understanding and co-operation is demonstrated by increased eye contact, smiles or full attention to an activity. For example, one child with profound and multiple learning difficulties, watched a ball run down a helter-skelter several times and responded with a startle when it hit the wooden tray at the base. Most pupils benefit from the very good use of symbol cards, which are used in sequence to indicate the activities of the day. As a result of their consistent use, children look at the cards as they are removed from the timetable and understand that activities are changing. Attention to early literacy is a major focus within the foundation stage. There is a good emphasis on story telling. Pupils were enthralled in a short story about a bear hunt when the teacher and staff used a very wide range of materials to illustrate the stages of the narrative. Pupils listened to crunchy leaves, they felt dark brown pieces of plastic that felt just like mud, and enjoyed the sensation of being draped in a blue cloth representing the river. Individual children are often seated with a member of the support staff while enjoying a story and beginning their understanding of the use of books. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate early signs of communication and literacy by the use of a very few words or increasingly systematic responses to the teacher's voice. The teacher is aware of these responses but, has not yet created a language rich environment within the unit, with sounds and pictures displayed to stimulate and promote early reading skills.

Mathematical development

79. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of shape and colour. They point to named items on a computer monitor and have started to group objects by colour with encouragement from support staff. Activities are well planned in order to use of number in counting songs, stories and at drinks time but children cannot understand the concept of a number or their use in counting. Very good use is made of two computers in the classroom; pupils are extremely motivated by the colourful graphics and show delight when they are able to change the screen display by putting their finger on the touch screen. The teacher places a strong emphasis on the events of the day and the passage of time by consistently explaining when activities are changing what has just happened and what is to happen next. Linked to the use of symbols on children's timetable cards, this provides a very clear focus for the children and helps them to understand how time passes. It was clear, for example, from their response at the end of the day, that they understood they were going home and that school was finished.

Knowledge and understanding

80. The wide and stimulating range of activities planned by the teacher provides very good opportunities for pupils to explore the world around them. When making bread they handle the ingredients enjoying the feel of the flour. They then watch keenly as the ingredients alter in appearance when they are mixed. All enjoy the smell of newly baked bread and the children choose which spread they want on it. Individual children are beginning to successfully explore materials within the classroom but most need help to do so. Support staff give very good support to children. They do not miss opportunities to explain how things work and what is happening as the children manipulate objects. This enables the children to understand the effect of what they do. For example, children watch moving toys as assistants explain directions such as up, down or across. Pupils benefit from the generous size of the classroom and explore it safely; they understand that some areas are for quiet times, some for work or drinks and others for the computer. Records show that pupils who have been in the class since the beginning of the year have made good progress in developing their understanding of the class routine and a sense of appropriateness in their behaviour, such as knowing when they should sit quietly for a story. Work in school is supplemented by visits to local shops and other places of interest so children become familiar with the local environment and community.

Physical development

81. In physical education lessons, pupils improve their range of movement when compared to prior attainment. Some are over active and, as part of their individual targets, learn not to run around continually. Others are less mobile and learn to move or stop on request. Physical education and playtimes are used well to promote such understanding and skills. Although the playground is small and shared with another class, the pupils exercise there and use a small range of equipment to learn skills in imaginative play. Opportunities for the pupils to learn about self-care and hygiene are good. Staff treat pupils with great dignity in the bathroom and teach them important routines when toileting, ensuring that they wash their hands then and at other appropriate times of the day

Creative development

82. In a music and movement lesson pupils responded well to changes in the tempo and

volume of the music. They sat up, became more active, made stronger movements and moved more quickly when the music changed. Staff use good, stimulating stories, songs and rhymes to encourage children to think and act creatively. At this early stage of term, however, there were few examples of children's paintings or other work on display in the classroom and the staff are aware that they need to improve the learning environment by adding more resources and displays to stimulate creativity in the children.

83. The provision for learning is good and results in good understanding by children. Planning is good but the teacher is aware of the need to fully comply with recent requirements regarding Early Learning Goals. These are being introduced and should be fully in place by the end of the term. Further work also needs to be done in assessing pupils' progress. Initial targets for learning should quickly be identified when pupils are admitted to the school. Provision for children in the foundation stage was not separately reported upon in the last inspection. Comparisons of pupils' progress and provision for learning cannot, therefore, be made.

ENGLISH

84. Progress made by pupils in English is at least good or better, both in lessons as well as through time. In Key Stage 1, it is good in most lessons and excellent in 'circle time'. Key Stage 2 lessons are very good. Key Stage 3 teaching is excellent and results in pupils making particularly good progress. At Key Stage 4 pupils confidently use English in speaking and listening, writing and reading. This is the result of good teaching
85. All pupils in the four key stages make very good progress in speaking and listening and show increased awareness of speech where this is supported by appropriately used Makaton signing or the picture exchange communication system. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively and this is used flexibly throughout the school to improve pupils' attainment in English. The expectation brought by this enables pupils to have a clearer understanding of their part in the learning process.
86. Key Stage 1 pupils are improving in all areas of English, including literacy, language and communication skills. Their attention increases as they listen to stories. In circle time, the whole class are involved as they follow stories in a hand-made big reading book that includes pupils as characters. Every pupil is included in the story telling either by shared reading or using Makaton signs and symbols. Excellent progress is made in pre-reading skills during these lessons. During this key stage, higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise letters and match and read some key words. Pupils make very good progress made in pre-writing skills. They complete work in books that have been prepared to enable practice in left to right skills and work on tracing and copying. Very good use is made of resources to improve pencil control and handwriting skills using a variety of writing implements. Improved communication is evident in all lessons in Key Stage 1. Much emphasis is placed on involving all pupils in social interaction and sharing or listening to news and events. Satisfactory use is made of information technology in lessons and this enables pupils to practice and improve English skills. Key Stage 1 staff work as a very effective team to ensure the inclusion of every pupil in literacy and language activities.
87. In Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress learning phonic skills, using a commercial reading scheme. Pupils use a big book and hand-made puppets of characters to enact and follow the story. Teachers involve all pupils in this activity during the literacy hour. More profoundly disabled pupils take part, using hand over hand

support that enables them to respond to their character's names. Follow up work for higher attaining pupils includes completing phonic exercises in their workbooks. Very good progress is made in tracing and copying and some pupils have begun to write simple words and phrases. Pupils who have communication difficulties use a range of computer software to practise matching sounds to symbols. Satisfactory use is made of technology in the classroom. By the end of this key stage, pupils communicate their needs effectively, using a range of resources such as reading and writing books, audio tapes and computer software, signing and picture exchange cards.

88. In Key Stage 3 pupils make excellent progress in speaking and listening skills. Teaching staff inspire pupils to take an active part in improving communication through a range of exciting and challenging activities. Drama, music and dance, art and story telling are used to involve all pupils in lessons that help to improve English skills. Imaginative use is made of excellent resources in reading activities. Pupils listening to 'Mrs Lather's Laundry' enact the story, using a range of props. Follow up work was excellent as all pupils recorded new vocabulary using workbooks, or worked with support to reinforce new words through signing. At the end of this key stage, pupils use reference books to gain information. Excellent planning has given all pupils access to work at an appropriate level in all key stages.
89. In Key Stage 4, a group of pupils with very profound communication difficulties makes very good progress in English using TEACCH programmes. A highly skilled team of staff, using a structured and well-planned approach ensures all pupils make very good progress. A mixture of words, signs and symbols is used in speaking and listening, reading, handwriting and spelling activities. Fiction and non-fiction books as well as a range of reference material are well used to promote very good reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 4, teachers have encouraged pupils to use these skills in other subjects. Visits to a local high school, for some lessons, have increased pupils' confidence and competence in reading and handwriting. These lessons provide opportunities to practise conversational skills and exchange ideas and interests. Most pupils have made very good progress by the end of this key stage.
90. The standard of teaching is very good. Lessons are lively. Teachers are imaginative and confident in the way they present lessons. They encourage pupils to use their language skills at every opportunity. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively, and with sensitivity, thus making sure that other pupils are not distracted from their learning. Expectations in English are high and pupils are consistently challenged to do better. Learning objectives in the pupils' individual education plans are followed and progress is often recorded but evaluation of outcomes is not effective. Co-ordination of English is improving but still requires more detailed staff training about recording and assessment practices. Special support assistants make a significant contribution to lessons. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders benefit very well from this team approach which is co-ordinated very effectively by the class teacher.
91. Since the last inspection a new library has been provided that enables pupils to independently browse and select books. This comfortable and attractive room, containing a good and attractive range of books encourages pupils' involvement in reading and research. Pupils would benefit from better access to, as well as a wider range of, information technology to widen their opportunities to learn. Within classrooms, very good use is made of the space, for example in story telling and role-play. Staff prepare resources in advance. This practice enables time to be used to the full.
92. Classrooms and corridors echo to lively conversations and discussions as pupils and

staff relate news and exchange pleasantries. Pupils use Makaton signing or the picture exchange communication system and this improves dialogues. Homework is given when requested by parents and takes the form of reading books that can be used to practice new words or stimulate discussion about pictures. Parents support the work of the school by encouraging children in their reading and use of books.

93. Very good progress has been made in English since the last inspection. The higher attainment among pupils is the result of significantly better teaching, including good learning opportunities. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has further enhanced the structure of lessons. As a result the standard of achievement by pupils across all key stages is very good.

MATHEMATICS

94. On entry to the school pupils' levels of attainment are low. Some pupils, on completing the Foundation Stage, recognise number names and know some number rhymes. Pupils make very good progress in all Key Stages, in number recognition, counting, writing and using numbers and money. They know some 3D shapes and have improved their use and understanding of mathematical vocabulary.
95. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils write a number one to three, and count three objects by correctly matching number name to number shape. Lower attaining pupils track an object and respond to teacher requests to point to a number by reaching out and touching it. Pupils within this age group make very good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2 count simple number sequences both forwards and backwards. In Key Stage 3 pupils number skills. Higher attaining pupils use coins successfully. They count up to five coins, take some away and say how many have gone and how many are left. Lower attaining pupils, with more complex needs, recognise number shapes on a computer screen and touch the screen to identify correct numbers. By the time pupils complete their formal education at the end of Key Stage 4, they are sufficiently confident to solve simple problems involving money, as well as completing basic calculations. They identify common geometric shapes. Higher attaining pupils understand the process of telling the time, using the analogue clock. Higher attaining pupils at this key stage work successfully on multiplication and quickly give the correct answer to a written problem. Lower attaining pupils, with more complex needs recognise 3D shapes such as a cuboid or cylinder and successfully sort and match these shapes to the pictures.
96. Teaching is very good at each Key Stage. Of seven lessons seen, six were very good and one was excellent. All lessons incorporate an oral introduction, that successfully engages the pupils attention. Pupils respond very well, try hard and enjoy the stimulating activities. This further motivates the pupils' interest in their work. A mixture of group, partner and individual work helps to ensure effective concentration on tasks. Teachers employ appropriate methods that enable pupils to complete their work successfully. The plenary session at the end of each lesson, where pupils are brought back together in a group, is used very well. Teachers are adept at encouraging pupils to reflect on what they have been doing, to reinforce skills learned and to orally assess pupils' learning. In the best lessons teachers make written observations during or at the end of lessons and this helps match future work to pupils' targets. Teachers' lesson planning is thorough and takes account of pupils' individual educational targets. This gives challenging tasks to pupils who make very good progress both in lessons as well as over time. The very good use of praise, both by teachers and assistants, is a significant factor in encouraging pupils to enjoy the challenge of mathematics and take delight in

their achievements. Teachers have very good behaviour management skills and use the schools' behaviour policy consistently in their lessons. This ensures well-disciplined lessons where pupils are confident, behave very well and able to make very good progress in their learning.

97. Since the last inspection there has been a new co-ordinator who has successfully led the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, attended training and disseminated information to the rest of the staff. This has led to an improvement in the teaching of mathematical skills to pupils. A draft subject policy has been produced that takes account of the National Curriculum targets and the needs of pupils with more complex learning needs. However, there is no consistent approach to assessment and recording throughout the school, though the co-ordinator is aware of this and along with colleagues is considering an appropriate system. Currently, the co-ordinator has not yet begun to monitor and evaluate the outcomes from each year group. This practice is needed to ensure that standards within the subject will continue to rise. There are exciting plans by the department to hold mathematics workshops for parents, so that at home they will be able to reinforce the work done by teachers and help their children continue to make very good progress.
98. The subject has good resources and teachers use these effectively. Better and more frequent use of information technology would increase all pupils' skills in mathematics, as well as widen the range of opportunity for learning. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are not following courses that lead to accreditation. The introduction of this opportunity would help pupils become aware of their achievements, raise their self-esteem and prepare them for further education.

SCIENCE

99. The school's provision for science is satisfactory at all key stages, but the progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is adversely affected because of unsatisfactory accommodation. The teaching and learning is good and, in relation to previous attainment, pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. At post-16, elements of science are included in accreditation modules. This is good and effective in extending pupils' knowledge and understanding.
100. At Key Stages 1 and 2, science is taught within topic modules, and therefore no separate lessons were observed during the inspection. From an examination of pupils' work and in photographic records it is evident that pupils make good progress. They identify between hot and cold and the importance of the sun to life. This links geographical work on weather and the changing seasons. They use touch and smell to learn about living things such as flowers. They record their work in paintings and sketches. They begin to recognise how materials change by mixing ingredients, for example when making bread in food technology lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils extend their knowledge of living things, planting seeds. For example, they know that plants need water, light and air. They carry out experiments by growing watercress, and they correctly classify living and non-living things. They consider the topics of earth and space by investigating the causes of day and night and record their work through drawing and writing. By the end of the key stage, they begin to examine forces and motion, experimenting with energy sources through water play.
101. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils have a good understanding of experimental processes. In the case of Key Stage 3 pupils this is across a limited range of opportunity because of the unsatisfactory accommodation provided for science. Key Stage 3 pupils make

simple predictions, such as, what happens when water is added to soils of different porosity. They are restricted to the simplest of scientific experiments because of the accommodation. However, they know scientific terms such as, metamorphosis, sepal and petal. Lower attaining pupils identify objects by smell, such as that of rosemary, mint and lemon. The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 4 is better because they have access to combined work with the local comprehensive school, where they share the laboratory.

102. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the quality of separate science teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and this is reflected in the very good behaviour and long periods of concentration shown by pupils in lessons. Teachers also have a detailed knowledge of pupils and their individual abilities. Lessons are well planned and as a result they retain pupils' interest whilst provoking curiosity. Imaginative methods are used to present new concepts, such as when investigating irreversible changes in materials, or naming parts of plants. Pupils' literacy skills are encouraged and developed through the use of correct scientific vocabulary. Classroom assistants are effective in providing both group and one-to-one support. The good teamwork by staff is instrumental in creating stimulating and well managed learning opportunities for pupils. Lessons are very well prepared, with good use made of resources. Where possible these include links with other subjects, such as, religious education, art and design technology. However, at all key stages, information technology is insufficiently used to support the subject and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
103. Science is well managed by an appropriately qualified co-ordinator, and policies and comprehensive schemes of work are well targeted to pupils' attainment. They have improved since the last inspection. Evaluations of topics from each class are analysed each term and this helps future curriculum development. Within this context it is a model of good practice. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is inconsistent. The unsatisfactory outcomes of this are reflected in annual reports to parents. These do not specify what the pupils know and understand. There are no opportunities for higher attaining pupils to gain accreditation through publicly recognised examinations.
104. Resources are satisfactory but the quality and range of computer software is limited. Good use is made of off-site resources, for example a number of pupils participated in a local schools' science day. It received prominent coverage in the local press. Learning support packages containing sensory objects are tailored to individual needs, especially for those pupils with complex difficulties. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is no designated science room and this prevents pupils from following an appropriate science course, particularly at Key Stage 3. Unlike Key Stage 4 pupils they do not have lessons in the science laboratory at the mainstream school.
105. The school's provision of science has improved since the previous inspection. Now there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils of all levels of attainment make good gains in their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills.

ART

106. The quality of learning in art is satisfactory and when compared to prior attainment pupils make good progress. Skills learned in art are used to complement work done within other subjects.
107. At Key Stage 1 pupils have developed well their sense of colour through the use of paint

and crayons and many are beginning to use this in the production of simple colour-fill drawings. Low attaining pupils within this key stage recognise bold colours, such as yellow and blue but only those of higher attainment have learned to select each of these colours from a background of others. At Key Stage 2 pupils put their knowledge of colour to use in the composition of scenes of the sea, such as the 'Rainbow Fish'. This jointly produced collage was in support of literacy work based on the story of the same name. Key Stage 3 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of both painting techniques, as well as other artists, in their production of works in the style of Giacomo Bella and Paul Signac. The samples of pupils' work displayed in corridors show pupils have a good understanding of these styles. At Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils use computer software effectively to produce colour pictures and drawings of Autumn scenes, using the pointillism technique. A combined work of an 'under the sea scene' was exhibited publicly during the Dorset Arts Week.

108. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. They show through their attention and concentration that they enjoy art lessons. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2. Pupils produce simple prints using different fruits. They showed a great determination to complete their work. The look of wonder on their faces as the fruit imprint was revealed on their paper was evidence of their enjoyment. At Key Stage 4 pupils enjoy the subject and higher attaining pupils are anxious to help others by offering advice or practical help. Where information technology is used in lessons, for example at Key Stage 4, the level of concentration and quality of work achieved is enhanced considerably. Pupils respond very well to such opportunities and take positive delight when they see their work emerge from the printer.
109. The teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared, with relevant and challenging tasks presented to pupils. One of the strengths of this teaching is the way in which teachers identify the individual needs of their pupils and construct tasks that will extend their attainment. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, the teacher skilfully encouraged a pupil of high attainment to develop his computer drawing of a tree to indicate the season. The pupil did this by including leaves of different colour around its base. Teachers encourage both the effort of pupils and the quality of what they produce by very quickly putting the results on display. Through this means they indicate to the pupil how much they value their work. Basic skills, such as colour identification and mixing are well taught. Pupils use these skills in joint artistic projects such as collages depicting under the sea scenes.
110. A weakness in the provision is the lack of confidence and flair of individual teachers, shown through some of the outcomes. There is little three-dimensional work of note, and the range of media available to pupils is limited. Further work in developing opportunities within the curriculum needs to be undertaken. Co-ordination of the subject is ineffective at Key Stages 3 and 4. Time and lack of opportunity is against the co-ordinator who, despite her knowledge and enthusiasm, has made insufficient impression on the work done at these key stages. Since the last inspection standards have risen, particularly in teaching and the progress made by pupils. The narrow range of opportunity for artistic expression remains as a weakness.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. During the inspection the school topic was 'Food and shopping'. The focus of learning was therefore based on food technology. The curriculum is biased towards food

technology because the school does not have appropriate accommodation to support work in other areas of the subject, such as resistant materials. The school tries to overcome these difficulties by arranging for some pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16 to study at a local school and college. This arrangement helps pupils to broaden their range of experience and learning. For example, pupils take part in graphics and textile lessons in integrated lessons at a mainstream secondary school.

112. In food technology all pupils make satisfactory progress. Often their progress is very good. Teachers plan so that pupils carry out a great deal of practical work and provide opportunities to experience the feel, touch and smell of food. Pupils respond well by getting involved with cutting, stirring shopping and cooking. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, the pupils made spaghetti bolognaise followed by fruit salad. One pupil exploring a clove of garlic for the first time and working out how to peel it; another getting to grips with peeling an apple. Once the cooking started one pupil showed great pride in being able to fry the minced beef.
113. The layout and resources in the food technology room are unsatisfactory. This affects the teaching and pupils' opportunities for learning. There is only one cooker and teachers are sometimes reluctant to let pupils get close to the heat source. The construction of work surfaces prevents non-ambulant pupils from full participation. Wheelchairs do not fit under the work surfaces. Pupils, small in stature, cannot take part in the clearing away because the sink is too high and taps are out of reach. In these circumstances pupils cannot play a full and effective part in lessons. However, in all lessons, teachers ensure that pupils handle and taste food, even if they do not always cook it.
114. Teaching is satisfactory. It is good in a significant number of lessons. Teachers use great ingenuity in showing the ingredients and demonstrating cooking methods to the pupils. For example, in one lesson the teacher immediately gained the pupils' attention by cracking an egg and allowing it to fall into a bowl from a great height. Pupils visually tracked its descent and enjoyed hearing the 'plop' as it landed. The food processor is attached to a large switch that can be operated by pupils who have poor hand control. Their response to the control of such equipment is evident. They look in wonder at the ingredients, as they are whizzed around in the mixture. Such imaginative teaching makes technology lessons an interesting experience for pupils. It helps them to understand how ingredients are combined to make something that looks entirely different.
115. Where pupils are integrated into mainstream lessons, such as at Key Stage 4, they are taught alongside mainstream pupils. This arrangement extends the range and quality of the design and technology curriculum. Pupils are enabled to work on textiles or enamelling in mixed gender groups. Other pupils worked in a food technology lesson and were able to show great independence. Only one needed support from mainstream pupils when he became confused over the sequence in a recipe. At the local college lower attaining post-16 students gain good sensory experiences by working with clay prior to its firing. Arrangements, such as these, are effective in broadening pupils' experience of technology but. Unfortunately, they are available only to a minority of Wyvern pupils.
116. The remainder of the design and technology curriculum is concerned with the use of glue, paper, paste, card and other basic materials. The curriculum is too narrow. Pupils have made successful models of rockets and planned and evaluated what they have made. Teachers try hard to incorporate elements of technology into other lessons but the lack of specialist resources limits the ways in which this can be done.

Nevertheless, in all practical lessons, pupils are well motivated. They behave well and use equipment carefully. Practical work and good encouragement from teachers motivate them to do well. This approach is further enhanced by the support provided by support assistants. Many pupils are clearly making progress towards general targets in their individual educational plans. However, as the subject is not formally assessed throughout the school, the progress pupils make in relation to their prior attainment is not consistently and regularly identified. This is in part due to a lack of firm and effective leadership and evaluation by the subject co-ordinator.

117. The subject has maintained the standards found at the last inspection but the school recognises the need to make substantial improvements in the accommodation.

GEOGRAPHY

118. The provision for geography is satisfactory. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the subject is taught as part of a topic based programme of study. No geography lessons were observed, therefore judgements of the pupils' achievements are based on an analysis of their work. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the high standard of teaching and in-class support ensures that the pupils make good gains in their overall knowledge and understanding of a range of geographical concepts.
119. At Key Stages 1 and 2, cross-curricular topic work helps pupils learn simple mapping skills through use of their immediate surroundings. Their work is recorded in photographic evidence and teacher-written accounts, which shows that the pupils discuss their route to school and begin to locate specific items within the geography of the classroom. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils act as guides to other classrooms and extend their understanding of the lay-out of the building. Off-site visits are followed up with well planned practical tasks. For example, Key Stage 3 pupils who had visited their local shopping centre used and consolidated their knowledge by mapping the street through the use of photographs of each shop. Not only did they place their photographs in the correct sequence but they also described what each shop sold. At Key Stage 4, pupils use a digital camera to record street scenes. They study aspects of the Dorset coast, and create a wall map to display local features. Well-planned lessons encourage a deeper understanding of the wider world. This occurred when pupils examined and made volcanoes. This was linked to science of changing materials. Residential field trips provide pupils with opportunities to learn elements of geology as the pupils study rock and land formations.
120. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and very good at Key Stage 3. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils, together with the quality of teaching is reflected in pupils' good progress. Teachers set high expectations and pupils' respond accordingly, with good behaviour and a keen interest in their work. Teachers engage the pupils' interest through a series of practical activities, such as role-play. Pupils discovered why shop doors are wider than house doors. Pupils looked for clues in photographs of shops. By this means they enable the pupils to consider changing landscapes and local industry, and extend their knowledge of their local environment. Literacy skills are an important part of the teaching and opportunities are well used to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.
121. The subject co-ordinator effectively ensures that in the schemes of work account is taken of pupils' special needs and they reflect the needs of the National Curriculum. However, procedures for evaluating the subject and for monitoring and assessing the pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Resources are adequate. Good use is made of the

immediate locality and organised trips. Wall displays throughout the school are attractive and reflect the pupils' work, which boosts their self-esteem as well as reinforcing their learning.

122. Since the previous inspection the standard and quality of teaching has improved considerably. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils are well motivated and able to build upon their earlier learning and acquire new skills.

HISTORY

123. Judgements about standards of achievement in history are based on observations of one lesson at Key Stage 2 and consideration of evidence from records, photographs and pupils' work at Key Stages 2 and 3. Because of insufficient evidence no judgements can be made about the standards of achievement at Key Stages 1 and 4. History at Key Stage 1 is included with work done in other subjects. Standards of achievement at Key Stages 2 and 3 are satisfactory. At Key Stages 2 and 3 the subject forms part of a humanities topic together with geography.
124. At Key Stage 2 and 3, pupils develop a sound understanding of the difference between past and present through the 'Food and shopping' topic. At Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils recognise the life-sized model of Henry the Eighth as a king and know that the fireplace in the castle is where cooking was done. A pupil with more complex learning needs experiences the type of smell that might be found on the fireplace walls. In Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils successfully place food pictures in their correct historical context. Lower attaining pupils make a model of an Anderson Shelter as part of the Millennium topic on World War Two. At Key Stage 4 pupils experienced what it was like to live in the Iron Age, during a visit to The New Barn Centre in Autumn 1999.
125. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is judged solely on the basis of one observed lesson and it is therefore impossible to form a firm judgement about teaching standards throughout the subject. This very good lesson resulted from well-prepared plans to visit Portland Castle. This ensured that pupils collected appropriate data for their future work. The lesson, which followed this visit, made effective use of the data that pupils collected and linked it well to the whole school topic. The teacher and assistants worked together very well to create an interesting and stimulating visit that provided many learning opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils enjoyed the opportunities to dress up in clothes, such as those worn by people of medieval times. Teachers encouraged and developed role-play, such as eating a meal from wooden platters and simulated the drinking of 'mead'. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and this results in lessons that allow all pupils to fully concentrate on their learning.
126. The co-ordinator, only recently appointed to the school, has not had sufficient time to improve provision. However, a draft policy for the subject has already been written. The aim is to teach history by making use of the EQUALS scheme and take proper account of what is set out in the National Curriculum. Assessment and recording procedures are ineffective and are under review. The planning for pupils' learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 needs to identify clearer opportunities for these pupils to extend their historical knowledge
127. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. Many are outdated. More resources are necessary if teaching of the subject is to become effective. Use of information technology, particularly the wealth of information available through the World Wide Web, is unsatisfactory. However, very good use is made of visits to places such as TimeWalk and Tudor House in Weymouth, as well as further afield to castles at Lulworth and Corfe.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

128. The school has made significant improvements in provision for information technology since the last inspection. It has invested a significant sum of money to ensure that each classroom now has at least one computer. This has ensured that there are now more computers available and pupils have more opportunity to work with them. In spite of this, information technology is not used to fully support the work that pupils do in other subjects.
129. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress. For example, the youngest pupils in the school are developing a clear understanding of cause and effect as they manipulate a switch or mouse to move items on the screen. Older pupils use a symbol-writing program as an aid to writing and, with the help of support assistants, work effectively in expressing their views and making text easier to read. Some pupils benefit from the use of specialist switches to operate equipment such as food processors or bubble tubes in the sensory room. This is instrumental in engaging pupils' interest and allowing them to use such equipment but not all pupils have equal opportunities to the complete range of equipment. This occurs because there are insufficient devices to help pupils, with communication difficulties or poor motor control, to effectively use the equipment.
130. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and good in almost half of lessons, but the knowledge skills and confidence that teachers demonstrate is inconsistent. Where teachers are keen and well versed in the use of technology, they provide good opportunities for pupils to use the computers for a wide range of activities, particularly for word processing. The opposite is also true in the case of teachers who are unfamiliar with the technology. The school should, as a matter of urgency, pursue their application resulting from New Opportunity Funding. The training received from this will enable teachers to become better skilled in using information technology to the benefit of their pupils. Pupils' work, seen during the inspection, demonstrates there is insufficient focus upon such tasks as data-handling and graphic work. The school has yet to introduce a consistent system for assessing progress and therefore is unable to identify the required small steps of learning for each pupil. The co-ordinator does not yet play a full role in monitoring and co-ordinating the subject and there is no clear data resulting from what pupils have learned, as a result of their work in information technology. Despite the improvement in provision, these aspects of the subject remain unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE- French

131. French is taught to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. The main focus is on the use of language and development of French vocabulary through conversation. Pupils are making good progress and the standards they achieve in oral work are also good.
132. In lessons pupils use French greetings and phrases wherever possible. The quality of pronunciation by higher attaining pupils is good. These pupils also, when asked a question, respond using short sentences. For example, at Key Stage 4, a lesson on French food involved all pupils enacting a shop scene. A range of food and drinks had been arranged, as in a shop, and pupils took it in turns to be either customer or shopkeeper. The enthusiasm of teacher and support staff encouraged pupils' confidence and interest. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had been involved in an exchange of French dialogue. The use of sign language or touch enabled pupils with

individual difficulties to take an active and effective part in the lesson.

133. The quality of teaching is good and the successful outcomes of lessons are derived from the enthusiasm and presentation of the teacher. Although not a fluent speaker of the language, he manages to engage the pupils in a very good level of participation by imaginative use of 'props' and an implicit demand that pupils respond in French. This insistence on high standards pays dividends for the pupils, in that the higher attaining pupils can sustain brief but understandable dialogues that will be of use when they visit France.
134. Pupils' behaviour and attitude in lessons is lively though appropriate. Some pupils show particular aptitude for the language and are effectively encouraged to improve their pronunciation of words and phrases. The use of practical activities, such as baking and serving French food in a lesson at a local high school, was a good example of the exchange of skills and ideas in the community. Pupils have, in the past, had the opportunity to visit France and photographs as well as written details of this visit adorn the school, alongside other displays of French writing and labelling.
135. More work on curriculum planning and programmes of study leading to accreditation are being considered. The time available for effective planning and co-ordination is unsatisfactory, though this is under review. A draft policy, outlining the intentions of the teaching, currently provides a structure for the subject but there is a planned re-draft of this in the near future. Links with a school in France have improved the opportunities for further development in French. Links with this school could be further developed through use of the Internet. Fund-raising has begun in order to provide a future exchange trip with this school. Pupils regard French lessons as exciting and enjoyable. Opportunities to extend the expectations of higher attaining pupils are limited essentially because the teacher is not a fluent French speaker. Resources are unsatisfactory in terms of the range and availability of tapes and books. The use of information technology to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.
136. Since the last inspection, when there was no provision for the learning of a foreign language, significant improvements have been made. Not only is the opportunity now offered to study the language and culture of the French people, but it is also widening the horizons and experiences of pupils. As a result, their knowledge and understanding of different cultures is enhanced. Pupils have responded with great enthusiasm.

MUSIC

137. Music within all key stages is of a very high standard. It is integrated very effectively into a range of other activities in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stages 3 and 4, there is an excellent music lesson at the end of each week, when all pupils join together in the hall.
138. Pupils sing and play instruments in circle time and also benefit from lessons in dance and drama given by a visiting specialist. Music therapy is available for very specific needs. A highly skilled and experienced music therapist provides opportunities for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. As a result of this tuition, these pupils make excellent progress. This therapy is aimed at treating anxieties and obsessions through musical expression and composition. It also produces a very high level of improved communication, as pupils learn to relax when creating music at their own pace and level of attainment. All pupils in the school enjoy music and dance. The integrated music lesson at the end of the week provides a valuable opportunity for all pupils to express their musical talent. Pupils with more profound physical and communication difficulties

play a full part in this session.

139. The quality of teaching is very good. Non-specialists use commercially available audio-tapes to underpin their lesson planning and these provide a good framework for teachers to develop the subject and ensure that lessons are stimulating and challenging. For example, in a lesson at Key Stage 2, pupils listened to a tape recording of Australian Aboriginal music and from this were encouraged to follow the rhythm and beat. The majority did this very successfully. There are very good examples of the use of music in lessons. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils sing responses in circle time. Pupils with little or no speech capability are helped to experience rhythm and sound and they respond with head turning or expressions of pleasure to the music and singing. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were rewarded for good work by being able to play an instrument of their choice. There is a very good range of instruments now available although there is a limited allocation of funding for music. Teachers also use music effectively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the use of alphabet and number rhymes. In sessions of aromatherapy, provided for pupils with profound difficulties, music is used to soothe and relax.
140. Music makes a very good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. There is a very good range of resource material provided by specialists who visit the school. Continued support from them will enable pupils to extend their musical ability and creativity.
141. Music co-ordination in the school is in its early stages. Further time and planning will be required if the intentions of the co-ordinator are to be realised. There is no means, currently available to the co-ordinator, by which pupils' progress and continuity of knowledge can be ensured. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils.
142. The standards of music continue to improve following the last inspection. Plans for future development in the subject and revision of the policy are, appropriately, on the school's list of priorities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in physical education but the opportunity to experience the full range of the curriculum is reduced by unsatisfactory facilities. Despite this, teachers effectively incorporate physical education into other areas of the curriculum, such as music, movement and drama. No lessons were seen at Key Stages 3 and 4 and so judgements must remain tentative for these groups.
144. In a lesson combining movement and music, pupils in Key Stage 1 show good awareness of their bodies by moving appropriately in response to music. For lower attaining pupils this involves head movements and gestures that they successfully make as a response to the music. Higher attaining pupils and those with greater mobility perform their movement independently. For example, they move competently from place to place either by running or two-footed jumping. Within a lesson for pupils in years 1 and 2 progress against prior attainment could clearly be seen. An individual pupil, whose target within his individual education plan was to sit upright without support, managed to do this successfully. At Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils have become competent swimmers. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in water confidence skills. They show little or no anxiety when water splashes their faces. Post-16 students fully use all their physical skills in a series of dance sessions provided by a visiting teacher. In their warm-up activities, by engaging in a series of fast and slow exercises,

they show a good sense of both rhythm and movement.

145. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They understand their part in learning and wherever possible work co-operatively with others. Enjoyment and involvement is a significant feature of all lessons and in the swimming pool, particularly, this translates into squeals of delight as challenges are successfully met.
146. The quality of teaching is good. Groups are well organised and managed. This enables pupils to concentrate fully on their tasks without distraction from misbehaviour. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers have identified the strengths and attainments of their pupils and plan exercises accordingly. This occurs at Key Stages 1 and 2. Warm-up routines are designed to enable each pupil, whatever his or her attainment, to take a full part. The pupils' involvement and participation is assured by requiring individuals to choose the next sequence of the routine. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what is required of them by appropriately using different communication systems, such as Makaton or the picture exchange communication system. Because of this pupils with profound communication needs are fully included in lessons. The good pace at which lessons are given, enables pupils to retain concentration for long periods. Exercises, such as those done in the swimming pool by Key Stage 2 pupils, are rotated quickly so that pupils do not become restless, but at the same time they allow sufficient time for each pupil to develop the required skill.
147. Assessment and evaluation at the end of lessons is unsatisfactory. The procedures, by which pupils' progress can be monitored, are unsatisfactory and currently they cannot ensure a sound record of each pupil's attainments as they move between classes. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is seeking ways to redress the deficiency.
148. Since the last inspection the standard in teaching has improved, as has pupils' learning. The quality of the curriculum remains static and this needs further development in its range to ensure that pupils develop their attainment to the full. This is especially the case for pupils of higher attainment and those with better mobility. The staff should address this deficiency, together with improvement in the unsatisfactory accommodation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. Since the last inspection, a new co-ordinator has been appointed who currently is reviewing the arrangements for religious education and has produced a new policy document. The policy continues to pay regard to the locally agreed syllabus. A review of the EQUALS scheme is taking place and a decision about which to use has yet to be made. Religious education is taught as a separate subject at Key Stages 3 and 4, but in combination with other subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2.
150. Standards of achievement in religious education at Key Stage 1, 3, and 4 are satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 no lessons were seen and too little evidence was available to make firm judgements. At Key Stage 2 religious education is incorporated into stories told during literacy activities.
151. At Key Stage 1 religious education is planned for in circle time. A candle is lit to create a focus. Pupils show an appreciation of others by applauding their friends efforts. Pupils at Key Stage 3 learn about self-awareness and to appreciate what others can do. Most pupils say what they are good at, make positive suggestions about others and provide answers for those pupils with complex learning needs. At Key Stage 4, pupils learn

about other religions. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of the Jewish religion. For example they know that Rosh Hashana is the Jewish New Year and on such an occasion Jews wish each other a 'Sweet New Year'. Lower attaining pupils taste the sweetness of the honey cookies and link this to the Jewish custom.

152. Teaching at Key Stage 1, 3, and 4 is good. No judgements are made about teaching at Key Stage 2, because no teaching was observed. Effective teaching occurs in lessons where teachers have good plans with clear learning objectives. This enables pupils to make good progress. This includes developing a sense of self-awareness and self-worth. Teachers make good use of praise to encourage pupils' participation. This helps raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and helps them to make progress. Pupils respond well to this, listen well and show interest in lessons. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour. This helps to ensure that pupils persevere at tasks and make good progress.
153. Collective Worship takes place on two days each week and there is a weekly assembly to celebrate achievement by pupils. Classes take turns to be responsible for conducting assemblies. Pupils enjoy this responsibility. At the worship session, two hymns are sung, a prayer may be said and there is a quiet time for reflection. This arrangement makes a good contribution to the religious education in the school.
154. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. There are a limited number of artefacts representing other faiths. For particular celebrations resources supplied by the county library service supplement these. There is an occasional visit to local places of worship, such as, a Roman Catholic Church. There is a need to include visits by representatives from other faiths so that pupils can experience different cultural and religious viewpoints. Since the last inspection standards have remained satisfactory.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WHO ARE POST-16

155. The provision that the school makes for the students at post-16 is very effective. It enables students to build on their capabilities. The quality of teaching and learning for the students of all attainment is very good. Sometimes it is excellent. In addition to further developing their basic skills, the recent introduction of an accredited award scheme for life and learning skills (ALL) makes a significant contribution to the students' personal development and self-esteem. Excellent college links enable the students to develop further their learning and social skills.
156. Within the post-16 unit, the students make at least good and sometimes very good progress. The teachers set high, but realistic expectations, that the students work to achieve. For example, in food technology, they are challenged to plan a simple meal. They have learned to prepare the meal and eat it with others. They work willingly and effectively as a team, each having an area of responsibility and although some have difficulty using graters and tin openers, all play a part. Staff are particularly alert to the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. They provide the students with opportunities for becoming more independent, building up confidence and raising self-esteem. For example, staff advise or show the students how to hold a utensil rather than taking over the task. Good use is made of modern technology to assist learning and the students' work shows a good range of design, word-processed reports and Internet research. They send e-mails and purchase shopping via the Internet. They confidently explain how this is done. All students' study assignments that lead to national standards of accreditation. These cover a range of topics, from environmental issues to a study of the world of work.

157. A variety of teaching methods are used. They are very effective in helping students learn literacy and numeracy skills. All students participate in college link days and most discuss what they have achieved and what they would hope to do in the future. Support staff provide additional exercise and sensory sessions for students with more complex needs. Account is taken of individual education plans and these are carried out with sensitivity and dignity.
158. The efficiently managed unit provides a well-balanced curriculum that integrates basic skills with elements of other subjects, including religious education. Completed modules are assessed towards Accreditation for Life and Learning (ALL) certification. Policies, planning and schemes of work are very good and based upon the individual needs and achievements of the students. The local authority has provided separate accommodation for these students, and while this is classified as 'portable' it, never the less, enables the students to experience an environment that is separate from the school, in both practice and philosophy. The building is also equipped with good quality specialist equipment and customised provision for intimate care is good. The level of staffing provided for the unit is satisfactory, enabling the requirements of all students to be met.
159. The quality of provision for these students has risen considerably since the last inspection. The establishment of a self-contained unit has enabled students, of all ability levels, to have an identity as young adults and this aids them in their developing maturity. Improved college links also promote their social well-being and self-esteem is further enhanced through a revised and relevant curriculum.

Glossary of terms used within this report

ALL : Accreditation for Life and Learning.

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Circle time : A group activity in which pupils explore personal and social issues.

EQUALS: A modified form of the curriculum that takes into account the attainment and needs of **SLD** and **PMLD** pupils.

Foundation Stage: The provision made for pupils who are under age five. This group was formerly known as 'Under fives'. Their curriculum follows the requirements of the **Early Learning Goals. (ELG)**

IEP: Individual Education Plan. This document outlines what individual pupils should learn. It focuses teaching on individual needs and is reviewed regularly.

Key Stages (KS): The pupils are divided into key stages of the curriculum according to age.

Key Stage 1 = Pupils aged 5 – 7 (Year groups 1-2)

Key Stage 2 = Pupils aged 7 –11 (Year groups 3-6)

Key Stage 3 = Pupils aged 11 – 14 (Year groups 7-9)

Key Stage 4 = Pupils aged 14 – 16 (Year groups 10-11)

National Literacy Strategy (NLS): A government initiative designed to raise standards of literacy in schools. This consists of a series of objectives taught through the 'Literacy Hour' and focus on;
Speaking and Listening
Reading
Writing

National Numeracy Strategy (NNS): A similar initiative to the NLS, focusing on developing pupils' understanding and use of number.

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS): A form of visually based communication, designed for pupils who have difficulty in speaking. This involves the pupil selecting and showing a card or symbol that signifies a request. (eg. A symbol of a cup would indicate the need for a drink)

Plenary: A discussion at the end of a lesson in which pupils may answer questions or discuss what they have learned in the lesson. This can be an effective way of enabling teachers to find out what pupils have understood.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD): Severely disabled pupils who may be totally dependent on assistance from others for the majority of their needs.

TEACCH : Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children. A structured form of teaching and learning that enables pupils on the autistic spectrum to make progress.

NOTE: This glossary is offered in order to enable readers to understand the use of terms within this report. It is not intended as a definitive guide.