

INSPECTION REPORT

BARDWELL SCHOOL

Bicester, Oxfordshire

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123344

Headteacher: Mrs C Hughes

Reporting inspector: Ms M Landy
1927

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th October 2000

Inspection number: 223614

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Foundation special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hendon Place Sunderland Drive Bicester Oxfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Mills
Date of previous inspection:	May, 1998

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Ms D Morris 18498	Team inspector	Under-fives Mathematics History	The school's results and achievements
Ms J Taylor 17260	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Music	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bardwell is an Oxfordshire Local Education Authority mixed day special school for up to 55 pupils, currently 51, 49 full-time equivalent. The pupils have severe learning difficulties and complex needs, that is they have profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism. Pupils are aged between two and sixteen years. Pupils are mainly white, a very small number come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bardwell is improving at a good pace, it no longer has serious weaknesses. It has improved a lot since the last inspection. The headteacher has provided exemplary leadership during a difficult period in the school's life. Standards are now satisfactory overall and good in the Nursery. Improvements since the last inspection are to be found in the Nursery, in English, mathematics, science, history, art and physical education, music has also improved significantly from unsatisfactory to good. The school now has a good capacity to succeed and to improve standards further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership from the headteacher and key staff. The headteacher sets an excellent example and has been very influential in motivating staff.
- Very good information provided for parents who feel well informed, most are very happy with the quality of education provided.
- Very good induction of new staff, who appreciate the time and commitment given to this important area by the deputy headteacher.
- High proportion of good and very good teaching and learning, a tremendous improvement in quality since the last inspection.
- A shared commitment to improve and a good capacity to succeed, all the staff, managers and governors have a common sense of purpose, they want the best.
- Very good teamwork between all members of staff ensures that pupils' personal welfare is effectively promoted.
- Assessment has improved, it is now much more systematic. Teachers know their pupils well, they pay close attention to targets in individual education plans in lessons which helps them to plan and to track the progress that each pupil makes.

What could be improved

- The balance of the timetabled curriculum as some subjects get too little time or are not taught regularly enough and provision for modern foreign languages, information and communication technology and aspects of design and technology do not meet legal requirements in regard to the National Curriculum.
- Provision for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen and in particular extending the curriculum offered, improving opportunities for vocational education, increasing the range of accreditation and improving the consistency and quality of teaching and learning.
- Provision for some pupils with the most complex needs, this includes the curriculum they receive and the training of some staff in teaching strategies to improve learning.
- The amount of space and specialist accommodation.
- Legal requirements with regard to a policy on drug education, minor details in the prospectus and in the annual report to parents by the governing body.

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

When the school was last inspected in June 1998 it was identified as having serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case and the school has made good progress in improving itself. It now has a good capacity to succeed.

Five out of the seven key issues for action that the last inspection highlighted have now been successfully and fully addressed. These were to improve financial planning and long-term strategic planning; implement formal monitoring systems for the curriculum and teaching; develop and implement whole-school assessment procedures; provide co-ordinators with relevant training and to align procedures for special educational needs with the special educational needs Code of Practice.

Two key issues remain, although there has been some progress regarding both. These now feature in the key issues to address following this inspection and concern the curriculum and progress for pupils with the most complex needs.

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	Key	
speaking and listening	B	C	C	very good	A
reading	B	C	C	good	B
writing	B	C	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	C	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	C	C	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	C	C		

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

Pupils, where appropriate, complete national tasks and tests but the numbers are too low to be statistically valid. The oldest pupils have started to study for nationally recognised qualifications, but no results are available as yet.

Standards achieved by pupils with severe learning difficulties are satisfactory, however, the standards of those pupils with more complex needs are inconsistent. Some make unsatisfactory progress as tasks are not always well matched to their abilities or they do not have equal access to appropriate curriculum content.

Standards are good in the Nursery. Overall they are satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Standards achieved in English and mathematics are satisfactory except at Key Stage 4 where they are unsatisfactory. Standards in science are satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 4 and good at Key Stages 2 and 3. Standards are satisfactory in information and communication technology at Key Stages 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. All other subjects are satisfactory except music, which is good, and modern foreign languages which is unsatisfactory, as those pupils with the most complex needs do not get the opportunity to study it. Also aspects of design and technology are unsatisfactory as opportunities to work in wood, plastics, metals and other resistant materials, plus textiles are too limited. Too little work is kept as evidence in some subjects to ease judging standards and progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment

Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to their work are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in school and when the pupils are out on trips.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and as a result staff successfully promote the personal development of the pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils arrive in good time for the start of the school day. Lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There has been a tremendous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. It is now good overall. Sixty per cent of teaching and learning is good or better, this is twice as much good teaching than during the last inspection. Ninety-five per cent is satisfactory or better and five per cent is unsatisfactory. Two per cent is excellent and 18 per cent is very good, that is 20 per cent of teaching and learning is very good or better. Good teaching was seen in every class across the school and in a wide range of subjects. In English, teaching and learning is usually good and in mathematics it is satisfactory in almost all lessons. In literacy, standards are good and in numeracy they are satisfactory. In personal and social education standards are good. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching – only three lessons – were lessons for fourteen- to sixteen-year-olds.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good provision for pupils under five years of age. Overall much improved but still unbalanced time allocation for some subjects, therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils do not spend enough time on information and communication technology or modern foreign languages at Key Stages 3 and 4, nor aspects of design and technology related to resistant materials across the school. In these subjects the school does not meet statutory legal requirements. Provision at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory as time is not used well, the pace is too slow and there is insufficient emphasis on vocational education and accredited courses, the latter is already being addressed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Good moral and social development. Satisfactory personal, cultural and spiritual development. Pupils often show a good level of care and concern for each other.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils are well cared for and ably assisted by skilled support staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She

management by the headteacher and other key staff	has seen the school through an unsettled period in an exemplary manner. She has put in place an effective management team which ably assists her in moving the school forward.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body has a very good knowledge of educational issues. It has a number of new committees and officers that are already providing the school with effective support and advice. They now work well together and have a good awareness of what needs to be done. They need to develop a policy on drug education and improves some details in the prospectus and in their Annual Report to Parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Since the previous inspection the school has developed good systems to evaluate teaching, learning and progress. Co-ordinators and senior staff are starting to use the evaluation information well. This is helping with monitoring progress in both teaching and curriculum development.
The strategic use of resources	Staff and finance have been effectively used to assist in improving teaching and make the most of new resources. Although accommodation is used well by teachers and support staff, it still restricts learning especially for pupils aged 11 to 16 years in design and technology, art and science. The Nursery is very cramped and in most classrooms space is too limited.

Resources are generally adequate except for design and technology resistant materials and artefacts in religious education. The school is well aware of best value and applies the principles appropriately. Staffing levels are satisfactory to meet the needs of the pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress in learning. The staff are very caring. • Dramatic improvement in communication skills and behaviour of children. • Pupils really enjoy coming to school. • Parents feel generally well informed. • Annual reviews very constructive. • Parents appreciate very gentle care after their child had major operation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed views on homework, several parents want more • More challenge at Key Stage 4 and more external accreditation • Alternative arrangements, particularly more help for parents who have child care difficulties, to attend parents' meetings

The inspection team agree with the parents' views. Pupils do enjoy coming to school, staff are very caring, parents are kept very well informed and provision at Key Stage 4 does need to be improved. The homework policy is related to age and need and this is appropriate. Overall this works well, but more homework could be set especially for older pupils. The school does run crèche support for some meetings, it is rightly considering doing this more often in order to assist parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall standards achieved have improved considerably since the last inspection. The Nursery was satisfactory and sometimes good, it is now consistently good and sometimes very good. Standards were unsatisfactory over time at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 due to the school's restricted curriculum. They remain satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and is now also satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3 but still remains unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. This represents satisfactory progress overall as several subjects have also improved, especially religious education which now meets legal requirements.
2. However, there are still unsatisfactory aspects of design and technology related to resistant materials across the school, and in information and communication technology at Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards are unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages for pupils with complex needs at Key Stages 3 and 4. Improvements since the last inspection are to be found in the Nursery, English, mathematics, science, history, art and physical education. Music has improved significantly from unsatisfactory to good. The school now has a good capacity to succeed and to improve standards and progress further. There is too little evidence of progress over time in geography and insufficient work is kept in religious education.
3. Pupils with severe learning difficulties generally achieve satisfactory standards over time. The progress that they make in lessons is often good. The progress of pupils with more complex needs, such as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders, is good in some lessons; it is unsatisfactory in others and is not consistent across the school. This is because tasks are often not sufficiently linked to their abilities and because they do not always have equality of access to appropriate curriculum content. Over time these pupils make unsatisfactory progress.
4. Progress in the Nursery is good. Pupils develop their skills across all areas of learning through a good range of activities. They listen well to stories, answer to their own names, take part in simple counting on a daily basis, and investigate and explore a range of materials. They begin to use computers from the earliest times. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world as they go on visits into the local community. They build recognisable structures, and use outdoor play facilities with confidence. They are developing good personal and social skills. There is a detailed separate report in this report on the Nursery or Foundation Stage.
5. In English standards achieved are satisfactory in Key Stage 1, good in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4. In all key stages there are pupils with complex needs whose progress in communication is not satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen to stories and respond to questions. Literacy skills are developing in a satisfactory way as they develop a small vocabulary and read a few key words. Writing develops in the form of rudimentary print for about half of the pupils. At Key Stages 2 and 3, progress is good. All pupils develop an interest in reading, develop their word skills, and write simple text. Language skills develop well, and allow pupils to communicate within class group times. Pupils achieve good literacy skills given their low attainment. A small number of pupils with more complex needs develop gestures or use symbols to support communication. For pupils aged fourteen to sixteen the inspection evidence shows that slower progress is made in terms of increasing vocabulary and written language and pupils are underachieving.

6. In mathematics standards achieved are satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. In all key stages, some pupils with complex needs make unsatisfactory progress. At Key Stage 1 pupils join in with number rhymes and songs. They count every day, and explore objects. A few know their numbers to ten, and many can count to three. They are developing satisfactory understanding of shapes and colours, and their numeracy skills are developing in a satisfactory way. At Key Stage 2 all pupils work well with number lines to consolidate their understanding of numeracy. They develop satisfactory knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes. A few work with numbers to 100. At Key Stage 3 pupils work with real money as they develop their understanding of coins. They undertake real shopping expeditions. Many can name coins and understand their values. They begin to collect simple data and represent it in graph form. At Key Stage 4 progress is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils undertake independent activities but these are not always linked to their ability.
7. In science standards achieved are satisfactory overall with good progress in Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils with complex needs do not always have the opportunities to achieve the amount of progress that they are capable of, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 4. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can already predict whether or not light will pass through an object, and then experiment to see if they are right. In Key Stage 2 more able pupils are able to say whether materials are 'opaque' or 'translucent'. In Key Stage 3 pupils observe the molten wax on a burning candle as they study 'changes', and comment on how spaghetti changes when cooked. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are beginning to classify animals and can identify the key features of living objects.
8. In information and communication technology standards are satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Throughout the school pupils become familiar with computers and other technological equipment. More able pupils learn to use the basic facilities of a word-processor and art package. They use the Internet with support and are developing a range of appropriate skills. Pupils with more complex needs make appropriate progress in the use of switches, and understand that they can create an effect by their own efforts.
9. In religious education standards are satisfactory across the school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils listen carefully to Bible stories. A few act out their feelings of anger and remember facts well. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they begin to understand and discuss issues relating to the homeless and the poor.
10. In history standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils effectively develop their understanding of the past and the world around them through the study of real sources, books and visits to places of historical and geographical interest. There is too limited evidence of work in geography therefore progress over time is unsatisfactory. Too little evidence is kept in some subjects to assist in judging standards and progress.
11. In design and technology standards are unsatisfactory overall, although it is good in food technology. As pupils move through the school they develop their skills in preparation and cooking of food. They prepare whole group meals by the time they reach Key Stage 4. However, progress in the resistant materials and textiles aspect of design and technology is unsatisfactory, as these aspects are not taught sufficiently.
12. In physical education standards are satisfactory across the school. They are good in the use of small apparatus, very good in dance, but limited in the use of large apparatus. Progress is linked to resources, and the lack of resources for developing large apparatus skills is reflected in the lower level of progress that pupils make.

Pupils generally develop their physical skills by responding well and moving to music, and by changing movement to the mood of the music.

13. In music standards are good. For example some of the youngest pupils sing very tunefully and remember the words and melody of a new song. The oldest pupils read and write simple rhythms, including accents and rests. Pupils with complex needs often enjoy the sessions, responding to familiar music with interest, recognising new and different sounds and showing delight when they lead the class in rhythm work.
14. In art standards achieved are satisfactory overall. Pupils successfully experiment with a range of different materials and textures. They choose from different techniques and use simple tools, such as an air-brush, with minimal supervision. As they move through the school a few pupils use computers to good effect to complete a self-portrait. All pupils benefit from visits to the school by local artists.
15. Standards achieved in modern foreign languages are unsatisfactory overall as some pupils do not have equal opportunities to their curriculum entitlement, and other pupils do not have enough time to study the subject. A few pupils do increase their vocabulary and are able to answer simple questions such as their name, or repeat simple phrases.
16. Key Stage 4 pupils have begun accredited courses but there are too few results to compare as cohorts are small. The accredited range of courses is too limited. This in itself is a weakness that the school is addressing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. As reported in the previous inspection, pupils enjoy the time they spend at school and their attitudes to learning continue to be good. Although some pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves, the majority are clearly pleased to arrive at school in the morning and to be surrounded once again by familiar sights and sounds.
18. Pupils' attitudes are good, they are keen to be actively involved in their lessons and they enjoy experiencing the wide range of activities provided. They particularly relish practical lessons, for example, food technology, geography or physical education. During the inspection, pupils had great fun trying to identify various fruits and vegetables from Kenya. Although some of the pupils could see what they were eating, others were blindfolded during the tasting and this helped to create an added sense of mystery. Although pupils thoroughly enjoyed this lesson, they were still able to make sensible suggestions regarding the identity of the food they had tried, along with suggestions for its use. Pupils of all ages are usually co-operative and they thoroughly enjoy designing and making things. Pupils do their best to keep going even when they are tired or when they find the work to be difficult. For example, as part of a topic on transport, even the youngest children tried hard to finish their models of trains despite the fact that they had already had a full and active day.
19. Pupils are well behaved. Although those with complex difficulties appear to find it more difficult to form relationships with other people, pupils are polite to others around them and tolerate the presence of strangers well. They are friendly and curious about visitors and the more confident happily strike up a conversation when they see someone new. Although there are a few occasions when pupils become over excited by their activities, they usually calm down quickly. Within the school, there are some pupils who are difficult to manage and they sometimes disrupt the calm working of the classroom. Any untoward situations are managed with skill and the majority of pupils respond well to staff. Good teamwork ensures that any disruptive impact on the rest of the class is minimised. Space within several classrooms is very restricted and pupils know that, in order to be safe, they have to move around in a calm and orderly

manner.

20. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Members of staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and set very good examples of how to behave. Pupils learn to take turns amicably, co-operate with adults and each other and understand the impact that their actions have on others. There has been one fixed-term exclusion during the school year prior to the inspection due to very challenging behaviour.
21. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. They steadily grow in self-confidence and like being able to make their own decisions. For example, pupils enjoy deciding what they want to play with during playtime and like to choose their own library books. Pupils relish taking an active part in school assemblies and willingly undertake errands around the school, such as returning registers to the office. At lunchtime pupils wait for their dinner sensibly and, even though some find it to be difficult, they try hard to eat their meal independently. The school enjoys good links with nearby primary schools and a number of pupils benefit from being able to spend a proportion of the week with their peers elsewhere.
22. Attendance is satisfactory overall and the level of authorised and unauthorised absence is very similar to that found at similar schools. Some pupils arrive with their parents while others arrive by taxi or minibus, but they all usually manage to arrive in good time for the start of the school day. When pupils are absent, it is usually because they have been ill or have had to attend a medical appointment. A very small number of pupils, however, have a history of very poor attendance for less tangible reasons. Given the relatively small number of pupils on roll, the absence of these pupils has a major impact on the overall attendance percentage of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. There has been a tremendous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. There have been several staff changes. The amount of good or better teaching has doubled from 30 per cent to 60 per cent, of which 18 per cent is very good and two per cent is excellent. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has decreased significantly, from 17 per cent to five per cent, this represents three lessons. Ninety-five per cent is satisfactory or better. Good teaching was observed at all key stages.
24. Teaching and learning is consistently good in the Nursery where pupils in the Foundation Stage are taught in a friendly, structured and stimulating way. Pupils at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 benefit from good teaching overall. Although good and satisfactory teaching was seen at Key Stage 4, the three unsatisfactory lessons were here. The main causes are poor pace and ineffective use of time which results in pupils underachieving, they do not learn as much as they could. However, at Key Stages 1 to 4 the main weakness is the inconsistency in how well pupils with the most complex needs learn. They do not always do as well as they could as the time spent on the teaching activities is too fleeting as their concentration levels are low and they do not always return to the subject once they are ready to learn again. They do not spend enough time on the tasks. There are examples of their needs being met fully in other lessons. Teaching and learning for these pupils is too inconsistent.

25. Overall teaching is good. High quality teaching was observed in most subjects. Overall teaching is good in science, music, religious education, personal, social and health education and art. It is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, design and technology – mainly food technology – and physical education. Again this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Not enough lessons in history, geography and information and communication technology or modern foreign languages were seen to judge teaching and learning. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory.
26. The effectiveness of the teaching results from many factors across the school. Teachers and staff have generally good subject knowledge and use appropriate teaching methods to interest pupils and to challenge them in order to involve them in their learning. As a result pupils work really hard with good levels of interest and concentration. Teachers manage pupils with skill, patience and in a very respectful way. Support staff plus therapists provide very high quality assistance for pupils' learning, they relate well to them and actively encourage them to try their hardest. This results in good work being completed in lessons, high levels of interaction and a good deal of praise being received by the pupils, which they enjoy. As a result they concentrate and try really hard.
27. Overall teachers' planning and use of assessment is satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, good in the Nursery but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4, where pupils are not encouraged to be as independent as they might be. This is not the case in the rest of the school. The school is aware that this is an area that needs to be developed. The use of information and communication technology is too limited across the school, although other resources are generally used appropriately. Pupils know what is expected of them and how well they are doing. Homework is set by arrangement, the amount differs according to age and need of the pupils and is appropriate. However more could be set for older pupils.
28. Examples of teachers building confidence and providing good experiences include a pupil demonstrating backstroke to the rest of the group in a Key Stage 3 swimming lesson, or pupils having fun whilst being interested in how and why jelly goes mouldy in a Key Stage 2 science lesson. Also teaching that encourages all pupils to take part fully by placing coats on Joseph's brothers who were jealous of his technicolour coat, whilst acting out a Bible story in Key Stage 1. Teachers successfully work with support staff to develop whole-team approaches so that the pupils are happy and enjoy learning, in this way the amount of staff support the pupils receive is maximised and high levels of interaction and pupil assistance is the result. This greatly assists in the good behaviour of pupils and good levels of learning such as when cooking vegetable pies in Key Stage 2 or when really concentrating and writing in English across the school.

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

29. There has been a significant improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. The most impressive development has been that of the role of the subject co-ordinator. This is now better established so that they can develop and plan their subjects.
30. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are now taught. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have been introduced appropriately. The curriculum is broad and relevant for Key Stages 1 and 2, with the exception of too little provision for teaching resistant materials and textiles as part of design and technology. It is still unsatisfactory for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Most subjects

now meet legal requirements but design and technology, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages do not. The programme for design and technology is too narrow, and pupils do not do enough work with wood, metal, plastic or textiles or to develop skills with tools. Information and communication technology is not taught as a separate subject and although primary pupils have appropriate experiences, there are not enough opportunities for senior pupils to experience all the areas of the information and communication technology curriculum in depth. All secondary pupils experience modern foreign languages. The higher attaining pupils have one lesson a week for two half terms a year, but those with complex needs only have isolated experiences. This is not sufficient to fulfil legal requirements.

31. The school now meets the recommendations of the special educational needs Code of Practice. Individual education programmes are good, and are appropriately taught, reviewed and monitored. Therapists and the school nurse make very valuable contributions to individual education programmes and class lessons. They often liaise effectively with parents helping everyone to work together consistently on important areas for a particular pupil. The curriculum is enhanced, where necessary, by using symbols and signing. The introduction of the Picture Exchange Communication System, to help pupils with autism communicate better, is a useful development but is not always consistent across the school. The majority of lessons are appropriately planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils, but there are still too many times when the needs of those with complex difficulties are not fully addressed.
32. Directions have been given to teachers about the time allocations to subjects and consistency between classes has improved. These time allocations, however, need further revision to reflect new initiatives and school priorities. There are significant anomalies such as two hours per week for one class for swimming, but only one for science and there are some subjects that are not taught often enough, such as modern foreign languages, through the year.
33. Most subjects now have schemes of work to guide the teachers in their planning. Long-term topic plans are established, and more detailed medium-term plans are in place. These vary in detail and quality but are generally helping teachers to plan lessons appropriately. More work is still needed to ensure that work builds on each pupil's previous experience, especially as he or she moves between key stages.
34. There have been recent changes to the Key Stage 4 programme of work. Some accredited courses have been introduced, but these do not give most pupils sufficient opportunities to have their achievements recognised. Some time has been given to vocational activities, but this time is not always used well. It has taken time from the ordinary school curriculum, so that other subjects are not now taught with the same frequency or sense of purpose or rigour as in the rest of the school. The Careers Service is appropriately involved in developing careers education but the programme of work experience, and activities to encourage pupils to think about their long-term future, are far too limited.
35. Provision for personal and social education is satisfactory as are the contributions of the community to pupils' learning. Regular integration is a valuable experience for a significant number of pupils, either as individuals or class groups. These sessions are well planned and organised with clear co-ordination of objectives and curriculum between the participating schools. This also enables Bardwell staff to share their special expertise and very positive links have been made with nearby primary and secondary schools.
36. There are too few extra-curricular activities. More use could be made of the long lunchtimes. The school is aware of this and has sensible plans in place. Generally,

good use is made of out-of-school visits to enhance the curriculum, such as practical money work when shopping or looking at minibeasts in local woodland.

37. The school makes good provision for the promotion of pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
38. Pupils benefit from weekly assemblies that involve a good range of activities, which are led by both pupils and staff. Music, in the form of songs with a message and the Bardwell Rap, contributes strongly to moral and social as well as pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are a time for celebration with achievements being recognised in a variety of ways. That they only occur once a week is a missed opportunity as they provide a real sense of unity and illustrate the warmth of the school community.
39. There has been careful planning to improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development with the formalised religious education programme now in place. Visits to local churches and temples, the celebration of Christian and other faith festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Sukkot and the good cross-curricular work, for example the story of 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', all underpin the school's improving emphasis on spiritual development.
40. The provision for promoting pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and how to relate to and care for each other. They listen to stories with a moral message and are helped to understand their significance. The provision of merit certificates and their presentation in assembly effectively promotes pupils' self-esteem. Several classes have discussed and formalised their own set of classroom rules and these are prominently displayed within their classroom. The school is justifiably proud that the school football team won the 'Fair Play' trophy in the last football tournament.
41. There has been a good improvement in pupils' social development since the last inspection. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their skills. They often show a good level of care and concern for each other. This is frequently evident about the school, for example pupils automatically offering to push a classmate's wheelchair out of assembly or lessons and older, more able pupils caring for their younger and less able classmates to ensure they understood what to do. Pupils are clearly helped to gain confidence in coping in unfamiliar situations such as travelling on various forms of public transport and visiting local places of interest such as parks and museums as well as integrating with pupils from other schools for lessons. Parents comment that pupils are very polite and are very good at taking turns, they see this as a direct result of the school's efforts to help their children become sociable and to be more mature and responsible.
42. The provision for pupils' cultural development is now satisfactory, this is a positive improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities are frequently found within lessons such as English, art, food technology, music, religious education, history and geography to increase pupils' awareness of their own and other people's culture. The school library has an adequate selection of appropriate multicultural books, both fiction and non-fiction, and there is a wide range of music, such as folk, jazz, classical and national, from all over the world. Drama and puppet groups visit the school, pupils' artwork has been exhibited at Blenheim Palace and day trips to France have been organised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The previous inspection found that this school provided satisfactory support and

guidance for its pupils. Over the intervening two and a half years, procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare have improved and are now good.

44. Very good teamwork between all members of staff ensures that pupils' personal welfare is effectively promoted. Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils very well and pupils feel safe and valued. Relationships within school and with parents are good and the ensuing two-way dialogue helps to ensure that any emerging problems are addressed at an early stage. The school, however, finds itself with accommodation that is often too cramped and is poorly suited to the age range and personal needs of some of the pupils on roll. For example, it is not always easy to respect pupils' privacy when they are taken to the toilet or when they are changing after swimming and this is an affront to their dignity. In addition, several classrooms are too small and there is very restricted freedom of movement during some lessons. Some pupils are challenging in their behaviour and their condition can be aggravated when the classroom feels too crowded or they feel they have inadequate personal 'space'. Indeed, pupils have attacked members of staff on several occasions and the lack of adequate accommodation continues to place adults and the more vulnerable pupils at risk. In addition, some pupils have no choice but to eat their lunches in the classrooms or in the corridor which is inappropriate.
45. Following the previous inspection, procedures for assessing pupils' work and their personal development have been successfully reviewed. Assessment is now much more systematic and National Curriculum procedures are supplemented by a comprehensive school assessment profile that covers areas such as play, sensory, memory, communication and language development. Pupils' targets within their individual education plans are reviewed each term and these appropriately include at least one target in literacy or communication, mathematics and personal and social education. Teachers know their pupils well and they pay close attention to these targets during lessons.
46. Teaching and support staff work together closely during lessons and this helps to ensure pupils' personal development is also closely and accurately monitored. The moderation of pupils' work has improved and procedures for assessing the standard of pupils' work and their progress are now much more consistent. This information is now effectively used when planning what pupils will do next. Records of Achievement have been further developed and these are forming a very useful visual and written record of each pupil's achievements over their time at the school. Each term, pupils' work is assessed and is shared with parents when targets are updated, as well as during the annual review.
47. There is very good liaison between class teachers and external specialists such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Good teamwork ensures that the needs of each individual are identified and regularly reviewed.
48. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are good. The school liaises closely with the behaviour support service and high quality behaviour management programmes have been designed for individual pupils. These are carefully and consistently followed. Pupils with complex needs, however, can be particularly challenging in their behaviour and current procedures do not always prevent them from harming themselves or those around them as alternative spaces are very limited.

49. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Close liaison with escorts and regular contact with parents ensures that the school is kept well informed when pupils are absent. The school is prompt in following up any unexplained absences by telephone or letter.
50. Arrangements for child protection are good and members of staff record any matters of concern. Routine health and safety checks are also in place and, although there are some areas of some concern which were pointed out to the school, statutory requirements are met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The previous inspection found that the school works closely with parents and this continues to be the case.
52. The school enjoys the wholehearted support of the overwhelming majority of parents. Everyone who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that their child likes school and feels that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.
53. A number of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, however, indicate that they do not feel their child gets sufficient homework. All in all, inspectors find the school sets homework according to age and by agreement and it keeps parents very well informed. The level of information provided compares very well with similar schools.
54. A significant number of pupils travel to and from school using local authority transport. Their parents do not, therefore, have direct daily contact with class teachers and administrative staff. The school overcomes these difficulties very effectively by providing home/school books and several classes also issue exceptionally detailed class newsletters and weekly curriculum sheets. These summarise exactly what pupils will be doing and give really useful tips as to how parents can reinforce particular aspects at home. In addition, some of the older pupils produce their own version of the school newspaper 'The Bardwell News'. This includes many examples of the pupils' work, along with their comments on what they have been doing. The school makes very good use of the telephone and escorts play an enormous and very effective role in relaying information back and forth.
55. This school sees the partnership between home and school as fundamental to its work. Parents are provided with copies of their child's individual education plan along with their timetable. Each term, parents are invited to comment on how well their child has met his or her personal targets. They are also asked to suggest targets for the future. Parents play a full part in their child's annual review and the school thoughtfully sends out a pre-review questionnaire that helps to iron out any problems beforehand. In this way, the actual review becomes as productive as possible.
56. Parents receive detailed information on their child's attitude to work and on their personal development. Annual reports provide lots of useful information concerning the work that their child has been doing along with a clear picture as to how well they have progressed. Although the overall level of information provided is very good, there continue to be some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus.

57. Links with parents are used constructively. The parents and friends association is very active and runs a range of fund-raising and social activities. These include an annual day trip to Bournemouth, a summer barbecue and a November firework display. In addition to raising additional funds that are put to very good use, this group also performs a very useful function of providing a central forum where parents can meet others and exchange ideas and concerns. A number of parents also help with swimming and on trips out of school. This close involvement of parents reinforces the home/school partnership and helps pupils to achieve well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The school has experienced a period of considerable activity since the last inspection. A significant number of important areas for development were identified in the previous report. In addition, significant changes in staff have taken place and at the same time the school has responded to new challenges that have been introduced nationally. In this context the headteacher has provided exemplary leadership, which has maintained teacher confidence and assisted in the introduction of relevant curriculum and management changes. She has set an excellent example and has been very influential in motivating staff during a difficult period in the school's life.
59. At the same time, the headteacher has provided a much clearer vision for the school, which now allows all staff and managers within the school to share a common sense of purpose. The headteacher has been assisted in this by a group of able and committed senior staff who work well with colleagues and the governing body. Key stage and curriculum co-ordinators have invested considerable time in reviewing and updating their areas of responsibility and this has contributed to the improved standards of work, especially in language and communication skills. There is a uniform commitment to high standards and very good relationships between staff, senior management and the governing body.
60. The governing body has also changed significantly. It has an effective and efficient committee structure with an experienced and well informed chairperson. It was clear during the inspection that the governors make a valuable contribution to the management of the school and provide sound support for the headteacher. Their expertise in areas such as finance, construction and special educational needs allow them to provide high quality advice and share appropriately in the running of the school.
61. A shared vision and good communication between staff, headteacher and the governing body was evident throughout the week of the inspection. Individual governors make regular visits to the school, meeting teachers and senior staff. They have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses within the school and this aids their planning and support of the headteacher. They review finances well and have a clear overall picture of curriculum developments and the effect of these on the progress of pupils. Individual governors regularly relay information to the full governing body and this provides data to assist the decision-making process. This close contact means that the governing body is now well placed to set targets for the headteacher as the school implements its developing performance management policy.
62. The governing body fulfils most of its legal responsibilities, but it needs to develop a policy on drug education. Pupil absence rates are not included within the otherwise good school prospectus and the governors' annual report needs to mention actions taken since the last annual general meeting. It also needs to ensure that the school meets requirements within information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and some aspects of design and technology. The school only assembles as a whole once a week. This policy is currently being reviewed.

63. A key issue within the previous inspection report was the need to train all co-ordinators to manage and develop the curriculum. The school has addressed this issue well. A thorough training programme has been undertaken and this has resulted in curriculum co-ordinators who have a clear understanding of planning and resource issues within their subjects. Co-ordination in English has been identified as a priority and work here is impressive. The co-ordinator now evaluates her subject, assisting teachers with classroom management matters and has been using data effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses within her subject. This means that the school is well aware of issues relating to under-achievement for pupils with complex difficulties and the need for further work on signing. This monitoring of the curriculum is an excellent example of what can be done and sets a high standard that other subjects are now ready to follow.
64. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have initiated very effective monitoring of classroom teaching which is beginning to provide staff with useful information about their teaching and areas for development. This provides a sound basis for future work in identifying professional development targets for staff.
65. Developments are well supported through detailed financial planning and the school development plan links educational priorities to the budget much more appropriately than reported in the last inspection. This was an issue within the previous report and has been well developed by the senior management team and governing body.
66. Administration and financial procedures within the school are good. The headteacher, the chair of the governing body's finance committee and the school secretary work together well to ensure that educational targets identified in what is a good school development plan are pursued with attention to the available budget. In particular the secretary's administration of day-to-day financial matters is very good and contributes well to the smooth running of the school. This is aided by the development of a single, clear financial framework that reduces paperwork and ensures compatibility with local education authority financial information.
67. Where the school receives grants for specific purposes such as special needs support, training and computer hardware, these grants are used for the appropriate purpose and often topped up by the school to make the most effective impact on pupils' learning. Information and communication technology is used appropriately for administration purposes and the school is already planning to develop this with regard to monitoring attainment of pupils in the future.
68. The governing body and secretary keep a careful check on expenditure and ensure that the principles of best value are gained. This is not always a question of cost. All involved make every effort to ensure that developments are considered with regard both to financial implications and the quality of the purchases. This is an important consideration in view of the complexity of many pupils' disabilities.
69. The school is adequately staffed overall to support the pupils it has on roll. Teachers have appropriate qualifications for the subjects they teach and, where new to this form of work, receive detailed and effective training and support, with close supervision from a senior member of staff. Learning support assistants and nursery nurses work as integral members of the classroom teams. The inspection team was impressed with the high level of support provided by these staff and the deep commitment they have to both the pupils and their families. They are a skilled group of professionals and a strength of the school. Regular training is available for them and the training plan for the forthcoming year identifies this as a major priority. More training work is necessary for all staff with regard to complex additional needs, in particular signing and programmes for pupils with autistic characteristics.

70. The school makes very effective use of skilled support staff from outside. Therapists, psychologists and county advisory staff are well used to develop programmes for individual pupils and to keep the curriculum up to date. There are currently no nursery nurses working within the Nursery and this is a limitation. The school has a very good induction policy for new staff, designed and well implemented by the deputy headteacher. New teachers and learning support assistants regard it as an excellent introduction to the school, allowing them to settle in quickly, identify problem areas and receive regular support from all Bardwell staff.
71. The previous report expressed concern over the use of the sensory room and kitchen area. These are now used regularly and well. In addition, the school makes good use of its hydrotherapy and swimming pool and the areas for outside play. As at the time of the last inspection, accommodation still restricts several aspects of the curriculum. In particular, there is inadequate space for the Nursery and several classes to be fully effective or for an appropriate Key Stage 4 curriculum to be satisfactorily developed. Learning in science is limited by the lack of a laboratory. There are also limitations on the teaching of aspects of design and technology and art. The major concern that limited accommodation presents is with regard to therapeutic programmes. At present support staff do not have access to appropriate and consistent spaces to carry out therapy programmes effectively. Pupils with complex disabilities and staff with high levels of skill require spaces that recognise and value the importance of this work.
72. Learning resources are satisfactory in general for most subjects and the pool represents a good resource for physical education. In history good use is made of both visits and local primary school resources. Religious education is too restricted by the limited number of religious artefacts available and design and technology by the lack of resources for resistant materials. The library areas and classroom book corners are much improved since the last inspection. Within the library stock there are some texts that reflect a wide range of cultures or positive images of disability. The school is actively seeking more of these resources. However, good quality books have been purchased and are accessible to all pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to improve the standards and provision further the governing body and the school should now draw up an action plan to address the following key issues, two of which are carried over from the previous inspection.
- a) Improve the curriculum by:
- i) improving the balance of time spent on subjects at Key Stages 1 to 4 in order to improve progress over time;
 - ii) meet legal requirements with regard to modern foreign languages and information and communication technology at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the resistant materials and textiles aspects of design and technology at Key Stages 1 to 4.
(*Para refs: 8, 10, 11, 15, 30, 32, 33, 36, 62, 88, 137, 143*)
- b) Improve provision for pupils who are aged fourteen to sixteen by:
- i) providing an extended range of appropriate curriculum opportunities that meet legal requirements;
 - ii) extending opportunities for vocational education;
 - iii) increasing the range of accreditation; and
 - iv) monitoring the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
(*Para refs: 5, 6, 24, 84, 90, 98, 101, 103, 162, 163*)

- c) Ensure that the needs of the pupils with the most complex needs are met consistently across all classes by improving training, closer monitoring of progress and achievement and observing the teaching and learning of these pupils.
(Para refs: 2, 7, 31, 84, 93, 97, 191, 105, 143)

- d) Improve accommodation by:
 - i) urgently implementing the plans to increase the space in the Nursery and classrooms generally;
 - ii) increasing the amount of specialist accommodation at Key Stages 3 and 4 for science, art and design and technology resistant materials; and
 - iii) ensuring that areas used for therapy support are consistent and suitable.
(Para refs: 19, 44, 71, 111, 122, 127)

- e) Meet statutory requirements with regard to a policy on drug education and in relation to all details required in the prospectus and in the governing body's annual report to parents.
(Para ref: 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	18	40	35	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	51
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	9.36	School data	0.59

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	7

Education support staff: YN – Y11

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	603

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	533,143
Total expenditure	432,013
Expenditure per pupil	9,673
Balance brought forward from previous year	66,367
Balance carried forward to next year	67,497

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	51
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	42	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	45	0	3	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	45	3	0	23
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	26	16	16	29
The teaching is good.	52	32	0	3	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	39	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	42	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	48	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	48	39	10	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	42	3	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	42	0	0	16
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	35	16	6	16

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

74. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage, that is under the age of five, at the school is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when provision was satisfactory overall. The Nursery class caters for children from the age of three on a part-time basis. There are currently six children on roll in the Nursery under the age of five. The attainment of children on entry into the Nursery is well below that expected for children of the same age. By the time children reach the age of five and enter the main school, their attainment varies, but is still below or well below average despite the good provision. This is because of the severe or complex learning difficulties of the children.
75. The development of children's language and literacy skills in the Nursery is good. Children are beginning to answer their own names. They listen to stories very well and use books for pleasure. They are encouraged to answer questions about their daily lives, and about stories they have heard. They join in and answer well. For example, while listening to the story of 'The Three Bears', children extended their learning about size and numbers as they counted the bears and indicated the 'big' bear and the 'little' bear. They use the appropriate words to describe what happened to the porridge in the bowls. They were encouraged to think carefully about the sequence of the story, and more able children were able to relate it in their own way.
76. The children benefit from the good use that is made of signs and symbols, and they use them well to join in with aspects of their favourite stories. They enjoy rhymes and songs, and many join in with the appropriate actions as they sing. They identify the activities of the day through the use of words and symbols, and make their needs known by signing or vocalising to an adult. Speaking and listening skills are developing well through interactive groups. High levels of support ensure that all children have an opportunity to express themselves. Children are also encouraged to develop their early literacy skills through a wide range of activities in which they draw pictures, paint and mould materials. Sometimes adults do not model early writing and reading strategies often enough to promote good improvement. The use of the sand tray to make letters is effective, however, and a few older children can recognise the initial letter of their name.
77. Children achieve well in mathematics and their skills are good given their prior attainment. They develop their understanding of number, shape, space and measures by exploring and investigating the good resources that adults provide for them. For example they play with sand and water, and adults work with them and focus their attention on 'filling' and 'emptying' containers. Good use of questions enables the children to find answers for themselves by trying things out. In daily group sessions they count the number of children present, look at numerals and practice making the number. They watch short videos about particular numbers. For example they watched the programme 'Number Time' during one lesson, and concentrated on making the number three. The teacher used the programme as a focus for helping the children to consolidate their understanding of how to write the number, and what '3' actually means. Children are beginning to use good mathematical language. They describe things as 'round' or 'big' and show recognition of a wide range of objects.

78. The development of children's creative skills is good. They learn well how to use different materials such as playdough, paint, different papers, and glue to make pictures. More able children can draw recognisable people, with significant detail. Other children make marks on paper with crayons and paint. They use brushes or their hands to explore textures. They create patterns in paint by using different techniques such as pulling string through the paint, or folding the paper to make 'butterfly pictures'. They enjoy using three-dimensional media to build structures. Opportunities are created to enable children to explore and listen to music. They sing songs and rhymes every day, and effectively use simple instruments to tap out sounds and rhythms.
79. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is also developing well. They benefit from having two computer systems in the Nursery. More able children are already using the mouse effectively. They use it to make a choice on the screen, and show pleasure in the results. They talk about the effect that they are having. Other pupils have support so that they can also develop good understanding of computers. During their time in the Nursery children are given many opportunities to visit the local environment. For example, during the week of the inspection they went on a train ride. They used this experience to develop well their understanding of trains, and places that are different to the school environment. They listened to stories about trains, sang songs and painted engines. They built good trains out of junk and also used construction toys. They made good progress in knowledge and understanding as they shared their experience in whole-class discussion time.
80. Children's personal and social development is good. They behave well and are aware of the routines of the classroom and show good respect for resources and adults. Children arrive in the morning with eagerness and they settle quickly. They choose a book to look at while they wait for the daily routine to begin. They play together well. For example, when sharing resources at the sand and water tray with little disruption. They take turns and wait to use the computer and are beginning to take some responsibility and learn to be independent in their own personal life, for example, a few take themselves to the toilet and pour drinks carefully from a jug. They are polite and keen to learn and enjoy school life.
81. Children's physical development is good. They are given many opportunities to develop their skills. For example, they play on large-wheeled toys such as cars and bicycles. Some use the pedals accurately, others propel themselves with their feet. They climb safely on the climbing frame, and push each other in trucks. Most play generally happily alongside each other, but relate primarily to adults as they use the toys. The outdoor play area is currently restricted due to a recent fire, and this has a negative impact on children's ability to choose the time when they need to play outside.
82. The quality of teaching in the Nursery is good. Lessons are well planned and reflect the Foundation Stage of learning for pupils under the age of five. Good provision is made to ensure that children's special needs are catered for, and clear assessment procedures enable staff to monitor the progress that the children make. Because of the good provision children make good gains in learning during lessons, and good progress over time. Activities are based on a shared understanding of good early years practice and high expectations of what children can achieve. Occasionally too little attention is paid to modelling activities such as early writing and reading skills, however modelling of other activities by adults promotes eagerness among children to try new skills. The high quality of relationships and detailed knowledge of each child allows careful and skilled support to each individual.

83. The accommodation in the Nursery is too small and is unsatisfactory overall. There is no room for a book area, and no wet play area. The sand and water trays are currently in the toilet area. This is totally unsatisfactory. Outdoor play-space is also restricted. The unsatisfactory accommodation restricts progress in some areas of learning, particularly physical development and investigative activities. Despite this, provision is still good overall. This is because the best use is made of the accommodation available, which is presented well. It is also because of the good quality of teaching and the good range of activities that the Nursery provides.

ENGLISH

84. The standards achieved by pupils in English is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stages 2 and 3 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. This is an overall improvement in standards since the last inspection and one that is supported by parents' comments. However, at all key stages there are individual pupils with complex needs whose progress in communication is not satisfactory. All pupils have language and communication targets and detailed programmes set up by the speech and language therapist ensure some progress in communication and articulation for all pupils. Within lessons progress is good. It is only satisfactory over the eleven years of schooling and this suggests a need for closer links, particularly between Key Stages 3 and 4.
85. Most pupils start Year 1 with limited communication skills and a very restricted spoken vocabulary. By the end of the key stage they are better able to listen to stories and take turns in responding. All enjoy listening to stories. More able pupils know many sounds and recognise some words. They can read simple familiar books at an appropriate early level, recognise a small range of letter sounds and can match them visually. Their small sight vocabulary includes common words such as 'is', 'what' and 'the' together with their own and family names. Pupils with complex disabilities join in group story sessions and respond with gesture or sign. They need support in basic book skills such as page turning, but express interest and enjoyment in favourite stories. A few pupils can write their name independently and some short familiar words, with letters that are evenly formed and correctly oriented. The majority write over or copy words written by their teacher or trace letter shapes in sand.
86. By the age of eleven most pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately in a variety of situations. A few have continuing difficulties with listening and attention skills and their communication continues to rely upon sign and gesture. More able pupils continue to build on their phonic skills and develop a genuine enthusiasm for stories and poetry. They take notice of book titles and pictures and are able to retell a story from a picture sequence. Their small reading vocabulary develops well as does their ability to discuss and comment on stories they have read. Pupils with complex disabilities also progress in their enjoyment and understanding of books. This familiarity is very effectively built into the physical co-ordination and language therapy programmes. These pupils develop better eye-contact and communication through the use of gestures and a few build up a small sign vocabulary to express their opinions and wishes. They also gain basic skills in single switch systems that give them access to computer programs. More able pupils sustain a half page of writing, usually in well formed print, and spell accurately a small number of common words. A few develop dictionary skills and become independent and more confident in writing both stories and news. Early punctuation develops well as does the appropriate use of lower and upper case letters.

87. By the age of fourteen most pupils are confident in public and group presentation settings, such as assemblies and reporting back to the class. They listen to each other with interest and work well together in a group. Those with more complex disabilities focus well on adults in one-to-one situations and often in group activities. Higher attaining pupils read with expression and interest from a range of fiction. They show interest in both poetry and non-fiction materials and clearly read at home as well as at school. They can predict story endings sensibly and read confidently. Thus, a pupil reading 'the Case of the Smiling Shark' reads the story with a range of voices, indicates the links between text and pictures and confidently outlines how the story will end. Library skills are developing, but are not as far advanced as they might be. Less able pupils enjoy stories read to them and are developing consistent skills in shape and picture matching. They know how to use books and respond to questions with a basic vocabulary of sign and gesture. Some are writing a small number of letter shapes and work well on a range of pencil and paper activities. More able pupils write a page or more of stories and news. Good sentence structures are developing, as is punctuation. They write for a range of purposes using well formed print and occasionally begin to develop joined writing. They are more aware of the audience they write for than younger pupils, and some write their own extended stories. One such story, 'Red Riding Hood', has been built up over a period of weeks. It shows a real ability to present work well, draft and re-draft and sustain a story line over a long period.
88. Within Key Stage 4, pupils give answers clearly and politely and follow instructions without constant repetition. A few have complex disabilities and rely much more on the one-to-one support of staff. However, they indicate a high motivation to communicate and join in group sessions with understanding and interest. Their language skills develop in the form of increased eye-hand co-ordination and clearer articulation developing from the speech and language therapy programmes. A few higher attaining pupils read books at their appropriate level, accurately and fluently, but do not always have the opportunity to share their reading or move on with their reading as quickly as possible. A few show a good understanding of the plot and characters of books, but do not experience the full range of reading including plays and day-to-day information literature. Their handwriting is often poorly formed and they sustain only short pieces of creative writing. They do not have adequate time for word processing and, overall, lack sufficient opportunities to develop their ideas, build up a range of presentation skills and link their work to the outside world.
89. Pupils' attitudes to language work throughout the school are very positive. They enjoy group activities such as listening and responding to stories. In most lessons, they are keen to answer questions. They listen to each other and are proud of their work. Pupils at all ages develop an enthusiasm for books and enjoy sharing them with adults. They value each other's views and are keen for peers who have complex disabilities to participate in group activities as much as possible. Some pupils experience considerable difficulties with concentration and following simple instructions. During the inspection it was clear that sensitive support programmes allow these pupils to participate as much as possible and they usually make good progress in the form of longer attention spans and less disruptive behaviour. The development of communication skill is very evident in social settings. At one lunchtime pupils talk with their teacher and support assistant. They demonstrate a good understanding of taking turns, of how to respond to instructions and how to ask questions when unsure. They clearly enjoy communicating and develop well socially as a result.
90. Teaching is seldom less than satisfactory, usually good and often very good. Only one English lesson during the inspection was unsatisfactory and this is partly linked with uncertainty of purpose in the school's Key Stage 4 provision, where there is some confusion between teaching basic skills and the necessary preparation for adult

life. Lesson planning in general and schemes of work are better now than at the last inspection.

91. The best teaching shows excellent teamwork between teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants. In a very good Key Stage 2 lesson, a pupil with autistic difficulties is well supported by an assistant while the teacher works with the full group. It becomes clear that this pupil is ready to work and he has been timetabled to work with the teacher. With no fuss the teacher hands the group over to the assistant and moves off to work with the pupil for over fifteen minutes. This level of professional collaboration is very good indeed and makes maximum use of teaching time and skills. All staff use language, especially questions, well to build on what pupils say and to extend their ability to communicate ideas and answer questions.
92. Teachers and support staff are especially good at demonstrating to pupils how good communication takes place. They set very good role models, especially at the start and end of the day and during social activities such as lunch. There is also good use of a range of channels of communication to involve all pupils. In a very good lesson with Year 3 pupils, the teacher and assistants sign the alphabet with the whole class. More able pupils are asked questions to reinforce their sound and letter knowledge, while those with complex disabilities are given signed cues for words and letter sounds. During the group work these pupils play a singing game that emphasises the letter sound of the day, while more able pupils work on a computer programme using a talking book that also reinforces the 't' sound. Most teachers keep detailed, useful records of pupils' progress to ensure that they are learning the right things and their needs are being met. Some are developing on-the-spot techniques for recording. There is also careful recording by classroom assistants who often implement language therapy programmes.
93. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, objectives are unclear and work is often used to occupy rather than extend pupils' assessment and recording is under-used and this makes matching work to individual pupils difficult. In some instances pupils with the most complex disabilities do not have enough access to teacher time.
94. Subject teaching usually places a very positive emphasis on language and communication skills. In a very good Key Stage 2 food technology lesson, the pupils have the concepts of sizes and 'bigger' and 'biggest' emphasised; they practise initial letter sounds on the science worksheet and a rich language experience is provided throughout the lesson. Similarly in a very good science lesson the teacher ensures that the scientific vocabulary is always used for hearing and sight. Pictures, song and mime are used to reinforce concepts such as 'vibration', 'vision' and 'sound waves'. It is an excellent example of the use of language skills across the curriculum.
95. The co-ordinator gives a very clear educational direction and manages the subject very well. The last inspection highlighted a weakness in subject monitoring. Monitoring in English is now very good indeed. The co-ordinator has established the literacy hour format well and backed this up with good resources, especially for reading and listening skills. She is setting a good example in the use of sign and symbol and is already assisting staff in exchanging good teaching ideas. Teachers who teach English have been monitored and action is about to be taken on the outcomes. Specifically, these relate to the needs of pupils with complex disabilities and the need to develop the signing curriculum throughout the school. The fact that the monitoring has identified similar issues to the current inspection is an indication that English now has a sound framework for identifying areas for development which then link to new targets for the school's development plan.
96. There has been significant improvement in the school library since the last inspection. Reading materials, pupils' readers, big books and audio tapes are of a good quality

and stimulating. Although the library areas are not well sited for reference and study purposes, they add to the enjoyment that pupils derive from books. There are still not enough books that provide positive images from other cultures or of disability, the school is actively looking to increase these. More able pupils do not have enough structured support in the development of library skills, particularly in the upper part of the school. Classroom materials and resources are varied and well used by all teachers.

MATHEMATICS

97. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they make in mathematics has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils still generally make satisfactory progress at Key Stages 1 to 3 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Some pupils with more complex needs make unsatisfactory progress in comparison to their more able peers.
98. Pupils aged five to seven make satisfactory progress in mathematics over time, and their learning in numeracy lessons is also satisfactory overall. Pupils are beginning to recognise numbers and to count up to 30. They recognise several colours and shapes. More able pupils successfully undertake simple calculation of numbers well to ten, and write numerals to ten accurately. They consolidate their understanding of numbers through a range of practical activities such as sand and water play in which they fill and empty containers. They are encouraged to think about which container takes more, and which takes less. Other pupils in Key Stage 2 join in with all the counting activities on a daily basis, and show enjoyment in practical mathematics lessons. They explore sand and water and learn to interact with objects. Pupils with complex needs benefit from the effective modelling and demonstrating of tasks by adults. For example, in one lesson the teacher modelled how to put bricks into a container so that the pupil could copy this. However, there are times when the tasks are too difficult for this group of pupils and they find it difficult to succeed. All pupils in Key Stage 1 say or sing number rhymes regularly to consolidate their understanding. They join in with actions, and sometimes use signs or symbols to help communicate answers to questions. They use large clock faces to help them learn about time, and have a broad awareness of shape and space.
99. Pupils aged seven to eleven also make satisfactory progress in mathematics. They take part in daily numeracy lessons and develop their skills through use of the number line. They are developing satisfactory numeracy skills overall. For example, in one lesson in Year 3 the teacher checked that pupils understood what '6' was as she encouraged them to clap each number in turn. Pupils play a range of simple games and sing songs to consolidate their numeracy skills. More able pupils at the beginning of the key stage can choose a number between nine and 16, and can do simple calculations. They count independently and fluently to 30. Other pupils interact actively during mathematics lessons and learn to match objects and numbers. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they continue to develop their numeracy skills through interactive games and activities. By the end of the key stage more able pupils can count to 100, and recognise many numerals. Many are beginning to write numbers accurately and do simple addition and subtraction sums. Other pupils count to ten, copy their numbers and recognise numbers to five. Pupils with more complex needs join in with the rhythm of counting and develop their awareness of objects through different experiences and exploration. However, they do not always have sufficient time to respond to questions or improve their learning. This is particularly evident during the mental oral starter sessions. For example, during one lesson a pupil with profound learning difficulties was given opportunities to handle two- and three-dimensional shapes as other pupils in the group named them. Although the experience was valuable, too little time was allocated to enable exploration, or choosing, and learning was not sufficiently reinforced.

100. Pupils aged eleven to fourteen begin to develop their independence in learning. For example they use real money to go shopping, and to solve simple problems. They continue to make satisfactory progress overall. More able pupils add mentally, amounts such as 20p and 18p. They undertake simple addition and subtraction sums and achieve mostly accurate results. Other pupils practise their money skills by handling and recognising coins and playing shopping games. Pupils with complex needs go shopping with adults, and take part in real shopping experiences. However they have too few opportunities to develop early mathematical concepts through exploration and investigation. During their time in Key Stage 3 all pupils have opportunities to collect data about the things that interest them, and to undertake simple measurement tasks. Many pupils understand the concept of 'more' and 'less' and relate it to the correct mathematical symbol. They benefit from a broad range of numeracy experiences that improves their understanding.
101. Pupils aged fourteen to sixteen undertake individual mathematical activities linked to ability. A minority continue to make satisfactory progress as they work at their own level. For example, in one lesson a pupil was observed using a bus timetable to find out which bus took the shortest time to complete a journey. He worked independently to find answers to a range of questions. However, many pupils in the key stage make unsatisfactory progress. This is particularly true of less able pupils and those with complex needs. For these pupils the content of lessons is unclear, and their tasks do not challenge them to make gains in learning. For example one pupil was observed completing a 100 square. She took a whole lesson to do this task, which was essentially too easy for her, and no challenge was offered. Also four pupils with profound learning difficulties were observed using a sound beam (a device that responds to movement). The aim of this device is to help pupils understand the link between cause and effect. For example when they move a part of their body, the device makes a rewarding sound that encourages them to move again. The rewards of each pupil were heard by all, thus without moving all of the pupils received the rewarding sound. This resulted in confusing the pupils and in unsatisfactory learning overall.
102. Pupils generally respond appropriately to mathematics lessons. They behave well and listen to adults with interest. A few are beginning to take some limited responsibility for organising their own resources, such as collecting their books and pencils. A few pupils find listening and concentrating in the lessons more difficult. This is usually when there are too few resources or when activities are not linked closely enough to the abilities of each pupil.
103. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory in almost all lessons. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection. There are examples of good teaching in Key Stage 2, and some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4. Overall teaching during the inspection was satisfactory in six out of ten lessons. It was good or very good in two lessons and unsatisfactory in two lessons. Teachers generally plan well with good links to the National Numeracy Strategy. A broad and balanced range of activities is used in lessons, and the curriculum now meets requirements. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when no scheme of work was in place.
104. Assessment is now good, with whole-school awareness of each pupil's level of attainment. Lessons are generally lively, and resources are well used to promote interest and attention. In the best lessons good strategies are used to keep pupils on task. Teachers enable their pupils to understand what they have to do by demonstrating and modelling the activity. For example, in one lesson in Key Stage 1 the teacher modelled how to fill containers with sand so that the pupils would know that each container needed to be filled to the top. This enabled them to make good progress in the task, and they completed it well. Targets are set for all, however

teachers do not always plan well enough for the less able pupils and those with complex needs. The content of some lessons is too difficult for these pupils to follow and they do not have enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills through exploration and investigation. This has not improved significantly since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

105. Standards achieved and the progress that pupils make in science is good at Key Stages 2 and 3 and satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 4. The majority of pupils make sound progress across all four areas of science. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory. Standards of achievement and progress in Key Stages 2 and 3 are good, due to very good teaching and careful attention to the needs of every pupil. The progress that pupils make over time is not as good as the short-term progress in lessons, because the programme of work is fairly new. Pupils with complex needs do not always have the opportunities to make appropriate progress, especially in Key Stages 1 and 4. In lessons during the inspection they received less of the teachers' time and attention, and activities did not sufficiently challenge them.
106. By the time that they are aged seven, higher attaining pupils can predict whether or not a beam of light will pass through an object. They then test this for themselves to see if they are right. They play with shadows and are beginning to understand that this is because they are blocking the light. By the age of eleven, pupils working on similar experiments can use the proper terminology – opaque and transparent. They can talk about some properties of magnets, and remember that a magnet can attract or repel another one depending which way round it is. Pupils with complex needs explore with their hands and feet, responding to changes with interest.
107. By the time that they are fourteen pupils observe very closely and can bring their knowledge and understanding to bear on new situations. When studying 'changes' in a Key Stage 3 lesson, they compared uncooked and cooked spaghetti and looked at the molten wax on a candle. Higher attainers looked for some time at the flame to decide whether or not it was smoking and then one pupil said 'No it's a heat haze', they learnt that the air was moving. All the higher attainers were able to draw and fairly accurately label a diagram of their candle observations. They have learned about the movement of the sun and the moon and can describe how the light of the sun makes the moon shine. Pupils with complex needs were able to discriminate between wet and dry substances when asked, and showed great interest in the changes in the spaghetti, clearly exploring the difference in texture.
108. By the time that they leave school, pupils are beginning to classify animals and can list the features of living things. They draw neat diagrams to show the parts of a flower and learn how they grow and what the component parts do. They experiment with air resistance by making parachutes, learning that by using parachutes they can slow down the rate of fall. Pupils with complex needs show that they are used to touching and smelling things, and those that are able, look with interest at new objects that they are given.
109. Teaching and learning are good. They are consistently satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 4 and very good in Key Stages 2 and 3. In the best lessons there is a variety of appropriate activities that keep pupils motivated, using the topic vocabulary and thinking about the concepts that they are learning for the full session. Planning and learning objectives are shared with, and well used by, support assistants, so adults work as an effective team promoting high standards. They share enthusiasm for learning and have fun with the pupils, for example when feeling cooked spaghetti or wet cornflour. This encourages pupils to work hard and enjoy learning too. Activities

are planned for the whole class, which all relate to the topic that they are studying, teachers' time is fairly shared between the pupils whatever their ability, and every pupil makes an important and valued contribution to the learning of others during feedback sessions. Pupils learn to listen to and respect each other. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed when pupils complete worksheets independently, and pupils learn to create and interpret diagrams and charts.

110. The scheme of work for science is new and work has still to be done to ensure that teachers are building on what has been studied before. Most pupils, however, have an interesting, broad and balanced programme. The oldest pupils, however, sometimes repeat things that they have done earlier in the school, and the challenge in lessons does not sufficiently reflect the standards that they have achieved previously. Records of achievement in science are a useful way of recording achievement and the annual review report gives parents a National Curriculum level, but these procedures are not used systematically and accurately by all teachers yet. The school's use of the local authority's record system and the informed use of the recently introduced 'p' levels is beginning to give a good picture of pupil progress over time.
111. The lack of specialist accommodation significantly limits the range of activities that can be undertaken, but most teachers work hard to overcome this. The Internet and CD-ROMs help pupils find information for themselves.
112. Co-ordination of science is good. This too is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has established clear direction for the subject and has made good links with the local authority to ensure support for developments. Most teachers clearly enjoy science lessons, and there is a shared commitment to raise standards.

ART

113. Standards achieved are satisfactory and pupils make sound progress in art overall at all key stages. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when art was unsatisfactory and not taught sufficiently as a discrete subject. The pupils now have access to the full range of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
114. Progress over time is satisfactory in all key stages, all pupils have portfolios and older pupils also have sketchbooks. Pupils' work is celebrated through displays and art exhibitions such as the work displayed at 'Portraits 2000' at Blenheim Palace. The pupils also benefit from visits by artists and by looking at the work of different artists.
115. Pupils enjoy art and have positive attitudes in lessons. Their behaviour is good and lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to experiment and create using a satisfactory range of media, although evidence of the use of information in portfolios and three-dimensional work is too patchy and limited overall.
116. The progress made by pupils with complex difficulties is satisfactory overall although occasionally the time spent actually on art activities in lessons is too brief. Some pupils can only concentrate in short bursts of time and need a break. However, they do not always return to art activities once the initial task is experienced.
117. Progress made by pupils who are talented at art is good. They experiment with a satisfactory range of different media and build good skills in drawing and painting from direct observation and from their imagination.
118. Progress in lessons is good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. No lesson was observed at Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching and learning is good at all key stages observed.

Five to seven-year-old pupils all help to paint a cotton shirt linked to their work in religious education. They enjoy the new experience of painting on material and are able to choose which colours to use, the more able independently and those with complex needs with a high level of staff support. The teacher and LSAs skilfully organise the lesson so that the time is used well and that all pupils contribute. High amounts of praise and encouragement are used to build pupils' confidence.

119. From the ages of seven to eleven pupils experiment with a range of different materials whilst making a collage. They are helped to choose what and where to stick the different textures such as feathers, foil, cones and foam. The more able can do this independently, those with more complex needs complete the task with a lot of staff support and are able to tolerate help to feel the different textures.
120. By the age of eleven more able pupils can choose what they want to do next from a choice of three or four techniques related to their project on shape in mathematics. They can use the airbrush with minimal supervision, arrange shapes on the page and are proud of their achievements. Those with more complex needs can tolerate support from staff helping them to stick shapes and to use a roller to print over templates. The staff work as a team and create a busy working atmosphere. There is a high level of verbal interaction between staff and pupils. This has a good effect as it assists with social skill development and enables pupils to build the new vocabulary to be able to comment on their work. Through skilled questioning and use of praise the staff enable the pupils to decide what they want to do next or where they want to place the next shape. This verbal encouragement and close direct help results in more work being completed and good levels of learning.
121. Eleven to fourteen-year-old pupils are encouraged to draw themselves using a computer. They help each other by demonstrating how to click and choose a colour and use the mouse to draw the shapes, changing colours. Staff assist a pupil to achieve by showing him a picture of himself to use as a model. Time is used well and the results are celebrated as part of the group summary at the end of the lesson. Staff encourage the pupils to be independent and to do as much for themselves as possible, whilst helping each other by demonstrating the art program on the computer.
122. The co-ordinator of art has recently changed. The new co-ordinator is clear about the role and what needs to be done. Monitoring of plans and outcomes has begun. There is a need, and plans are in place, to improve the central storage of specialist art resources to make them more efficient. There are also plans to further develop the scheme of work. Art is taught in classrooms. Accommodation is very limited as there is no specialist room for secondary-aged pupils, this restricts aspects of the subject, especially three-dimensional work. Art is still linked too closely with design and technology, an issue that was identified at the last inspection. There is still some confusion between the two. This results in too little attention given to aspects of design and technology. Overall art is much improved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Standards achieved and progress made in food technology is excellent at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Progress in the use of resistant materials is unsatisfactory at all key stages. No lessons using resistant materials were observed and what little photographic evidence was available showed unsatisfactory levels of achievement, therefore the subject does not meet legal requirements. By the age of seven pupils understand that vegetables grow in different ways and when used to create tasty meals such as vegetable pie change in texture. More able pupils name the herbs they pick from the herb garden whilst less able pupils, with support, mix pastry for the piecrust.
124. By the age of eleven pupils are more skilled in the independent use of kitchen tools such as knives, cheese graters and potato mashers and the more able use them correctly and dextrously. Less able pupils feel the texture and recognise the difference between wet and dry potato peelings. All eagerly taste and give their opinions about their cooking, cheesy potato, either verbally or by signing.
125. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils use their skills well to prepare midday meals for the class. By the age of 14 pupils identify what tasks are involved in the preparation of the meal, such as grating cheese, washing lettuce or cooking pasta. More able pupils know what utensils are needed, prepare salad vegetables appropriately and understand that potatoes, burgers and pasta are all cooked in different ways. Less able pupils, with support, help prepare salad leaves. By the age of 16 pupils, in pairs and with relevant levels of support, follow recipes (written using symbols or words) and independently prepare class meals.
126. The quality of teaching and learning in food technology is excellent at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory over time at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Evidence over time shows that whilst younger pupils enjoy and successfully make 'junk' models there is virtually no teaching using resistant materials, i.e. wood, plastic or metal, which is an unsatisfactory situation. There has been satisfactory improvement in food technology since the last inspection but no improvement in the teaching of resistant materials, therefore improvement overall in design and technology since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is excellent the content of the lesson is very well planned, a wide range of activities are offered, timing is brisk and support staff superbly assist pupils in tasks which ensure success and participation by all whatever their ability. Where lessons are less successful practical tasks do not involve all pupils, some spend considerable time doing little or nothing and are not given the correct level of support.
127. Food technology resources are good, the specialist room is the right size for full classes of younger pupils and groups of older ones. The complete lack of facilities to teach resistant materials has an immediate and detrimental effect on pupils' learning in this area. Design and technology is still too closely linked to art, with art being the winner. This means that the subject is not taught sufficiently and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn important aspects of design and technology. However the school is aware of this and has begun to rectify the problem.

GEOGRAPHY

128. There is too little evidence to judge standards or progress over time in geography. The planned geography curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It is taught in topics across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, alternating with history and represents satisfactory progress since the last inspection. However the evidence of taught content is too limited. It is not sufficient to judge or ensure satisfactory progress over time. Evidence of photographs of past work show that pupils enjoy geography and do have some understanding of the subject.

129. Scrutiny of work shows that by the age of seven more able pupils find their way to their own house from the end of the road and less able pupils recognise their own house. By the age of eleven more able pupils guide an adult around the school and its immediate neighbourhood. By the age of 14 pupils create a class map of Bicester. In the only geography lesson observed they could identify various crops grown in Kenya. More able pupils name the fruits and deduce that they did not grow in England because the weather is not hot enough. Less able pupils register their likes and dislikes as they taste avocado and pineapple. By the age of 16 pupils identify countries in Europe, the more able accurately locating France every time. Less able pupils are aware of familiar routes travelled regularly.
130. Insufficient lessons were observed and the lack of evidence make it impossible to form a judgement about teaching in geography. The scrutiny of work and study of the co-ordinator's file shows that there has been an improvement in geography since the previous inspection. The school is aware that more evidence of its work in geography is needed and has plans to ensure that better records are kept. Geography will have a higher profile in the future. The co-ordinator has insufficient time allocated to enable her to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, this has a detrimental effect upon progress made by pupils.

HISTORY

131. Standards achieved and the progress made in history is satisfactory. During the week of the inspection only one lesson of history was seen. However, from the scrutiny of work and from planning it is evident that sufficient history is taught across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 to enable pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in knowledge, skills and understanding. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
132. Pupils aged five to seven learn about history through focusing on their own lives. They collect photographs of themselves as babies and look at changes over time. They find out about the past from stories and from visits to places of historical interest. For example, they looked at changes in trains as they went for a ride on a steam train. They visited a canal to find out about transport in the past. They use real objects as well as pictures, books and photographs to develop their knowledge. As a result they begin to gain an understanding of time.
133. Pupils aged seven to eleven begin to learn about different societies from the past. They study the lives and times of the ancient Egyptians, and the Romans. They learn about life in those times by taking part in activities such as a visit to the Egyptian museum, and to a Roman villa. They learn about the differences between life then and now. For example photographic evidence shows how pupils dressed up as Egyptian 'mummies', and took part in a Roman feast. They undertake a mini-topic on archaeology and some good extended writing explains some of the interesting activities that took place. For example they searched for relics in sand and used simple tools to dig and explore. More able pupils develop their understanding well through drawings and writing. Some good drawings of dinosaurs are seen on display. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 pupils learn about Britain since the 1930's. They enjoy watching videos of the period, and explore questions such as why soldiers wore uniforms, why people needed shelters and what life during the war must have been like. This enables pupils to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the different periods in history that they study.
134. Pupils eleven to fourteen undertake local studies of the town in which they live. They learn about different buildings and aspects of the town's evolution. They reflect on why certain developments took place. They use photographs and books as well as artefacts to gather information, and increase their knowledge of how the various

aspects in their locality have developed, building on prior topics in history.

135. The quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory, and leads to satisfactory progress overall. Teacher's planning indicates that appropriate activities take place for the majority of the pupils. However, there is evidence that less able pupils and those with complex needs are not offered sufficient access to content that is different and accessible. This means that they make less progress due to the very wide ability range in classes. Too little that is different is planned to meet their very specific needs.
136. The history curriculum now meets legal requirements, which is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Resources have improved and are effectively supplemented by good links with a local school that lends artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. Standards achieved and progress made in information and communication technology is satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 as legal requirements are not being met. This means that progress is satisfactory for primary pupils but whilst older pupils have a broad range of appropriate experiences, teaching is not sufficiently frequent or focused to build the skills of which pupils are capable, or to ensure that they have their full entitlement to the subject. Progress for pupils with the most complex needs is good, due to careful attention to individual needs and the imaginative development of switch activities for communication and access.
138. There was not enough direct teaching of information and communication technology seen during the inspection to make secure judgements on teaching and learning although pupils were seen using computers and other equipment in a number of lessons. Records and plans were scrutinised and work discussed with teachers and pupils.
139. By the end of the primary phase a number of pupils have good skills in controlling the mouse and have their favourite programs. Pupils are proficient with programs that support work in numeracy and literacy, and use simple art programs to good effect. They use the Internet, with some help – one pupil reminds a teacher to add '.org.uk' on the end of a website address. Pupils use symbol software well to help develop keyboard and literacy skills, with one pupil with complex needs writing a story with a support assistant to share with the rest of the class. One pupil is a gifted artist and produces very high standards of artwork on the computer. She has also been supported to create stories on the computer by photographing her plasticine models and adding speech bubbles and text. This demonstrates very good development of both her artistic and her information and communication technology skills. Switch users join in with others, for example by answering the register with pre-recorded messages.
140. By the time that they leave school the highest attainers are familiar with a Windows environment and use the basic facilities of a word processor reasonably independently. They enjoy art programs, editing and improving their pictures as they work. Pupils make sound use of the Internet and CD-ROMs to get pictures and information for work in history and geography. They have experienced some control technology. They use digital cameras and tape recorders, and become aware of technology in the environment. However, the oldest and highest attaining pupils still need encouragement and help to complete many of these activities successfully. Pupils with complex needs understand that they create effects by their own efforts, such as when they use the Soundbeam to make interesting sounds by their own movements. They use switches to operate electrical machinery, for example when

making a cake for a class outing, and to deliver simple messages. One pupil is successfully learning to answer 'yes' and 'no' on a simple scanning programme and another chooses between two favourite activities with two switches.

141. Pupils clearly enjoy using computers and behave responsibly with expensive equipment. Many pupils who have difficulty behaving in other situations, focus happily for long periods when using computer technology and occupy themselves constructively. For younger pupils it often gives a very good focus for discussion and the development of communication, when they are eager to share what they have done with other people, and they learn to share and take their turn when working on a favourite program with a friend.
142. Co-ordination of information and communication technology is good. There is great enthusiasm for the subject and a clear and accurate view of what represents good provision. There is a shared commitment to improvement, and teachers are making good use of digital photography, symbol software and word processors for their own work and for developing resources. Appropriate documentation is in place and schemes have been identified, but other important school priorities have prevented these being fully implemented. A good resource base is being developed with attention being given to ensuring that there are different and age-appropriate materials at all key stages. The school has good capacity for developing a full and appropriate programme for every pupil.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

143. At the last inspection the school was not meeting legal requirements and this was unsatisfactory. This is still the case as some pupils do not have enough time spent on it. With the exception of the more able, standards achieved by pupils and their progress, is unsatisfactory.
144. The teaching of French and German is now established on a termly modular basis (every other term) for pupils aged eleven to sixteen years who are more able, although the time allocated is still too low for these pupils to make regular progress. However, whilst pupils with complex needs occasionally experience modern foreign languages they do not receive the same or equal opportunities as their peers. This means that the school still does not meet statutory requirements in relation to modern foreign languages.
145. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and no written work was available. The more able pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are taught together. In the lesson they made good progress. They built their vocabulary and speed at counting to ten and answered very simple questions about what their home was like.
146. Teaching and learning was good in the only lesson seen. The teacher is a linguist, and enthusiastic specialist and has very good subject knowledge. The methods used were highly relevant, mainly oral and practical. Pupils enjoyed the games and tried hard to contribute, as a result they learnt well. They built their confidence and social skills whilst repeating words and phrases. Good levels of reinforcement by the teacher assisted their learning and good levels of praise meant they were willing to work really hard. Pupils' behaviour was very good and their attitudes to their work very positive.
147. The curriculum is appropriate and based on published schemes, it is relevant for the most able pupils. The pupils with complex needs do receive some modern foreign language experiences through more sensory approaches like tasting food from

France and Germany, or listening to music. However, this does not happen regularly enough.

148. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish the subject for the most able pupils. She is aware of what needs to be done, the policy needs improving and schemes of work for the less able developed. The school has a good capacity to improve modern foreign languages. Resources remain adequate, many good quality resources are tailor-made for the pupils by the co-ordinator.

MUSIC

149. Standards achieved are good in music and pupils make good progress. For younger pupils progress is best in singing and responding to the demands and routines of music lessons. For older pupils progress is good in reading, writing and performing their own compositions. Pupils with complex needs make good progress in communication, responding in different ways to rhythm and melody and, for some, in participating as part of a group. A sound, broad scheme of work, enthusiasm and high expectations of pupils, whatever their abilities and needs, makes an important contribution to this progress.
150. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory, the programme of work was too narrow and teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low.
151. By the age of seven the highest attainers sing very tunefully and remember the words and music of a new song from the previous week. They are able to lead with a line of the song, waiting for the other group to respond, showing remarkable skill and confidence. They recognise high and low notes, and play these on a xylophone when asked. All the younger pupils respond to beats and moods of music showing they notice a difference. They hold percussion instruments correctly, and pupils with complex needs too, show anticipation and pleasure when they know it is their turn to beat the drum or play the xylophone.
152. By the age of eleven pupils have developed clear preferences for music. All have their favourite instruments and choose, sometimes by eye pointing, which ones they want to play. Higher attainers recognise and name different instruments, such as a flute and a guitar, when they hear tunes on a CD. They copy rhythms and beat out the syllables of their names with some support.
153. By the age of fourteen, some pupils play simple tunes on the recorder. For example, higher attaining pupils compose and read a simple six beat phrase paying attention well to rests or accents. One pupil led the whole-school assembly in a rap. This had a very positive impact on the whole assembly as pupils and staff readily echoed the response. As a result attention and even interest levels were raised significantly. This was improved even further by another pupil with no speech, saying the last line by pressing the recorded rap line on his communication aid attached to his wheelchair. Pupils with complex needs enjoy the sessions and behave very well, even when they often find it difficult to conform at other times. They respond to familiar music with interest, recognising new and different sounds and show delight when they lead the class in rhythm work.
154. Teaching and learning in music are good. They are best in Key Stages 1 and 3 where teaching is underpinned by very good musical knowledge and singing skills. In the best lessons all the pupils work together with the adults to perform, generating a sense of wholeness and a feeling of being at one with themselves and each other, recognising each person's contribution. Teachers work successfully to support pupils to succeed in complex tasks, showing high expectations and giving pupils a pride in

their achievement. The music lesson for the younger pupils very skilfully built singing, listening and playing skills through a series of carefully linked activities around a new rainbow and song. There was good use of analogy and gesture – high in the sky, low on the ground, up and over the rainbow and down – which the pupils quickly related to. Features of some lessons were less satisfactory when the commercial scheme use by the school was followed too closely without sufficient consideration to giving pupils good quality musical experiences or developing skills.

155. The school has adopted a commercial scheme of work that ensures appropriate coverage of the curriculum and helps non-specialist teachers to take music lessons. It also gives good opportunities for pupils to hear the music of people from other cultures. A co-ordinator, new to the school, has been in post for just a few weeks. She has taken on the previous co-ordinator's development plan, and has already identified further useful areas for development. This includes music for each day of the week on arrival in class, to help all the pupils recognise what day it is and enhance the welcome. She also has plans for a music club at lunch-time.
156. Singing is heard throughout the school. For younger children it helps learning in many areas, such as greetings, counting rhymes and the alphabet song, and is often used to help children conform and communicate. In assemblies it encourages a sense of community and participation, and gives some pupils the opportunity to perform and succeed in a public arena. Music makes a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. Standards achieved are now satisfactory in physical education. Whilst only a limited range of activities were observed during the inspection photographs and other evidence shows that satisfactory progress is made by all pupils over time and across the spectrum of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory.
158. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make real progress in dance, listening and moving rhythmically in time to swaying, sleepy and happy music. More able pupils immediately recognise and move to the different sounds made by percussion instruments. Less able pupils show their response to the differing 'feel' of the rhythms when carried around by support staff who move to the music and in the spontaneous jigging in time to the music by a very withdrawn pupil.
159. By the age of eleven more able pupils climb onto the box, jump off neatly and land symmetrically, confidently climb up a sloping bench and walk along a raised plank with confidence. They swim two lengths of the swimming pool retrieve objects from the pool and scull on their backs. Less able pupils walk with assistance on apparatus using and identifying handholds. Using a float they swim a few strokes using leg kicks.
160. By the age of 14 more able pupils play team games in lessons and take part in football matches and athletics events against other schools. They use the correct arm and leg strokes for back crawl. Less able pupils make good progress in their physiotherapy exercises increasing their ability to stretch and relax both on land and in the water.
161. By the age of 16 as well as perfecting their swimming strokes and stamina, pupils make good use of outdoor pursuits centres whilst on residential visits as well as participating in matches and athletics events against other similar schools with some reasonable success.
162. The quality of teaching and learning observed is very good at Key Stages 1 and 3,

good at Key Stage 2 and unsatisfactory in swimming at Key Stage 4. Where teaching is very good it inspires pupils to enjoy their lessons and to put the maximum effort into their actions, for example, in dance where all the adults act as superb role models and ensure every pupil is able to participate fully at his/her own level. The excellent contribution made by therapists enhances pupils' progress in all aspects of physical education.

163. Where lessons are unsatisfactory too much time is spent hanging around the pool doing nothing and when in the water, pupils are not sufficiently challenged to increase their swimming skills.
164. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a very good start in researching the use of off-site facilities, for example, for more able pupils to use a larger swimming pool and use football/athletic fields nearby which will enable more able pupils to make greater progress. The school scheme of work is under revision to incorporate all key stages within Curriculum 2000. Integration with pupils from local mainstream schools has a very positive effect upon Bardwell pupils' progress, both socially and physically.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. When last inspected the school did not meet legal requirements in regard to religious education. It now does and each class has a weekly lesson. As a result pupils make satisfactory progress and standards achieved are sound. However, the school still does not keep enough evidence to show the standard of pupils' work over time or to ensure that progress can be judged easily. Provision for religious education is now sound and it is now well established as a subject. Overall the improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
166. Religious education now makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy visiting local churches, and studying different religions from other cultures a result their learning is good. They learn well about major festivals such as harvest time and have good attitudes to learning. Relationships are positive and their behaviour is good. They make good progress in their social skills and in understanding right from wrong. They begin to build up a knowledge of fairness, for example when discussing why Joseph had a special coat when his brothers did not, following a story.
167. Standards achieved and progress over time are satisfactory at all key stages. Pupils aged five to seven listen carefully to the names of different parts of a church during a visit, this helps them to understand through real experience what arches are and as a result they learn better. Pupils aged eight to eleven learn well as they are keen to hear the next part of the story of Joseph and to watch the next part of the video. The more able can act out the feelings of anger and as a result have a better understanding of the emotions involved. All pupils enjoy painting on material to change a white shirt into a coat of many colours. Most pupils learn well and remember the plot of the story.
168. Those with more complex needs require staff help to hold the brush, they usually accept this help in order to paint and are able to choose and indicate what colours they prefer. They get very excited whilst visiting a church and enjoy the experience. They make good gains in learning and respond well to the different religious environment. Older Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy tasting dates while pretending to have been fasting so they learn the term 'breakfast' and why we say it, whilst learning about Ramadam, the Muslim month of fasting. They learn well that some people have different beliefs. The more able pupils explain how they would feel if they ate no food during daylight. The pupils with more complex needs indicate and choose between the traditional water to drink or dates to eat to break their fast. As a result of the practical and relevant approaches of the teachers and staff the pupils experience new

things and build their skills and knowledge. They enjoy tasting new things and discussing different customs. They reach satisfactory standards in learning about different religious beliefs.

169. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the more able are grouped together to study religious education. They research different agencies that help people in need by writing to them. They begin to understand that certain groups often need extra support such as the poor, the elderly or the disabled. They read the replies whilst trying to find out what the agencies do to help people. They discuss issues such as homelessness. They are helped through careful and skilled questioning by the teacher to understand what homeless means.
170. The teaching and learning in lessons in religious education is good across the school at all key stages. Teachers are particularly skilled at choosing relevant and practical tasks that involve and interest the pupils, as a result they learn well and are keen to co-operate. Lots of praise is used and this motivates pupils to work hard. Support staff work hard to relate positively to the pupils and this means that there are high levels of interaction and the amount pupils learn is good.
171. The school has now adopted and adapted effectively the locally agreed syllabus as its scheme of work. The co-ordinator has plans to extend the current programme and revise the policy. The co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be done, is keen and has already started monitoring plans, has audited resources and is now ready to monitor the curriculum, teachers' assessments about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
172. There are insufficient resources for the teaching of religious education; the amount of artefacts in particular is unsatisfactory.