

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GARTH SCHOOL**

Pinchbeck Road

Spalding

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120752

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Dowson

Reporting inspector: Mr Alistair J M Bates  
21737

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 October 2000

Inspection number: 223632

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pinchbeck Road Spalding Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE11 1QF
Telephone number:	01775 725566
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Barnes
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Alistair J M Bates	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school it is?
		French	How high are standards?
		Music	Quality of teaching.
Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	Personal, social and health education	The school's relationship with its parents.
Mary Kingsley	Team inspector	Geography	The curriculum provided to pupils.
		Physical education	
Roy Lund	Team inspector	Science	How well does the school look after its pupils?
		Design and technology	Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs.
		Information and communications technology	
		History	
		Art	
Graham Pirt	Team inspector	English	Leadership and management.
		Under Fives	
		Equal opportunities	
		Religious education	

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Garth School is a mixed special school for pupils with severe or profound and complex learning difficulties. There are 26 pupils on roll. The pupils range in age from 2 to 19. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language. The pupils' attainment is below national expectations and averages on entry and in all key stages.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Garth School is an effective school. Standards of achievement are good in most National Curriculum subjects and in personal, social and health education. Teaching is good. The management of the school is effective and has brought about considerable improvement in the short time since the previous inspection. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards of achievement are good in all aspects of English, in mathematics and in science. Standards are good in most other National Curriculum subjects. Standards are good in personal, social and health education.
- Foundation Stage children and post-16 students achieve good standards.
- The children, pupils and students make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. These are particularly detailed and reviewed regularly.
- The quality of teaching is good. It is based on good quality planning and assessment of the pupil's progress.
- The curriculum provided to the pupils is good.
- The leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body is good. The school has developed effective means to evaluate and improve the quality of its work.
- The children, pupils and students have good attitudes to their work, behaviour is good and relationships are good between all members of the school community.
- The school prepares children, pupils and students well for the next stage of education.
- The school has improved since the last inspection.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is hampered by the lack of individual support in a small number of lessons.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in 1998. Since that time the school has improved very well. All the issues raised in the last report on the standards achieved, teaching, the curriculum and the leadership and management of the school have been addressed. Children, pupils and students achieve good standards in most subjects compared with unsatisfactory progress in 1998. Teaching is now good and meets the individual needs of the pupils. The strong leadership of the senior managers has produced very effective systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. All staff are fully involved and have implemented the changes well.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	Very good A
Reading	B	B	B	B	Good B
Writing	B	B	B	B	Satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	Unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	Poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

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

Foundation stage children make good progress. Standards of achievement for school age pupils are good in English, mathematics (particularly in numeracy), science, art, design and technology, geography, history, physical education, religious education and music. Standards are satisfactory in information and communications technology. There was insufficient evidence for a judgment in French. Post-16 students make good progress in their academic and vocational subjects.

The pupils make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans and towards the areas identified in their statements of special educational needs. The pupils make good progress in the formal personal, social and health education curriculum and also in their personal development.

Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards, overall, although for short periods of time they do not make sufficient progress because of limited staffing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy their work and have positive attitudes in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well and show increasing responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory

A small number of pupils present challenging behaviour. They generally respond well to the consistent behaviour management of the staff. Although the figure for overall absence is higher than national averages the small number of pupils in the school makes comparisons unreliable.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection it was very good or better in 7 per cent of the lessons and satisfactory or better in all lessons. It was good in 68 per cent of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching took place. The strengths of the teaching lie in the good quality planning which identifies individual targets for pupils in all lessons. The pupils' progress towards these targets is monitored and recorded well. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together in class teams.

The teaching of literacy and communication is well supported by the consistent use of sign language. The consistent implementation of the teaching methods of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy has improved the quality of the pupils' learning in these areas. Teachers and support staff address the behavioural needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders but their learning is not always effective throughout the lesson.

The pupils enjoy their learning and enjoy their success. They apply their basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Post-16 students apply their learning very well when out in the community.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good overall. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is satisfactory, overall, with good provision for moral and social development through the personal, social and health education programme. There is less specific planning for spiritual and cultural development and these are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development is good with very good use of individual education plans.

The school works well with its parents who are kept well informed and are increasingly involved. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant with good planning. The personal needs of pupils with additional special educational needs are met consistently but on occasions the level of staffing means that they are "occupied" rather than actively learning. The curriculum meets statutory requirements

The regular assessment of pupils' progress towards the targets in their individual education plans leads to good monitoring of academic and personal development. The school meets the physical needs of pupils with profound and complex learning disabilities well and respects their dignity. Child protection procedures and arrangements for health and safety are as they should be.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher show strong informed leadership with a good vision of how the school needs to develop.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and hold the school accountable for its performance and improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Evaluation is informed by very good monitoring of teaching and learning and this helps all staff to take effective action to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well, especially the use of specific grants to enhance the curriculum and teaching.

The strength of the school's leadership comes from the clear sense of direction provided by senior staff together with the consistent implementation of the school's monitoring and evaluation processes. Staff at all levels review their practice critically in seeking higher standards. The school applies the principles of best value in its operation.

The accommodation and learning resources are good. The school has appointed a temporary teacher to provide specific support for the Foundation Stage and for post-16 students. However, on occasions, there are insufficient staff to ensure that pupils with additional special educational needs make progress throughout the lesson.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards and progress achieved</li> <li>• The good standards of behaviour</li> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and be responsible</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parents did not raise any criticisms of the school</li> </ul>

The inspection confirms the parent's positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the children, pupils and students for whom this school caters in relation the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in their statements, annual reviews and individual education plans.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all the areas of learning. In language and literacy sessions they are attentive to the sign language used by the teacher or support assistant. Children with profound and complex learning disabilities make eye contact and smile on hearing familiar voices. They develop their mathematical understanding through sorting objects and the use of number in songs. Children develop their understanding of the world when they explore the school's immediate environment looking at the natural features. The good facilities for play develop their creative abilities. The children's physical development is supported through regular hydrotherapy sessions and through individual physical programmes. Their personal and social development is enhanced by the regular integrated sessions with other children of their age.
3. Standards of achievement are good for school aged pupils in all the core subjects of the National Curriculum. They are good in most of the foundation subjects, including art, music, history, geography, physical education, religious education and for younger pupils in design and technology. Standards are satisfactory in information and communications technology and in design and technology in Key Stages 3 and 4. It was not possible to make a judgment on standards in French as no lesson took place during the inspection. Standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection in 1998 when they were unsatisfactory in nearly all subjects.
4. Pupils achieve good standards of achievement in communication, speaking and listening. The youngest pupils respond well to the consistent use of sign language and reply with vocalisations. Older higher attaining primary aged pupils express their wishes and respond to questions. The oldest pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 will converse socially and explain their actions. They are beginning to give reasons for their views.
5. All pupils attain good standards of achievement in reading and writing or in developing the basic skills that lead to these areas of learning. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 enjoy listening to stories and looking at the "Big Books". They recognise common symbols. The older Key Stage 2 pupils can predict events in the story and familiar words. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are beginning to write in sentences or can use information and communications technology to produce text or symbols, with support.
6. Pupils in all key stages achieve good standards in numeracy and in applying mathematics in everyday life. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 can match objects by colour, with higher attaining pupils able to match a numeral with the number of objects. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 can count to 100 and recognise which are the largest numbers. Lower attaining pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 can find a number when asked. Higher attaining pupils can perform written addition sums with two columns.
7. Pupils in all key stages achieve good standards in science. They develop their observation skills, from experiencing features of the school environment in Key Stage 1 to making observations of different types of "mini-beasts" in Key Stage 2. The oldest pupils are beginning to understand the need for a fair test. Standards in the other subjects are generally good.

8. The pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education. Regular activities such as drinks and lunch provide good opportunities for learning and programmes are implemented consistently. Pupils begin by recognising the class routines and then show an awareness of the needs of others in the class. The oldest pupils learn to take turns and share equipment. They comment on their likes and dislikes.
9. Post-16 students make good progress in the key curriculum areas of communication, literacy, numeracy, information and communications technology and personal and social development. Much of their other work is accredited through the use of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) "Towards Independence" award.
10. The major influence on the improvement of standards has been the improvement in the quality of individual education plans and subject targets. The targets set are now specific and reviewed regularly. The pupils' and students' progress towards these targets is recorded well. As a result the teaching is directed well towards individuals and they make good progress.
11. There is a small number of pupils with additional special educational needs in each class. These are often autistic spectrum disorders or complex physical disabilities. When these pupils are being directly taught they make progress in line with the other pupils. However, in about eight out of the fifty-six lessons observed the teacher had a group including such pupils without additional support. In working with another pupil, the pupils with additional special educational needs were left without specific learning activities. This meant that their overall progress in the lesson was satisfactory. Other pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition need to be withdrawn from the group – this settles their behaviour but means that learning opportunities are missed.
12. The one pupil who has English as an additional language is well supported for language development. There is no significant difference in attainment or progress between boys and girls.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

13. The previous report was positive about the attitudes of pupils to their work and the behaviour of the majority of pupils was judged to be good.
14. This inspection confirms that this is still the case. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. In lessons, the pupils and students particularly enjoy activities that take them out into the community or require practical skills. Some of the older and higher attaining students are beginning to have the confidence to answer questions and speak in front of their classmates. Most show pleasure in learning and respond well to the challenge. They participate well in the various clubs that take place at lunchtime. Pupils show obvious enjoyment when they arrive each morning and are greeted by the staff. Parents confirmed that their children enjoy school. They say that during the holidays and at weekends their children are keen to get back to school, to work and be with their friends.
15. Attendance is satisfactory. Because of the small size of the school it is not appropriate to make national comparisons of percentages. Many pupils require regular treatment for their condition and they are only ever absent for these, or other medical reasons. Pupils arrive punctually, but they are entirely in the hands of the school transport service and many pupils have a lengthy journey to make each morning.
16. Overall, behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in the classroom, playground, dining room and around the school corridors. There is a complete absence of any intimidating, sexist or racist behaviour and the school is a happy place. A few pupils present challenging behaviour as part of their condition and when they are difficult these situations are managed well so that disruption is minimised. Adults in the school provide very good role models and relationships at all levels are very good. The school has a positive atmosphere for learning.

17. The pupils' personal development is good. Although many pupils have severe difficulties to overcome, they make good progress during their time in the school. The youngest pupils are able to express preferences, for example in singing songs or choosing drinks and biscuits. They respond to familiar routines and help with dressing and their hygiene programme, where physically able. As they grow older they are increasingly able to understand and respond to instructions and, with support, make good progress with their work. Some can talk about what they are doing and begin to feel able to answer questions in class. As they reach the senior class for Key Stages 3, 4 and post-16, pupils show increased confidence, communicate and interact freely with their peers and the teachers. They are able to work independently, but are also beginning to appreciate the need to help others with reading, writing or in physical education classes. Individual pupils are able to accept simple responsibilities as dining table leaders or as register monitors, and a number of the older pupils are able to sign their own Individual Education Plan.
18. As they come towards the end of their time in the school there is a good provision for them to have experience of the outside world of work, as well as the residential colleges and homes to which they might eventually move. Those who are able, talk about where they might go. They have a picture of what this might be like and are optimistic about the future.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

19. The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons. It was at least satisfactory in all the other lessons. It was very good in 7 per cent of the lessons. This quality of teaching is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the overall quality was satisfactory and teaching was unsatisfactory in one-fifth of the lessons.
20. During the previous inspection, the weakness of the teaching was the quality of teaching to the full age range within the classes and the teachers' lack of knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The first of these weaknesses has largely been remedied; the second weakness is no longer a problem. The only occasions when the full range of needs was not met in the current inspection was when teachers having worked well with individuals with additional special educational needs had to then leave these pupils to occupy themselves while they worked with other members of the group. At these times, which were up to ten minutes in a forty-minute session, the pupils did not make the same amount of progress as in the rest of the lesson or when learning support assistants were available. This was the reason why some otherwise good teaching was graded as satisfactory, overall, and applied in half of the lessons graded as satisfactory.
21. Teaching is consistently good for pupils of compulsory school age. It is good for the children in the Foundation Stage and for students in the post-16 provision. In response to the criticisms raised in the last inspection report the school has deployed staff so that these groups are taught as discrete groups for a greater part of the week. Teaching in these sessions is good. When taught with school-aged pupils, individual plans are used well to ensure that all class members are working at an appropriate level.
22. The main feature that results in the good quality of teaching is the quality of the planning across the school. Lesson plans are detailed and identify the teaching methods to be used. They also identify individual targets for the pupils or students in the group. These individual lesson targets are directly linked to the individual education plans and are based on very accurate assessment of small steps of progress made by individual pupils in previous lessons. These features combine to lead to highly targeted teaching; for example, in a numeracy lesson for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 with post-16 students, individual questions of different range of difficulty were asked of the pupils. While lower attaining pupils were given time to find an answer, for example, to select a numeral to match the number of objects, higher attaining students has to think about the following numbers in a sequence. One pupil might be asked for the next number from 5, 10, 15, 20, while a

higher attaining pupil had to work out 25, 20, 15, ?. Similar strategies worked well in the teaching of literacy where pupils had individual questions based on the class reading.

23. The teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes of study has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teaching in literacy and numeracy has been improved by the consistent introduction of the national strategies and the teaching methods suggested for their implementation. In a very good introduction to a literacy lesson for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3, the teacher showed a high level of expectation by encouraging all higher attaining pupils to give a response to a word-card together while using specific objects to match the word for pupils with additional special educational needs. This enabled all pupils to participate in the group session. When the group then split for individual work, the work was very closely matched to the pupils' individual targets.
24. The teachers and learning support assistants work very well together in all classes and subjects. The role of the learning support assistants is clearly identified in the planning and the staff then take responsibility for working with their designated pupil or student, implement the planned activity and record the pupils' progress. Learning support assistants implement the individual behaviour plans for pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition and this ensures that their behaviour does not adversely influence the learning of the others in the class. In a very good design and technology lesson for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 the learning support assistants provided very good support for pupils with profound and complex learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorders enabling them to participate fully in exploring textiles and patterns.
25. Teachers use other resources well; for example, there are displays of key words and numbers in all the classrooms and these are used effectively in all subjects. The school grounds were used very effectively in science lessons during the inspection, for example, to allow Foundation Stage children to experiment with the texture of the falling leaves and pupils in Key Stage 2 to collect and later observe mini-beasts.
26. The teachers and learning support assistants use sign language consistently for lower attaining pupils, those with hearing impairments or those with profound and complex learning disabilities. The level of expertise in sign language is good. The teachers use appropriate phonic methods with higher attaining pupils to support reading. Symbols are used well with lower attaining pupils to support both reading and writing. Pupils and students use information and communications technology with support to produce their own symbol-based accounts of their learning.
27. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour and the pupils respond well to these. For example, two older pupils apologised to the teacher after they had been corrected for changing the program while working independently on the computer. Post-16 students behaved very well when shopping and all took part in clearing up after they had cooked their lunch with the minimum of instruction from the teacher. Homework is used well in all classes and is set at an appropriate level, although some parents acknowledged that they found it a lower priority than the care needs of their children.
28. The good teaching in most lessons results in equally good learning. The pupils are proud of their learning and in the final part of many lessons higher attaining pupils are able to identify the progress they have made. They can usually identify a question that they have answered correctly or show their work. This sense of pride keeps them well motivated and leads to increased confidence. Pupils and students respond to the high expectations of the teachers and assistants. For example, post-16 students were interested in the real price lists from a supermarket and were able to compare the prices with those obtained from a web site. For most of the time in the lessons the pupils worked well and were attentive to the task. The only exceptions were when pupils with additional special educational needs were left under-occupied or those with challenging behaviour had to leave as they were beginning to disrupt the learning of others. These pupils generally responded positively to the change of environment and usually returned to the lesson quickly.

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

29. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum with good opportunities for its pupils. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum. The draft religious education policy, based upon the locally agreed draft syllabus, meets statutory requirements. The school, headteacher, staff and governors, with support from the Local Education Authority, have worked effectively as a team to develop and enhance the curriculum and the current curriculum is very much improved since the last inspection. There are other examples of improvement; for example; information and communication technology is now taught as a discrete subject, resulting in higher standards. The school has made good progress in developing planning and monitoring systems. Medium and long term planning is good and results in all pupils being presented with curriculum opportunities in which they can succeed and make progress. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
30. Curricular opportunities are good at the Foundation Stage, for pupils of compulsory school age and for post-16 students. At Key Stage 4 and post-16 a great deal of effort has been put in to establish an appropriate curriculum, which provides a very good work-related curriculum with good support from the careers guidance service. There are opportunities for students to undertake work experience. The school is working towards the Careers Mark accreditation. The students work towards appropriate accreditation using ASDAN modules, such as personal care, work and community studies.
31. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy, which has had a positive effect on the teaching of literacy including communication skills. This is supported by the consistent and positive use of sign language. There is good use of literacy across the curriculum with an emphasis on communication skills and on phonics teaching. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought a good structure to the teaching of mathematics. There is good use of numeracy across the curriculum; for example, the counting of quadrant squares in science and the use of money in drama. The school is working towards accreditation from the Basic Skills Agency, in both literacy and numeracy. The provision for the pupils' personal and social education is good, well planned and co-ordinated and is closely linked to the pupils' individual education plans. There is a number of opportunities during the day when personal and social education is promoted, for example, in assemblies, at break and lunch times and during school trips. Sex education is taught at an appropriate level for the pupils and students.
32. The school makes provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with sensory impairment. The provision is satisfactory. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are generally well integrated into the classes in the school, with additional support from the learning support assistants. However, their behaviour can be demanding of staff-time and means that other pupils do not receive as much attention.
33. The school provides many opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good with staff providing a wide range of lunchtime clubs. The pupils participate in the clubs with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The school runs residential experiences, which are enjoyed by the pupils. A wide range of visits are arranged to support the pupils learning, including visits to the recycling plant, to Peterborough Cathedral, to housing estates to identify different types of houses and to Peterborough United football club. The pupils' and students' quality of learning benefits greatly from these links with the community.
34. School and college links are good, with pupils integrating into a local primary school and into two secondary schools. There are links with other schools for joint sporting events; for example the school joined with another special school for a sports day. Post-16 students attend the local agricultural college for appropriate courses.

35. Pupils are presented with a satisfactory range of opportunities for spiritual development. During assemblies pupils have the opportunity for reflection. During lessons there were opportunities for spiritual development when pupils read a poem, and on another occasion when thinking about when a character in a text had died. Pupils are made aware of their own culture by visits to Lincoln Cathedral, and to other cultures by visits to the Romany Museum, the mosque in Peterborough and by celebrating the festivals of other faiths in assemblies. However, teachers do not specifically plan for these areas of development and the pupils' progress is satisfactory.
36. The personal, social and health education programme incorporates specific planning for moral and social development and the provision in these areas is good. The pupils' achievements are celebrated and this has a positive impact on their self-esteem. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The pupils learn to behave in a socially acceptable way and to help one another. For example, when a pupil noticed that another pupil had put their head through the armhole of their sports bib, the first pupil helped the other one to take the bib off and put it on correctly without any adult support or comment. Older pupils interact with adults in a mature and appropriate manner, showing respect but also valuing their company.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

37. The school provides a good level of care and support for its pupils and students as it did at the time of the last inspection. The staff and outside specialists work well together as a team in order to promote the pupils' and students' personal welfare. They know the pupils and students very well and use this knowledge effectively in order to make them all feel valued and safe.
38. The school places a high priority on caring for its pupils and students. It considers their safety and security at all times. One example of this is the way in which risk assessments are undertaken prior to any school visits. They are undertaken for the school building and for the use of potentially hazardous materials and equipment. Health and safety are monitored well, with regular checks of fire equipment and electrical appliances. However, the school does not currently display warning signs about eye protection in the vicinity of machinery in the school design and technology workshop. The school responds very thoroughly and sensitively to the personal care needs of pupils with physical impairments. The supervision of the pupils and students during lunchtime, playtime and before and after school is good. The relationships within the school are very good and these extend to a wide range of outside specialists, who work effectively alongside the staff.
39. The school has clear guidelines for child protection and the procedures followed by the school are in accordance with the recommendations of the Area Child Protection Committee. The staff know the designated teacher and procedures if they have any concerns. However, the staff do not currently receive regular, on-going training in child protection.
40. The schools environment is caring, supportive and secure. All the staff, teachers and learning support assistants, know the pupils and students extremely well. They have a genuine concern for the welfare, personal and academic progress and well being of the pupils. As a result, the pupils and students feel secure and valued, cope well with school life and are prepared well for their life after they leave the school. This aspect of the school's work has improved well since the last inspection.
41. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are also good. The policies relating to behaviour give the staff a good framework to work from and as a result of this, the pupils behave well in lessons and in other activities. There are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff, and members of staff form very good role models for the pupils. The behaviour programmes and targets for the few pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their conditions are very well written and effective. The school has recognised the need for further staff training to deal with the complex needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

42. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in developing sophisticated and effective assessment and target setting procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic, performance and personal development. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school and as a result of this, teachers produce effective individual education plans with individual targets in literacy and numeracy and in personal development. Pupils have individual targets in each subject and these are regularly reviewed each fortnight. These targets are directly related to National Curriculum levels and to the published levels for lower attaining pupils. The targets are used as working documents in the classrooms. As a result of this, co-ordinators are able to monitor the progress of each pupil and student well and teachers provide realistic but challenging tasks within lessons. The school is able to monitor the progress of all pupils across the whole curriculum well. Termly and annual assessments are used well to provide the basis for the annual reports to parents. Teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of key stages by teacher assessment against National Curriculum levels. Older pupils and students are involved in monitoring their own performance through their involvement in setting their own targets and in developing their own Records of Achievement. This gives them positive support and assists in developing their self-esteem.
43. Attendance is monitored well. The school follows up unexplained absences immediately by telephone and letter. The school has a very good relationship with parents and they are keen that their children attend school regularly. As a result of this, unauthorised absence is rare and most absence is due to ongoing medical conditions.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

44. Parents and carers express very positive views about what the school achieves for their children. The questionnaires, and those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, have confirmed that they are very satisfied with progress achieved. Parents feel that teaching is good, accentuating pupil's strengths and self-esteem. They feel the teachers are approachable if they need to discuss problems. They believe that the school promotes the independence of their children, encourages them to work hard and to have both optimistic and realistic views of their future.
45. The school has strong links with parents. When they first come to the school parents are well prepared by an induction programme that tells them about the schools aims, organisation and routines. At this time they receive a good range of explanatory literature about homework, key policies, the curriculum, and all are asked to sign the home-school agreement. News about the day-to-day successes and activities of the school are conveyed to parents in the school newspaper. There are additional meetings to explain aspects of the curriculum, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and other specific topics of interest. Each term there are parent consultations where the pupils' progress towards Individual Education Plan targets is reviewed. At the end of the year, the pupils' annual reports give a clear picture of progress in all subjects as well as personal and social development. Parents are given a good understanding of what work their children are doing and how they have enjoyed their day through the homework and home-school diaries. For those parents whose children cannot express their views themselves, these are essential and reassuring links.
46. Parents make a good contribution to their children's education and the life and work of the school. The home-school agreement has been established and there is broad general support for the work pupils are asked to do at home. Often, due to the nature of their child's condition, parents find homework is a difficulty. For some it is not possible at all. Nevertheless, most parents do their best to add continuity to what the school does every day. During the course of a school year many parents will help directly in the school itself with reading, swimming and assisting educational visits. The parents group – Friends of Garth School (FROGS) – has become a well-established forum for both social and fund-raising events. Parents speak highly of the help they have gained by listening to the guest speakers and they value the personal support of fellow members. The group works with local agencies, such as Scope and Mencap, on fund-raising

initiatives and these have benefited the pupils considerably. They have done a great deal to raise the profile and the esteem with which the school is held in the local community.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

47. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide strong, informed leadership and have a clear vision as to how they see the school developing in the future. The school's aims are clear and, along with the mission statement, are displayed within the school and its documents. They positively influence the ethos and expectations seen throughout the school. There is a marked improvement since the last inspection when the aims of the school did not sufficiently embrace or promote access to the National Curriculum. The school now promotes high standards and effective teaching and learning, all of which have improved considerably since the last inspection. In a short time the senior managers, with staff support, have moved the school from a position of weakness, concerning the development and monitoring of National Curriculum programmes of study and schemes of work, to a position where policies and guidelines for subjects throughout the school are in place, comprehensive and well implemented. Subject co-ordinators understand their roles and contribute successfully to the management of their subjects and to the School Development Plan. They are now fully aware of strengths and weaknesses within the teaching of the subjects for which they are responsible. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection where co-ordinators were not successfully developing or monitoring their subjects.
48. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are very involved in the whole life of the school through teaching and supporting pupils and staff, for example, at lunch and break-times. The day-to-day management is good and leads to the smooth running of the school through the work of a committed team. Financial administration is sound with all processes working appropriately. The use of modern technology in administrative matters is not yet fully established but plans are in place to improve knowledge and skills in this area. The development planning for the school is good and this is an improvement on the satisfactory findings of the previous inspection. Targets are now well focused and generated from within the school through analyses of strengths and weaknesses in subjects. School development planning is an effective process, with costs, time scales and responsibilities clearly identified in the documentation.
49. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. It has effective committee structures that monitor aspects of school management and performance and hold those with management responsibilities accountable. Governors visit classes in the school. Co-ordinators' reports are presented to the governors' curriculum committee. The finance committee is involved in decisions in relation to the school development planning. The headteacher reports back to the chair of governors on the results of her monitoring of teaching, but as yet this aspect is not fully developed for reporting back to the full governing body. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are aware of the educational standards that the school achieves. This is an improvement from the previous inspection.
50. The monitoring of teaching and learning, undertaken by the headteacher and the subject co-ordinators, is very good and leads to targets to raise standards and to identify development needs for staff. The school has started to monitor its effectiveness, combining with other special schools to compare results obtained on baseline testing and national scales for lower attaining pupils. Co-ordinators produce an analysis of their subject that provides evidence of strengths and weaknesses. The senior management team and governors have secured significant improvements in both curriculum and teaching since the previous inspection, leading to this being an effective school.
51. Appraisal is undertaken well and preparations are underway for the introduction of performance management procedures. The effective monitoring and evaluation leads to the identification of good priorities for development informed by both external and internal initiatives and requirements. The management of the school has taken action to meet the targets of the previous inspection action plan that has led to a very good improvement. The success the school has achieved in gaining recognition from "Investors in People" has contributed to this overall improvement.

52. The school uses specific grants very well. Grants for National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy have been used to enhance the resources and training provision for these subjects. The use of extra funding for special schools has been used very effectively to increase teaching support in order to provide some discrete groups at both Foundation Stage and post-16.
53. The application of the principles of best value is satisfactory. Governors assure themselves that they achieve good value for money on purchases made by the school. As yet they do not evaluate the effect of this spending on how it has specifically improved pupils' learning. Governors show a very good understanding of this as an area for development and have identified their training needs.
54. There is an inadequate number of staff, particularly when one-to-one assistance is required for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, either because of groups being split or pupils needing close attention because of their behaviour. The induction of staff is good, based on a very clear policy.
55. Accommodation is good, overall. There is specialist accommodation for science, design and technology and art, although at times the space in here is restricted. There is a very good provision for hydrotherapy, although there is no separate shower area for adult, male helpers. Space for storage of large equipment in the Foundation Stage is limited. Resources are good in most subjects and are very good in English.
56. Financial control and administration is satisfactory. The most recent audit by the Local Education Authority was positive with few recommendations for improvement. All these have been implemented. The school administrator is new and the school is only beginning to use new technology to support financial administration. However, senior staff and governors have a good awareness of the school budget situation. In view of the recent improvements and the standards now being achieved the school provides good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. In order to continue to raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff need to:
  - Improve the quality of provision for pupils with additional special educational needs (Paragraphs 11, 28). This will include;
    - monitoring the deployment of staff to ensure that teachers do not have to deal on their own with a group containing a pupil with autistic spectrum disorder together with other pupils;
    - ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training to deal with the learning needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders; \*
    - ensuring that these pupils are monitored to ensure that they are learning throughout the lessons.

\* *This training has already been identified and planned.*
  - Other issues for development include further child protection training (paragraph 39), the use of new technology to support school administration (paragraph 56), and improved safety signs in the design and technology room (paragraph 38).

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **FULL AGE RANGE**

58. The school caters for the full age range of pupils within a very small school. The range of age in each class was criticised in the previous report as a reason for low standards. The improved quality of individual education plans and teaching now means that, although classes still contain a

wide age range, the range of activities is such that individual needs are met. This is especially the case in literacy and numeracy lessons based on the national strategies. The current number of teaching staff means that the children who are under five and the post-16 students receive appropriate opportunities to receive a distinctive curriculum.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	68	25	0	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	26
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	10	School data	1

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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	24
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.2
Average class size	8.7

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	6.3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	297,450
Total expenditure	307,998
Expenditure per pupil	11,407.33
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,570
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,978

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	28
Number of questionnaires returned	10

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	90	10	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	60	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	30	0	0	20
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	90	10	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	30	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	80	20	0	0	0

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The parents expressed strong support for the work of the school.

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

### **FOUNDATION STAGE**

59. The provision for Foundation Stage children is good and is successfully organised to allow some teaching of these children to occur separately from those pupils in Key Stage 1. This is an improvement from the findings of the previous inspection. In order to allow this to take place the management team and governors have appointed a part-time member of staff funded through a specific grant from the government. The teacher and learning support assistants work well as a team and successfully contribute to meeting the children's needs as identified in their statements of special educational needs. At other times, when Foundation Stage children are educated with Key Stage 1 pupils, the planning is suitably focused to allow separate learning targets to be identified and met.
60. Children make good progress towards their individual targets. They grow in confidence in playing and working with staff and other children. Although they do not have a full-time separate provision for their age group they gain positively through the careful attention that is given to their needs.
61. The teaching of language and literacy is a major emphasis in their activities. Teachers and learning support assistants use a high level of sign language as well as encouraging good eye contact and vocalising to support understanding and expression. The staff use a good range of resources, such as photos of children doing different activities, in order to encourage pupils to speak and listen carefully. Children participate in action songs and one was able to sing two lines on his own and another was able to provide words at the end of the song. One child was able to model actions when asked, "Have you washed your hair?" Literacy, and particularly speaking and listening, features strongly in all parts of the curriculum; for example, it was particularly strong in a science activity when children were encouraged to look at and feel the texture of the leaves.
62. Mathematical concepts are encouraged well with the use of sequence songs and the use of computer technology to develop appreciation of cause and effect. Although no observations were possible during the inspection, owing to children being absent through illness, scrutiny of teaching records and children's files shows evidence of good progress. Children sort objects and use creative play to develop mathematical elements such as one-to-one matching.
63. The children develop good knowledge and understanding of the world through the well-planned lessons covering science and design technology activities. Children took great delight in exploring the school grounds as they looked for a range of leaves that have fallen from the trees. They explored the difference between leaves that are still growing and those that have become dried. The learning support assistants encouraged the children through a high level of sign language, verbal and physical prompts. The children were able to help sort the leaves into colours on large coloured mats. When preparing to produce patterned materials in design technology the children responded well to the good teaching where materials were discussed and then displayed on a washing line. The teacher drew the children's attention to the types of pattern that helped them to make their own.
64. The very good soft play area, the hydrotherapy pool and the light and sound room provide opportunities for both physical development and aesthetic and creative development. Children participate very well in the hydrotherapy pool and gain from the individual attention and discover bodily movements in a stimulating environment that includes sound, light and smoke equipment. There are good opportunities for personal and social development and this is further enhanced when children join with a school based under-fives group. At this time children have the opportunity to mix with other children from outside of the school.

65. The co-ordination of the early years provision is good and there is a very good policy and scheme of work for the children. The provision is well monitored and evaluated through the whole school system and it prepares the children well for their next stage of education.

## ENGLISH

66. The pupils' achievements in English are good across all key stages. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. An important factor in this achievement is that teachers plan well so that, along with learning support assistants, they work well to encourage the basic skills of communication. This includes the successful use of sign language and symbols. Pupils achieve well because of the impact of the structure brought to lessons by the National Literacy Strategy, which helps bring good teaching methods and present challenging learning opportunities.
67. During and at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well towards the targets in their individual education plans. They make good progress, over time, shown in their work and in assessments of their performance. Pupils move from tracking a light source to responding to symbols that they sense by touch. Higher attaining pupils progress from matching pictures to symbols to recognising the first sound of up to six familiar words and to recognising their name, from a choice of four, by the time they are seven. Teachers and learning support assistants work successfully as a team encouraging pupils to give good eye contact and to respond to speech, signs and symbols with increased understanding. The use of the "big book" approach in the literacy work helps pupils to recognise the link between symbols and pictures. When reading *The Train Ride* by June Cribbin the use of objects to refer to parts of the story helped pupils to gain a greater insight into the story and the characters. One of the pupils was able to refer to the object and indicate where it was in the picture. The consistent use of sign language by both teachers and learning support assistants helps pupils to participate in the song "Old MacDonald" taking their turn and responding to cues. There is good use of information and communications technology where a pupil used a switch, with assistance, to provide a recorded response in the same song. This enhances the access that pupils have to developing communication skills in English.
68. During Key Stage 2, teachers set very clear targets and their effective questioning helps pupils to learn well and achieve well in both lessons and over time. There is a wide range of ability in the key stage with some pupils working on the experience of touching different objects and textures while others read a small number of familiar words. By the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils write their name on a line and recognise and name the letter sounds of regular three-letter words. Pupils often write using computers to help link words and symbols. Lower attaining pupils, with greater learning difficulties, draw lines with assistance and form the first letter of their name using paint and their finger. The highest attaining pupils identify full stops and capital letters in text in the big book and one was able to say that the full stop came at the end of "a sentence". One pupil was able to recognise the word "tortoise" in the book *The Clever Tortoise* and others could read along with the teacher. Pupils enjoy the lessons when they are involved in role-play relating to the story and they develop their speaking and listening skills well. Once again, the good use of objects referred to in the text helps the pupils understand the content of the story. Teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations of the pupils and keep them working through the good use of sign language and regular reminders to concentrate on the task.
69. By the age of fourteen, pupils achieve well. Higher attaining pupils recognise and name many letter sounds, producing meaningful print associated with familiar words and spelling words from the first 20 words of the National Literacy Strategy, such as, "look", "for" and "said". These pupils write words copied from the board and are starting to recognise the use of full stops and capital letters. Some pupils form and dictate sentences with a subject and a verb. Others are able to recognise the role of the letter "e" in changing the sound of a word; for instance, when one pupil volunteered the word "con" and changed it to "cone" by applying the rule without any reminder. The use of symbols associated with words means that the pupils make good progress in their learning as they link text with the associated story. Pupils use signs to indicate aspects of the story such as "light" when talking about the sun. Pupils use computers well to develop their

sentence construction and others respond well to the use of “sensory boxes” to develop their vocabulary, where they use adjectives such as “wobbly, sticky, gluey” and “horrible”. The use of drama activities reinforces previous work in literacy helping pupils to respond well to instructions.

70. Pupils in Key Stage 4 achieve well in all of the aspects of English. By the age of sixteen, pupils achieve their individual education plan targets when they use their knowledge of letters, sounds and words to help read unfamiliar words. They form letters well and write some individual words without help. Higher attaining pupils produce independently written simple sentences. These pupils construct sentences using a verb, noun and adjective and explain how the adjective brings life to the sentence. They have a good use of language, in relation to their learning needs, and make their wants clearly known. They conduct conversations about their interests with their peers, adults and visitors to the school. When studying *Whistling Jack* pupils described the content of the story and their feelings in relation to the death of a character in the story. This was further developed when they listened to the teacher read the poem *December* where they interpreted the feelings of cold generated by the use of the words.
71. The good teamwork of teachers and learning support assistants leads to well planned lessons and good teaching in English. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. During the inspection, features of very good teaching were seen in all classes. This teaching is characterised by an enthusiasm for the work and a high level of expectation that pupils will work hard at tasks. These tasks are very well focused on learning new skills. For instance, when the teacher is maintaining two groups by teaching one and retaining an oversight of the other, changing activities at the right time in order to maintain the high level of pace. The few lessons that are satisfactory are still well planned but learning is sometimes more restricted by pupils becoming disturbed due to the nature of their learning need or the changes in activity not being sufficiently judged in order to maintain pupils’ interest. Most teaching at all key stages challenges pupils well with teachers expecting high levels of responses from pupils; for instance, when a teacher rephrased her questions about the vocabulary in a poem so that she achieved a good explanation from a pupil about how he would feel “plodding through sleet”. Teachers manage the pupils’ behaviour well and use time and resources well in lessons. There is good assessment both in lessons and over longer periods of time.
72. Other subjects in the school contribute well to the pupils’ learning of literacy. There are opportunities for reading and writing in many of the subjects. The development of communication skills is good across the school, with a wide use of sign language and symbols. In art, there are good examples of pupils being expected to use their speaking and listening skills. In religious education, there was a very good example of pupils having to reflect on spiritual aspects of a christening and being expected to contribute using full sentences.
73. The management of the subject is very good. There has been a significant improvement in English and literacy since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has developed a very good curriculum that includes the National Literacy Strategy and this contributes significantly to the success of the subject. There is a very good level of monitoring and evaluation, including observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils’ records by the co-ordinator, and this helps to inform the subject development plan. Resources are very good for the subject having, been enhanced by specific grants that have been well utilised. Homework opportunities are satisfactorily provided for many pupils with reading, spelling and writing activities being undertaken.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils’ achievements are now good in developing their numeracy skills and understanding and in using mathematics in real life situations. Their achievements in understanding shape, space and measure and in handling data are in line with their capabilities. Much of the improvement in achievement is due to the improved quality of teaching brought about by the consistent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

75. Higher attaining pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1, count by rote to 10 and can match the number of objects to the number or the number of spots on a dice. Lower attaining pupils match objects by colour when instructed or prompted and enjoy number songs as part of their daily programme. Higher attaining pupils, at the end of Key Stage 2, perform simple addition, subtraction and recognise when a sequence of numbers is rising or falling. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 can recognise the difference in a sequence if it is 5, 10 or 100. They can add three two-digit numbers on paper, including remembering to “carry”. Pupils develop their understanding of mathematics and numeracy in other subjects; for example, when counting the total number of mini-beasts in science, the number of pupils present at registration, or working out money in personal, social and health education.
76. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers implement the methods of the National Numeracy Strategy consistently. The group sessions promote the pupils’ understanding of numbers in real life. In these parts of the lesson, teachers use good questioning of individuals according to their ability; for example, lower attaining pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 had to find a specific number to match that shown by a learning support assistant while higher attaining pupils had to continue a verbal sequence given by the teacher. In the individual work sessions, work is well planned and linked to the pupil’s past level of attainment. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Key Stage 2 was able to complete addition calculations independently on a computer. Teachers use the final part of the lesson well to reinforce the learning that has taken place.
77. The teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and good knowledge of the individual pupils’ capabilities. They manage pupils well and have high expectations; for example, pupils were corrected appropriately when they used a different computer program to the one that had been prepared.
78. Learning is generally good. The whole group mental mathematics sessions are challenging and the pupils in all classes respond enthusiastically. They apply their new learning in the individual sessions where higher attaining pupils in Key Stages 2 to 4 are able to work independently. However, in a small number of lessons, where there were few or no learning support assistants the complex needs of individual pupils meant that the teacher could not work effectively with the whole group. This means that although at other times in the lesson they worked well and were learning individual pupils received little adult attention for short periods of time and were not learning as effectively.
79. The subject is well co-ordinated and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well. Parents were kept well informed of this new initiative. The whole school monitoring and evaluation system has been used to support all the teachers and to check the progress of individual pupils. The assessment system is good and effective records are kept that inform subsequent teaching. This is a further improvement on the previous inspection, and the overall improvements mean that very good progress has been made. Resources are good and in each room a specific area has been established for numeracy; this supports the pupils’ learning well.

## **SCIENCE**

80. Standards have risen well, with pupils’ achievements now being good at all key stages. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection which judged achievement as unsatisfactory. All pupils make good progress in understanding the need for health and safety procedures in the laboratory and during fieldwork.
81. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils measure how far a rolling pin has moved on different surfaces, using string to measure. They know the difference between “wet” and “dry” and can test to see which materials are waterproof, with help. They can tell the difference between “hard” and “soft” materials. Lower attaining pupils experience the feel of the different materials.
82. By the end of Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils place pot traps for mini-beasts, collect them and examine them with a magnifying glass. They identify, for example, a spider or wood louse

from a picture in a key. They can count the legs of a spider and one knew that spiders have eight legs and that snails have shells. They know that cooking and heating change materials that some materials are attracted to a magnet and that toys can be pushed and pulled. They ask the question, "What if---?" The highest attaining pupils fill in a recording sheet, with help. Lower attaining pupils are able to look at, and try to touch and feel the mini-beasts. They watch the effects of a magnet on different materials.

83. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils have planted seeds and can observe and record their growth and development, with help. They know about breathing and digestion and about the use of their sense of smell, sight and taste. The highest attaining pupils understand that plants make their own food and that they will die if deprived of light or water. Lower attaining pupils plant seeds, with help, and watch the seeds grow. They can experience their own sense of smell, sight and taste.
84. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils know that oxygen is breathed in and carbon dioxide breathed out. They predict the effects of solvents, for example, nail-varnish remover, test these out and record their results, some with help. They know that vibrations produce sounds. Lower attaining pupils are aware of their own breathing, look at the effects of different solvents and smell them. They listen to different sounds and look at the things that produce them.
85. Teaching was satisfactory in the last report: it is now good. This represents a good improvement. The science co-ordinator, who teaches all the science, is a science specialist. She has a good understanding of the subject and high expectations of the pupils and students. Planning makes good use of materials from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work and a detailed knowledge of the pupils needs. The activities are always appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The teacher demonstrates high expectations by the consistent use of scientific terminology. The basic skills of communication and numeracy are developed through the use of questioning, the identification of key words, and through measuring and weighing in practical work. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to search for information and to enable curriculum access for pupils and students who find difficulty in writing. Good use is made of photographs for recording the pupils work.
86. Lessons include a good range of practical teaching methods. This leads to good quality learning. The activities are well chosen to meet the needs of the pupils and there is always plenty to do. As a result, the pupils maintain their interest well and behave well. For the few pupils and students who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition, behaviour plans are used effectively to enable them to join in and to prevent the learning of others being disturbed. Questioning is used well to enable the pupils to recall what they know and what they have already learned. It is used well to enable pupils to make predictions in response to "What do you think will happen if ----?" Learning support assistants enable all the pupils and students to join in: they are well briefed and knowledgeable about the subject and, as a result of this, lead group work within the lessons very effectively. Ongoing assessment is effective, as it is linked to the pupils' individual targets and used effectively to plan the next steps of learning.
87. Learning is generally good, but satisfactory for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders as they are not always fully occupied, for example, being taken out of the room when agitated. Pupils are keen to learn and maintain their interest well and this is directly related to well-planned lessons, with carefully chosen activities. They show increased level of skill, for example in looking for detail when observing. They take pleasure in their achievements and in the achievements of others. The pupils' capacity to work independently is limited by the nature of their learning difficulties but it is noticeable that this ability increases, as they get older. The pupils' behaviour is always good in lessons and this relates directly to the teachers' good group management skills, with clear boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition respond well to the teachers behaviour support plans and as a result, disruptive behaviour is minimal. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain good, as in the last inspection.

88. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator and the monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Curriculum planning was judged as unsatisfactory in the last report; it is now good, which indicates a very good improvement. There are appropriate schemes of work, which now link well to the National Curriculum programmes of study and to schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The time given to the subject is now satisfactory. The accommodation shares space with design and technology (resistant materials) and is good, overall and well used. The resources remain good and the school makes very effective use of the school grounds, in particular the ponds and wild area, for practical work about living things in their environment. Good use is also made of a local field studies centre.

## **ART**

89. Standards of achievement have risen since the last inspection and are now good at all key stages. This indicates a very good improvement. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils are able to distinguish between colours and some can match them. These pupils colour within the lines of shapes with brushes. They roll out and cut shapes out of salt dough, with help. Lower attaining pupils respond to different colours and apply paint with brushes, with help. They touch and feel salt dough and feel shapes made out of it. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils produce collages by sticking a range of papers, including tissue paper. They weave paper to make a pattern. They use sponges to produce patterns and to form pictures. Lower attaining pupils join in the same activities but need more help. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils describe the pictures they have seen at an art gallery. They paint recognisable pictures of daffodils. They select and weave wool, with help, to match the colours of a riverbank scene that they have previously painted. Lower attaining pupils join in with the painting activities, with help. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils are increasing their skills with paints and pencils. Pupils use a camera and can process black and white prints, with help.
90. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, overall, in the last inspection. It is now good which indicates a very good improvement. The teachers plan and prepare the lessons well, with activities carefully chosen to meet the needs of the pupils and students. Good use is made of photographs for recording the pupils and students work. The learning support assistants are well briefed and support the pupils and students well. Teachers reinforce communication skills through questioning and discussion of the artwork being produced. The teaching methods are good, overall, with a good pace to lessons and plenty to do, which keeps the pupils fully occupied and well behaved. The result of this good teaching is good learning for the pupils. Pupils use their new skills enthusiastically, for example, when painting with a range of colours.
91. The subject is led well and there are well-structured schemes of work based on the National Curriculum and guidance from the Curriculum and Qualifications Authority (QCA). However, insufficient three-dimensional work is currently being taught. There was criticism of the monitoring of the subject in the last report but this is now being done well. The accommodation is satisfactory and the resources remain satisfactory, although there is still a shortage of materials for three-dimensional work and for the use of information and communication technology.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

92. The pupils and students achievement was judged as unsatisfactory, overall, in the last report. It is now good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Overall, this represents a very good improvement at Key Stages 1 and 2 and good improvement at the other key stages. All pupils make good progress in understanding the need for health and safety procedures in the workshop and food technology room.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils cut paper, card and wool with scissors and paste them to make a decorated plate, some with help. They select patterns on fabrics and cut and paste paper on to larger sheets in order to replicate the patterns. Lower attaining pupils join in, but with much more help needed. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils can

select parts of a model car from a construction kit and assemble them with help. Lower attaining pupils can stick pictures of parts of a car on to a pro-forma with help. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils follow a design sheet with symbols and mix and bake cakes, with help. They discuss what they have made. They design and make a pizza. Lower attaining pupils join in and feel and smell ingredients and indicate preferences. Higher attaining pupils discuss the appropriate materials to be used and cut and fix wood and card to make bird boxes and picture frames, with help. They can make toast and boil an egg, with help. They can assemble pre-formed parts, using glue and pins, with help. Lower attaining pupils can join in, but need considerably more help. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils use acrylic to make picture frames, follow pictorial recipes, design and make bookends from wood, decorating them with wooden blocks and cylinders. They assemble them with glue and pins and either paint or varnish them. They use powdered enamel to make enamelled squares on copper, with help. Lower attaining pupils work well with learning support assistants to assemble materials. Throughout the school, the pupils demonstrate an increasing ability to work with materials and tools. By the end of Key Stage 4 some can also use a belt sander to finish wooden articles. They demonstrate an increasing ability to work out designs and select materials and tools. However, evaluation skills are still underdeveloped, particularly for older pupils and this results in their satisfactory rather than good achievement.

94. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory, overall, in the last report; it is now good overall and this indicates a good improvement. Some criticism was made about the teachers understanding of the design element in the last report. This aspect is now good, although the pupils' evaluation of their products is unsatisfactory. Despite this, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good, overall. Criticism was also made of the teachers planning in the last report. It is now good, with clear, progressive schemes of work, relating well to the needs of individual pupils and students. There are clear individual targets and regular, ongoing and effective assessment, including the use of photographs. Teaching methods are good, with a full range of activities planned to include all pupils.
95. Learning is good, with pupils enjoying the opportunity to use develop their skills; for example, when preparing their pizzas, pupils listened attentively to the support staff and changed their topping according to their personal taste.
96. Subject leadership is now good, indicating very good improvement since the last inspection. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator, who is a design and technology specialist and the monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Curriculum planning, judged as unsatisfactory in the last report, is now good. There are appropriate schemes of work based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. The accommodation shares space with science and is good. However, it is now well used. The food technology area is good. The resources for design and technology (resistant materials) are good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory, overall, at Key Stages 3 and 4. It should be noted that the previous inspection judged the facilities to be excellent for the limited range of work being undertaken at that time. With improving standards teachers use a wider range of work and the judgment of this inspection is that the facilities allow good standards to be achieved.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. The pupils' achievements in geography are good. This means that standards have risen well since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils look for and find key objects or places around the school. They take information from a secondary source, e.g. a photograph and match it to the real object. Outside in the school grounds, the pupils are able to match features from photographs and they are able to match items in the street and in the town centre. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher achieving pupils have an awareness of different countries beyond their immediate environment. They are aware of the difference between villages and towns and track routes on a map. At the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils are able to refer to a map of Spalding and show the location of the school. Pupils are able to describe verbally the route to take to get to the town centre. They are aware of the relative size of London, how long it takes to travel to London and the facilities that are available. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 can follow a map of Spalding. Pupils at the end of this Key Stage are aware of dangers to the environment, and in physical geography learn about the changes in a river from its source to its mouth, after seeing the River Welland from different points along its path. Lower attaining pupils differentiate between different types of houses.
98. The teaching in geography is good. Lessons are well planned and include an appropriate range of activities including regular visits to parks, lakes and rivers. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge but know the individual pupils well and this means that the work is at the right level to enable pupils to learn. The pupils enjoy their new skills, for example when finding an object from the photograph they realise that they are making progress. There has been a good improvement in geography since the last inspection. There is now good co-ordination, including the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning. Pupils are now regularly taught geography and the production of good schemes of work has enabled the teaching of the subject to be more focused. There is good use of resources and the facilities of the local community.

## **HISTORY**

99. No history lessons took place during the course of the inspection, which means that the judgements about the subject relate to discussions with staff, an examination of the pupils and students work and of wall displays and photographs and of the teachers' records.
100. The pupils progress was judged to be unsatisfactory in the last report. Achievements are now good at all key stages, indicating a very good improvement. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils appreciate the concept of a sequence of events, including past, present and that things happened yesterday and a long time ago. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to become aware of the sequence of regular events in their lives, such as meals and staff use specific objects to reinforce their understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils have visited a Tudor house and can spot and discuss the differences between old and new buildings. They know something about the life of a child fifty years ago. Lower attaining pupils experience the visits and stories about past events. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils understand the concept of the passage of time better and can follow the sequence of events on a time line. Lower attaining pupils look at old and new buildings and touch and feel their textures. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils know something of the changes that took place in the period 1500-1700, especially in the development of government. They examine the interior of a Victorian house and note the colours and textures and patterns of the textiles involved.
101. It was not possible to judge the pupils and students attitudes and behaviour in lessons but their work is well kept and indicates that they are interested and involved in it. The displays of history work around the school indicate involvement and commitment. The evidence suggests that teaching is now good. Plans and schemes of work relate well to the pupils' needs and indicate a good understanding of the subject and high expectations. Good use is made of links with art and design in producing pictures and displays of, for example, Tudor houses. Good use is also made of ongoing assessment, which is used to revise the pupils' targets well.

102. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. Planning was judged to be poor in the last report and is now good, with detailed planning at all stages and in relation to the pupils and students targets: this indicates an excellent improvement. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning well. The subject is now well resourced, which is also an improvement on the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. At the time of the last inspection, information and communications technology was only taught within other subject areas and not as a discrete subject. Although the subject is still taught within other subjects, it is now timetabled as a separate subject as well and this has had a positive effect on standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory: Achievement is now satisfactory, overall, in all key stages. This improvement is mainly because of the separate lessons that follow a good scheme of work with clear and appropriate targets for each pupil and student.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils open files and save them, with help. They control a cursor with a roller ball. They use switches to control model cars. One pupil used a touch pad to control a squeaky duck. Low attaining pupils use switches, with help, and watch a pattern on the screen.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils use appropriate programs to type simple sentences. They use a graphics program to draw curved and straight lines. They sequence and program a moving robot. Lower attaining pupils touch keypads, roller balls and control them to enter lines and colours, with help. They can watch the robot and its sequence of movements. One pupil was enabled to join in a speaking and listening session in literacy through the use of a communicator.
106. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils can open programs and files using a standard mouse. They can enter text with the keyboard using a word processor. One pupil can use a desktop publishing program to enter text and clip art, with help. The pupils can spell check and change the font with help. They can use a variety of switch-controlled appliances, including a moving robot, radios, microwave ovens and grills. Lower attaining pupils can enter simple text and clip art with help and can use big switches for appliances and communication aids. Most use software that produces symbols in addition to words to enable them to type in their work or input a story. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils have developed their computing skills further and are using them to produce simple newsletters. They can find information on CD-ROM and the Internet, with help. They can use symbol-producing software to produce recipe sheets. They can control appliances in the food technology area and program a sequence of movements into the robot. Lower attaining pupils can enter text and clip art with help and can follow sequences of symbols for controlling appliances, with help.
107. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in the last report, which was based on the subject being taught within other subject areas. It is now good, which indicates a good improvement. The teachers knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. The learning support assistants provide good support for individual pupils and groups of pupils in specific information and communications technology lessons and when pupils are using equipment in other subject areas. Lessons include a good range of teaching methods; for example, explanation of what the task involves followed by supported individual or small group work. The teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well, including those pupils who present challenging behaviour as a result of their condition. Good use is made of ongoing assessment sheets linked to the pupils' individual targets and this information is used well when new lessons are planned. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils' learning is now good. Pupils are interested when using the computer, although on occasions they will change the program without permission. The teachers generally identify this behaviour quickly and they take appropriate action. Information and communications technology is used well within literacy and numeracy sessions.

108. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator and the monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Curriculum planning was judged as unsatisfactory in the last report. It is now good, which indicates a very good improvement. There are appropriate schemes of work, which now link well to the National Curriculum programmes of study. The time given to the subject is now satisfactory. All classrooms have at least one computer and resources are good and well managed.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

109. As no lesson took place during the inspection, and there is little written evidence, it is not possible to make a judgment on the pupils' achievements. Teacher's records show that the pupils are following an appropriate course and are beginning to study appropriate topics such as the names of classroom items and French greetings. Individual assessments show that older pupils have studied appropriate topics over the last three terms and individuals can recall specific words and phrases.
110. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the subject and has conducted a subject review. This has identified appropriate priorities, including the improvement of resources and a possible visit to France. However, due to changes in co-ordination and the lack of evidence it is not possible to make a judgment on improvement since the last inspection.

### **MUSIC**

111. The pupils' achievements in music are good. This means that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 recognise familiar tunes and join in with actions or attempt to sing along. They listen attentively to new pieces of music. Lower attaining pupils, including those with profound and complex learning disabilities, show pleasure when hearing music and respond to the support and singing of the teacher and learning support assistants. Higher attaining pupils in and at the end of Key Stage 2 play un-tuned percussion instruments in time with a familiar piece of music. They can increase or decrease volume in line with the teachers' instruction. In a good lesson, pupils had created their own symbols for "loud" and "soft" and one pupil was able to compose and conduct by rearranging the symbols. Lower attaining pupils respond positively to the sounds of the instruments and the physical prompts of the learning support assistants. No lessons took place for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 but records show that higher attaining pupils can distinguish between pieces of music and identify features that they enjoy.
112. Teaching is good and the quality identified in the last inspection has been maintained. Lessons are well planned, with a clear structure that includes whole-group work and individual targets for all pupils. These are well matched to the pupils' levels of ability. The teacher's good subject knowledge means that appropriate musical language, such as *pitch* or *dynamics* is used where appropriate with higher attaining pupils. Activities are equally well planned for pupils with profound and complex learning disabilities including how learning support assistants are deployed. Lessons have good pace and appropriate resources are used. The pupils' behaviour is well managed and the number of learning support assistants available ensures that all pupils are able to participate.
113. The effective teaching leads to good learning. The pupils are interested and listen to the teacher or learning support assistant. They follow instructions and try hard. Higher attaining pupils apply their learning, for example, by using new signs or actions. The good planning of the lessons ensures that the pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. The pupils are enthusiastic and often pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition show pleasure at the range of music used.

114. The scheme of work is good and is being appropriately amended to link with the new National Curriculum programmes of study. There is good assessment of attainment for higher attaining pupils while the range of experiences of pupils with profound and complex learning disabilities is recorded well. Resources are good. The subject has continued to improve since the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

115. The pupils' achievements are good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in physical education as they get older, and pupils with profound and complex learning disabilities benefit from individual physical development programmes.
116. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils make progress in ball control, beginning to intercept and stop the ball. Lower attaining pupils are working on walking skills. At the end of Key Stage 2 the highest attaining pupils have gained confidence in swimming and can swim without armbands. Pupils understand about the need to 'warm up' before physical activities. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have developed skills in working as a team and are good at turn taking in activities. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils combine low-level gymnastics with problem solving and the highest attaining pupils are able to participate in simple orienteering challenges.
117. Teaching is good and during the inspection ranged from good to very good. Lesson plans are good and detail the range of activities to take place and appropriate individual targets; for example, a specific activity for a pupil with complex physical disabilities. Lesson plans identify activities to warm up and support skill development. Lessons have good pace and pupils are challenged to participate. The pupils' behaviour is managed well and pupils who present challenging behaviour as part of their condition seem to enjoy the more physical activities. The teaching of physical education has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory.
118. Learning is good. The pupils are involved throughout the session and try hard. In the pool, pupils with complex physical disabilities are relaxed and clearly enjoy the sensation of floating. Older pupils play well in teams and encourage one another to try harder.
119. The very good facilities available for physical education enable pupils to participate with enthusiasm. The outdoor area has a good level grassed area, marked out for playing football, and the hall has a good variety of gymnastics equipment. The swimming pool is well equipped with good sound and light facilities and with good changing areas and toilet facilities. The subject has good management and co-ordination with good monitoring by the co-ordinator. The curriculum is enriched by visits from Peterborough United football team and the use of other facilities, although this is occasionally limited by the lack of male staff at the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

120. The provision for religious education is good. Teaching is good and as a result pupils achieve well and standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The good range of resources and artefacts is well used and helps pupils to understand what they are learning about. The teachers are well prepared to introduce ideas, such as morals and the importance of belief in their lessons.
121. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were very involved in a lesson where they were expected to create a prayer of thanks. They select a range of picture cards and sort them into foods that they like in order to give thanks for these. Pupils demonstrate the good progress they make in their learning by indicating their preferences through smiling and making vocal sounds. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are given the opportunity to watch videos related to work such as Christening in the Anglican Church. This is further enhanced by the good provision of artefacts related to both symbols, such as candles, and reminders of the celebration such as gowns and presents. Key words, signs and

symbols are used well to help pupils follow the content of the video and the use of the various elements of the Christening. Pupils make good progress in their learning when they are able to discuss why baptism takes place and can give views both for and against the celebration.

122. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has a good knowledge of the subject. The scheme of work for the subject has been recently reviewed and is appropriately based on the draft Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. An effective audit of the subject, as part of the monitoring and evaluation policy, has highlighted areas for development and resource needs. Colour photographs in pupils' folders record the celebration of festivals throughout the year as well as aspects of other faiths, such as Islam.
123. Good use is made of the local environment and places of worship. Pupils successfully relate aspects of religion to their own family life. One pupil could describe how the celebration of baptism took place in his own home and other pupils were interested in his account.

## **POST 16 PROVISION**

124. The students achieve well in English and literacy. The students experience a wide range of English activities to enhance their learning in order to provide greater access to work and personal development opportunities. They continue to use the signs and symbols that they have found so useful in increasing their communication skills. The recording of their work within the vocational parts of their work enhances their writing and spelling and, overall, they make good progress in their learning. Students with limited literacy skills are well supported by learning support assistants to produce their own work using information and communications technology.
125. The students achieve well in numeracy and in the use of number in real life. The highest attaining students recognise different coins and can identify how to make up amounts such as 49p. When working out a household budget they were able to compare prices on an advertising flyer from one supermarket with costs obtained from a web site. Lower attaining students can identify items that they wish to purchase and put together a shopping list.
126. Students are confident users of information and communications technology. Higher attaining students are able to work independently on a piece of word-processing, for example' or to co-operate in producing a news sheet with others.
127. At the time of the last inspection the students were largely taught the same programme as the pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. This still happens in science and other subjects the students are involved in similar work to pupils at Key Stage 4. However, the good use of individual targets in all lessons ensures that their learning is at the most appropriate level.
128. The school has used specific funding to employ a teacher for one day a week to provide a distinctive curriculum. This is successful and ensures that the students combine work for lifeskills and vocational education. Their achievements are recorded and accredited using the ASDAN "Towards Independence" module. Students have compared different types of housing, planned journeys and regularly shop and cook for themselves. Students take part in a very good programme of careers education and work experience. One student has recently had a very successful placement and was able to identify her own learning and needs for future work. The students participate in a further separate day each week when they attend Holbeach College. They are well supported by learning support assistants on these days.
129. The teaching of post-16 students is good with the main strength deriving from the high quality of the individual target setting. For example, in a lesson prior to shopping for their lunch each student had their own target and worked in their individual way to achieve it. The students' attainment is recorded in detail and used to inform future planning. The relationships between the staff and students are very good and students are treated as mature individuals. They are prepared to express their views and encouraged to make their own choices. Learning support assistants provide good support in all situations, for example, on work experience or when

students are using the computer. Teaching methods are appropriate for the nature of the group. Teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations of adult behaviour from the students who respond well. In lessons with younger pupils the students maintain this standard of behaviour and learn well.

130. The students' learning is good. Higher attaining students recognise their own progress and demonstrate the beginnings of self-evaluation. For example, a student's work experience record not only identified what she enjoyed but also the tasks that she found difficult and those she found easier. She was able to identify her own learning needs, for example her need to use transport independently. Lower attaining students recognise their own progress when after working on the computer they are able to print out an account of their activities using symbols.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

131. Pupils make good progress and achieve well during their time in school. Many pupils have severe difficulties to overcome but they improve their ability to communicate with adults and peers. They learn to work with and alongside others, gain independence and improve their own powers of concentration.
132. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils express simple preferences and complete simple tasks related to hygiene and dressing. All pupils respond to familiar routines, for example, in choosing drinks, biscuits, or favourite activities. Some can choose their favourite song when learning counting and number. By the end of Key Stages 2 and 3, higher attaining pupils follow instructions and, with support, make good progress with their work. They are increasingly able to talk about what they are doing and explain the activity. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils played out the roles of customers and waiters in a café, some explaining that they made choices from a menu and needed money to pay for what they bought. As pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4 and begin post-16 studies some are able to work with minimum supervision, communicating and interacting confidently. They sustain concentration for periods long enough to complete their tasks. A group of students planned and cooked a midday meal and after enjoying it, they washed the pots and cleared away. They are increasingly aware of themselves as individual personalities. They understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. They understand the wider world outside of school and are able to talk about how they spend their weekends and leisure time, what hobbies they enjoy, what television programmes they follow. Within their individual capabilities they are acquiring skills to prepare them for the moment when they must leave the school and move on.
133. Teaching is good. In all lessons, as well as whole school activities, such as lunchtime and playtime, there is very good planning, which includes a range of appropriate activities and specific learning targets for individual pupils. The pace of lessons is good and all staff have high expectations, which result in appropriate levels of challenge. In a careers lesson for key stage four pupils, for example, they were required to think about their own skills and interests and then match those to pictures of occupations and working situations. In all lessons, teachers and support staff work closely as a team interchanging roles to work with different groups of pupils with complete ease. Staff manage behaviour well and the occasional challenging behaviour of a few specific pupils with particular disabilities, is handled well. Disruption is minimised and relationships remain very good. All staff use questioning well to extend pupils' reasoning skills. For example, during a visit to the supermarket, the quality of questioning pushed pupils beyond simply selecting and pricing items on their shopping list, into comparing the prices of alternative makes and sizes, thinking about value for money and what amount of goods to buy for different numbers of people.
134. The assessment and recording of progress is done very well. This allows an appropriate impact on future planning of activities and lessons, as well as an appropriate feedback regarding pupils' individual education plan targets. The planning of targets and assessment for lunchtime activities is particularly useful and helps the school to produce a wider picture of overall progress.

135. Pupil's attitudes to the subject are good. They particularly enjoy the practical work and outside visits. They enjoy and respond well to the variety of topics that comprise the curriculum. They cope well with the specific demands placed on them during lunchtime and break-times and know and accept these routines.
  
136. Since the last inspection, the development of an integrated personal, health and social education curriculum has been a priority. This has now been established successfully as a full part of the school's work. The content is clear and suitable for the widely differing needs of the pupils in the school and this includes sex education, and the preparation for work and life beyond the school. Specific targets are now included in individual education plans, where appropriate. There is an established process of evaluating the impact of the curriculum and the subject is being well managed to ensure that priorities are carried forward into the school development plan.