

INSPECTION REPORT

RICHMOND HILL SCHOOL

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109743

Headteacher: Mr M. W. Love

Reporting inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander
21265

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th November 2000

Inspection number: 223658

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:	5 - 16
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Sunridge Ave Luton Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L. Robertson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs F. Gander 21265	Registered inspector	Art	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school (1)
		Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements (2.1)
		Personal and Social Education	Teaching and Learning (3)
			Leadership and management (7)
Mrs C. Lorenz 9282	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development (2.2)
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety (5)
			Partnership with its parents and carers (6)
Mrs C. Richardson 22058	Team Inspector	English	Quality and range of learning opportunities (4)
		Music	
		Modern Languages	
Mrs A. Heakin 30243	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Humanities	
		Religious Education	
Mr T Watts 19386	Team inspector	Science	
		Physical education	
Mrs J. Charlesworth 21501	Team Inspector	English as an additional language	
		Special Educational Needs	
		Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is part of a reorganisation of special education in the authority that is spread over five years. The school is, therefore, in the midst of changing from an all age school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties to a primary school for pupils with complex needs. At the present time, there are 43 pupils with moderate learning difficulties who are between the ages of 12 and 16. In the primary department, there are 21 pupils who are between the ages of 6 and 11 years. Some of these pupils, such as, the majority in Year 6, were at the school previously. They have moderate learning difficulties, and also have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The other three classes in the primary department contain pupils with complex needs, including severe learning difficulties, autism, speech and language difficulties, and hearing impairment. The majority were transferred from other schools within the LEA at the beginning of this school year. The attainment levels of the pupils entering the primary department are well below that expected of pupils of a similar age. The attainment levels of pupils entering the secondary department are higher, but still below those expected at this age. This reflects their special educational needs and all pupils have a statement. A high percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals, 38 per cent are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 23 per cent of the total number of pupils in the school have English as a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The teaching is good overall, and the majority of pupils achieve well by the time they leave school. It is very well led, and the excellent commitment of all the staff is having a positive impact on shaping the future of the school. In the short time the pupils with complex learning difficulties have been in the school, the staff have not had enough time to gain the necessary skills and experience needed so that pupils make good progress. At this point in time, the provision for these pupils is satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is an excellent commitment by all concerned to develop and improve the school as it undergoes re-organisation.
- It makes excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this leads to pupils behaving very well, and having very positive attitudes to, and enthusiasm, for school.
- It provides very well for art, humanities, French and music in the secondary department.
- It provides a good range of external accreditation for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.
- It provides a very good range of extra curricular activities, and makes very good use of community links when planning learning opportunities.
- There are excellent supportive relationships between all adults and pupils.

What could be improved

- The development of, and the speed at which, all staff gain expertise and confidence in meeting the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties.
- The development of skills in, and the use of, information and communication technology at Key Stage 2.
- The monitoring, analysing and evaluation of information that the school gathers.
- The links between the targets set for pupils and the reporting, at their Annual Review of the progress they make.

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 1996 and there were a large number of areas that needed improvement, including leadership and management and the role of the governing body, and achievement in mathematics, physical education, and design and technology. There has been good improvement since then, and the majority of the key issues had been addressed by the time the school was monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1997. As well as completing the areas for improvement set out in the last inspection, the school has managed the changes brought about by re-organisation, including major building alterations very well. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning for the majority of pupils, in the standards of reading and writing, and in the range of external accreditation being gained by pupils. The school's capacity and commitment for improvement is excellent.

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 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
reading	C	B	good	B
writing	C	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	B		

Pupils, by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in all areas of the curriculum, including Literacy. Those pupils who are in years 5 and 6 make good progress in mathematics as a result of the well implemented Numeracy Strategy. Pupils whose learning difficulties are more complex, at this point in time, are also making satisfactory progress. However, staff do not have the experience in planning, teaching and assessing these pupils and if standards are to be maintained, this skills need to be increase rapidly. Pupils at Key Stage 2 do not make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology due to its under use. The pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and make at least good progress in all subjects. In music and French, they achieve very well due to the very good teaching. The school's approach to the planning and teaching of humanities through art is very effective and results in the older pupils making very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and have very good attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well and most respond very quickly to guidance and support.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development of pupils is very good. They establish excellent relationships with one another, and especially with staff who they value for support and guidance.
Attendance	This is in line with similar schools and therefore satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	with Complex Needs	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good, and meets the needs of the majority of pupils especially at Key Stages 3 and 4. This results in pupils achieving well and making good progress. However, teachers' skills and expertise in meeting the needs of the pupils with complex learning difficulties are still developing, and affects pupils' achievements. Teaching is good or better in 75 per cent of lessons, and it is very good or excellent in 23 per cent. In one lesson of religious education at Key Stage 2, the expectations of the pupils were too high and this resulted in unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and personal and social education is good overall. The expertise, and the expectations, of the teachers who teach music and French is very good, and this results in very good teaching in these subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is also very good in humanities where there is a team teaching approach. The skills of communication, literacy and numeracy are taught well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, this is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in two classes in Key Stage 2. At this present time it is satisfactory for pupils with complex learning needs, as the curriculum is not yet fully in place and is still developing. A very good range of extra curricular activities is provided. Links with community support the breadth of the curriculum very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This has been successful and pupils have made progress. However, the support provided targets their learning difficulty rather than developing English language skills and this approach is not suitable for the new intake of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is an excellent aspect of the school. The school makes great efforts to help pupils in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this has a positive impact on their behaviour and their attitudes.
How well the school cares	This is very good. Child protection procedures are very effective and all

for its pupils	pupils receive very good personal support and guidance. However, the monitoring of, and the reporting to parents of the progress pupils make in their targets needs improving.
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The school works very hard to establish links with parents. Appropriate information concerning events and meetings is sent to them, but many choose not to attend. However, many parents regard the school as successful and social events are well attended. Overall, its partnership is satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is very good. There has been a very focused and clear intention to continue improving the quality of the education, as well as developing a new school and managing the process of change. The effects of this change on the older pupils who remain at the school and the standards they achieve have been given careful consideration.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils these very well, and has been actively involved in all decisions around the future of the school. They have actively monitored the changing situation and worked with the headteacher to provide stability for staff and pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory overall. Priorities for development are very appropriate and well monitored, but whole school targets for improvement are not set, and there are no systems in place to analyse and evaluate how well the school is doing. The principles of best value are applied when purchasing resources and services.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are used well to improve the quality of the provision and standards of teaching and learning. However, there is insufficient expertise at a management level to use information and communication technology effectively in day-to-day management.

The accommodation is very good. The number of staff and their expertise in meeting the needs of the pupils with moderate learning difficulties is good. All staff are undergoing intensive and thorough retraining so that they can effectively teach and care for pupils with complex learning needs. However, this training needs to be intensified to keep abreast with the increasing number of pupils that are coming into the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like the school. • The behaviour of the pupils. • The way the school deals with problems or concerns. • The high expectations the school has for achievement. • The way the school is led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of activities outside school. • The amount of homework.

The team endorses the positive views of the parents. The team recognises that the transport arrangements inhibit after school activities, but finds that the school provides a very good range of activities at other times outside school. The amount of homework set for pupils is appropriate to their needs, and supports learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The achievements and the progress pupils make are overall good. However, on balance, pupils achieve better in Key Stages 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 2. This is because the teachers of the older pupils are very experienced in teaching pupils with moderate learning difficulties. They are teaching subjects in which they have a high level of expertise. At Key Stage 2, there are pupils with a wide range of complex learning needs, in two out of four classes. Due to the change that is taking place in the school, not all teachers have yet developed a high level of expertise in teaching and meeting the needs of these pupils.

2. Due to the differing needs and abilities of the pupils in Key Stage 2, it is inappropriate to report on the achievement and progress of pupils with complex educational needs with the rest of the pupils at this key stage. Therefore, achievement and progress of these pupils are reported separately. At the time of inspection, there was only one pupil at Key Stage 1, and it is therefore not appropriate to report on this Key Stage separately.

Achievement and progress of pupils with complex learning needs

3. These pupils have been in the school a relatively short time and staff are still assessing their needs and planning individual targets. Based on the observation of these pupils during the inspection, the achievement and progress they make is overall satisfactory. In English, they make good progress, and these pupils enjoy listening to stories and participate in the telling of "the Hungry Caterpillar". They are beginning to understand and follow instructions, and through the effective support in some lessons of the speech and language service, they are improving their listening and communication skills. They are beginning to understand and use signs and symbols for communication. Pupils show an interest in the pictures in books and listen to stories. In the development of writing, pupils, with help from adults, construct short sentences connected with the story of the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. They practise forming the letters of their name by overwriting or copying. Through the teaching of numeracy, achievement and progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils are acquiring an understanding of number, and thread and count beads. They name numbers, use counters to count to four, and sort and match objects. They distinguish small from large when selecting circles to use as templates in art and design. In science, the overall planning for this group of pupils is not yet fully in place and judgements of their achievements and progress cannot be made.

4. In the majority of other subjects, this group of pupils are making satisfactory progress. In art and design they select different colour papers, know the names of green and red, and join circles together using glue, to form a caterpillar. Pupils listen to music, join in musical movement and in the morning exercises. They copy the actions of others. There are some

areas of the curriculum, in which teachers have not yet developed the skills and teaching techniques, to ensure that all pupils achieve well. These include religious education, physical education and information and communication technology, where teachers' expectations of pupils' involvement and achievement are too high.

Achievement and progress of pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

5. Overall, other pupils across the rest of school achieve well, and make good progress. In English, pupils achieve well in all aspects and this is an improvement from the last inspection. By the time they leave school at the age of sixteen, they have made sufficient progress to gain distinctions or merits in the Diploma of Vocational Education (DOVE). They achieve well against the targets set for them in individual education plans. In speaking and listening, progress is good and this has been maintained from the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils listen very attentively to the class story, and ask and answer relevant questions. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils are more confident and are able to discuss and take part in presentations, for example, at end of lessons or in assemblies. These skills are enhanced by the inclusion of drama in the curriculum.

6. Pupils' achievement and progress in reading is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 discuss the pictures in their books, understand simple text, and use the pictures to interpret people's feelings and emotions. They read simple stories fluently. In Key Stages 3 and 4, through the implementation of literacy sessions, pupils are making good progress in reading. Lower attaining pupils have improved their knowledge of letter sounds and use it to build up words. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4, the higher attaining pupils follow a story, pay good attention to the details, predict what might happen, and talk about the differences between characters. Pupils become enthusiastic readers, finding references to explain why they think as they do and making relevant observations. Year 11 pupils discuss the moral issues that arise from a story and enter into mature discussions.

7. Pupils' achievements in writing are overall satisfactory. The higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress, and some are making good progress in developing handwriting. This is due to the attention that is paid to the development of writing skills and the correct formation of letters. Pupils write words and simple sentences in workbooks, and practise their spelling patterns. Achievement and progress in writing is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is the result of the good opportunities to practise writing that occur in most English lessons, and also in other subjects. For example, there are effective links between art and English, where the English teacher supports pupils' written work and research on famous artists.

8. Pupils' progress and their achievement in mathematics have improved since the last inspection when it was judged that a significant number of pupils were underachieving. Since then, the school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and now achievements of pupils in Key Stage 2 are overall satisfactory, and in Key Stages 3 and 4, they are good. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils know their number bonds to ten, complete addition, know the months of the year and can identify simple angles. They convert pounds into pence, and identify fractions, such as, quarters and thirds. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils solve mathematical problems and simple money problems. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes, estimate and check length, and use tally charts and block graphs to show their findings of surveys. Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stage 4, and by the end of the key stage an increasing number of pupils gain merits and distinctions in the Southern Examining Group (SEG) Certificate of Achievement, and gain General

Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). They apply their mathematical understanding when interpreting the results of surveys; their work on statistics includes producing bar charts based on traffic accidents and stopping distances, and converting currency. They compile daily timetables, use maps, develop their money skills by writing cheques, and increase their awareness of budgeting. They use information and communication technology skills well in this subject.

9. In science, pupils' achievements and the progress they make are good in all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand the basic principles of how to conduct an investigation. They consider how to test ideas, and make observations and predictions. They know the different parts of plants, and which ones grow in different climates. They have considered the important features of a range of different materials and can classify examples into groups. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a more rigorous approach to the investigations. They set up and carry out simple tests safely, and then check their results. They have extended their knowledge of the human body, and now draw and label the different parts, such as, the ear and the eye. They know the functions of each and can describe how they work. Pupils have continued their work with materials. Through investigation, they have discovered which are the best insulators. They understand food chains. By the time pupils leave school at sixteen they have developed a sound experimental approach to science, sensibly discuss how to create a fair test, and predict more accurately, what might happen. Most are able to offer explanations as to why there are differences between results and predictions, and how they would set the investigation up differently on a future occasion. They have made good progress and have extended their knowledge of plants to include photosynthesis. They understand the principles behind electricity and magnetism.

10. The achievement and progress of pupils in all other subjects are overall good. In the secondary department, there are some subjects where pupils are achieving very well. These are humanities, art, French, and music. In humanities, the decision to combine it with art has been very effective. This fresh approach to the subject has resulted in pupils making very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of events and the practical experiences motivates them. Pupils' understanding of events, feeling and emotions is further extended through the good links with English, whereby pupils write stories and poems connected with the topics they are studying. In French, pupils' achievements are very good, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening. Pupils ask and answer questions in French about a range of topics. They are developing an appropriate awareness of the French culture. In this subject, the teacher has a very high level of expertise and has developed good teaching techniques with interesting activities that motivate the pupils. There are high expectations of pupils. Due to increased expectations of pupils' achievements in art, they now study and are entered for GCSE and gain good grades. In music, pupils achieve very well, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4 where a specialist music teacher teaches it. There is a good emphasis on music from different cultures and some pupils receive tuition for flute, clarinet and brass instruments from visiting specialist teachers.

11. The only subject where pupils underachieve is in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2. This is partly due to teacher's narrow range of expertise and skills in providing the whole range of the planned curriculum, and the disruption caused by the building works. There is insufficient evidence kept by teachers concerning the experiences and achievements of pupils so that pupils' progress in this subject can be evaluated.

12. Pupils with English as a second language make progress in line with their peers. However, the current approach is to improve pupils' literacy skills rather than developing English language skills. This is not appropriate for the pupils with more complex needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. These areas have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school, most are very eager to learn and parents are pleased that their children like their school.

14. Pupils, in all key stages have very good attitudes towards their work. The majority respond very well in lessons, and are interested in the content and the tasks set. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 concentrate very well. For example, in a Year 9 swimming lesson pupils' level of concentration was high and as a result all achieved well and made progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 also have very good attitudes and concentrate well. Pupils who have more complex learning difficulties concentrate for shorter periods of time, and need extra support to complete the tasks or listen. They and respond better when the language used by adults is simpler and supported by signs or symbols.

15. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is very good. They behave very well around the school, at break and lunchtimes. Most respond very quickly to the consistent behaviour management of staff. During the week of the inspection, there was only once incident of unacceptable behaviour in lessons. This was when a few Year 11 pupils decided to be disruptive during a science lesson. The teacher managed it well, but it disrupted the continuity of the learning. Those pupils in Year 6 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties respond well to a firm, but friendly, approach, and, as a result, complete their work and achieve well. Pupils across the school are polite to visitors and completely trustworthy. For example, the prizes for the merit system that are out on display at all times, have never been removed. During the week of the inspection, there were no incidents of bullying or inappropriate language. There has been one permanent exclusion from the school during the last school year.

16. Relationships in the school are excellent, and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils get with each other well throughout the school and work well in small groups. Although there are more boys than girls in the school, and some classes have far more boys in then than girls, for example, Year 6, there is harmony in lessons and activities. Likewise, there is also racial harmony. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of other pupils' beliefs and values, and the older pupils are generally eager to learn about other's cultures. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, help each other in lessons, show concern for others, and are willing to wait their turn. They allow others, who may be slower, time to answer. The relationships that pupils have with teachers and learning support assistants are also excellent. They respect and value the support, advice and guidance they are given. This results in pupils developing very good personal and social skills by the time they are sixteen. Examples were seen during the inspection of adults talking through with pupils, the impact of particular actions on other pupils' feeling. Pupils who are new to the school, or who have complex needs, are building positive relationships with the adults who work with them by communicating their needs and emotions.

17. Pupils' personal development is overall very good. At all ages, pupils take part in the daily running of the school. For example, they deliver registers to the office, tidy classrooms, and act as prefects. At Key Stage 4, they take up the opportunities offered for work experience and for link courses with local colleges. For many, this is the first opportunity they have of travelling independently. The confidence they demonstrate is the result of the very good preparation they receive in their Diploma of Vocational Education course (DOVE). Pupils in Key Stage 2, show they are able to take care of their own possessions, and see to their own personal needs. The personal development of pupils who have complex learning

needs is less well developed due to their complex needs. However, they listen to instructions carefully, and the most able take care of themselves, such as, for personal hygiene, and dressing and undressing.

18. Attendance is satisfactory. It is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection but it is in line with the average found in special schools. Pupils arrive punctually at school, and are punctual to lessons. This is an improvement from the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, teaching is good. It has improved greatly from the last inspection when there was an unacceptable percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of reading across the school has been helped by the schools' good strategies for implementing literacy, and has resulted in pupils, by the time they leave school at sixteen, making good progress. The teaching of mathematics at Key Stages 2 and 3 has improved, as has the teaching of design and technology, and of information and communication technology at Key Stages 3 and 4, and pupils' achievements are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. In lessons observed during this inspection, teaching was good or better in 75 per cent, and it was very good or excellent in 23 per cent. There was unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson of religious education at Key Stage 2 where expectations of pupils were too high.

20. In the two classes for pupils with complex needs at Key Stage 2, the staff are still learning how to communicate and teach the pupils. This means that pupils' needs are not yet being fully met, and they do not have the same opportunities for learning as their older peers. However, there are already clear strengths in teaching, which is very positive considering how early it is in the staff's new role. Particular strengths in teaching in both classes include excellent relationships with the pupils, good teamwork between the adults, and the real enthusiasm of all staff to support the pupils and help them make progress. These factors help pupils feel valued and secure which motivates them to concentrate and conform. Staff provide very good support for pupils' personal and social development.

21. However, the staff have yet to develop certain skills which will promote pupils' learning more effectively. For example, teachers do not make their intentions sufficiently clear to pupils. Language is sometimes too fast and complicated and is not reinforced by signing to help the pupils understand. There is insufficient repetition and consolidation of important words and points. Pupils' full attention is not always gained before a lesson starts, which means that they do not know what is happening and lose concentration very quickly. At these times, their behaviour may deteriorate. Sometimes, teachers try to do too much in a session, which leaves the pupils behind. At other times, the pace of lessons is very slow and there is no clear point to what they are doing. Whilst relationships between the adults are good, distinct roles and responsibilities within the classroom are not yet established. For example, this means that all staff stop work to deal with one particular pupil who may be misbehaving. This interrupts the flow of the lesson for the other pupils who lose concentration and start to wander. Staff are not yet fully secure in managing difficult or inappropriate behaviour, rather "keeping the peace" than improving pupils' social skills.

22. Teaching in the other classes at Key Stage 2, and throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 is overall good. For example, the abilities of all pupils are well met in Year 10, and all have equal opportunities for learning and making progress. Particular strengths include relaxed, warm relationships that encourage good levels of participation and discussion. Lessons are interesting. They motivate pupils and encourage very good behaviour. Explanations and demonstrations are clear, and recap on past work or go over difficult an aspect. This ensures

that pupils of all abilities understand, persevere, and learn. Good quality extra support is given by teachers and learning support assistant to pupils who find tasks more challenging, or who have difficulty with reading and writing.

23. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and personal and social education is good overall, and there is very good teaching in music and French at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is also very good in humanities at Key Stage 3, due to the arrangements for team teaching. Teachers in all three key stages teach the skills of communication, literacy and numeracy well and there is a consistent approach. However, while the teaching of information and communication technology is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, where it is taught by a specialist teacher, it is unsatisfactory across Key Stage 2. Here teachers do not have the range of skills and expertise to teach all the aspects of the curriculum. As a result, pupils' achievements are restricted to word processing and using programs to support their learning. In addition, teachers of pupils with complex learning difficulties need to develop extra skills in using specialised programs and switches.

24. The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language has been satisfactory in the past, and has addressed the needs of the pupils admitted to the school. As a result, they have made good progress in their development of English language. The support teacher for these pupils works mainly under the direction of the class teacher in support of class work. The assessments of pupils' abilities in their first language, and records of progress in developing English are not routinely kept. Due to past practice and the lack of suitable professional contact and development, the teacher is insufficiently aware of current good practice in teaching pupils with English as an additional language - particularly in the context of also having severe and complex learning difficulties. This aspect is now unsatisfactory for a growing number of pupils in the school. An increased awareness of good practice, together with developing clear identification and assessment procedures, need to be addressed if the service is to become effective in the new school.

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

25. The overall curriculum is of good quality and shows effective improvements since the previous inspection. The key issues in the last inspection have all been met, as the school has improved the quality of provision and standards of achievement in mathematics, physical education, and design and technology.

26. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus. It is broad, balanced and relevant. It is still in the development stage for some pupils at Key Stage 2 and is overall satisfactory. Policies are being amended and the school is adopting the 'EQUALS' curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4, in an age-appropriate environment, to communicate, become more independent and to gain in skills, knowledge and understanding. Policies have been updated regularly, and the schemes of work ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills build on previous learning. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established and is effective, and a satisfactory start has been made to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Both strategies are being successfully adapted to the needs of the pupils.

27. The school provides a good range of opportunities for its pupils. The teachers' planning for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4, and at the end of Key Stage 2, is based upon the National Curriculum programmes of study, and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

Medium term planning and individual lessons plans are closely linked to the individual needs of pupils and the assessment of their achievements. There is very good provision of external accreditation courses for pupils in Year 11, for example, through DOVE and GSCE. In Key Stage 2, the curriculum for pupils with complex learning needs is appropriately based on the "Equals Curriculum," with additional sensory and tactile activities. However, the current timetabling arrangements are based too much on the model found in the Foundation Stage. This is not appropriate for older pupils, even though they have complex learning needs. Music therapy and speech and language therapy is provided for those pupils who need it.

28. The school has a well established personal, social and health education curriculum, which includes sex education, and careers education and work experience for Key Stage 4 pupils. The curriculum is very good across the school. In its formal structure at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in conjunction with the DOVE course at Key Stage 4, it prepares pupils very well for their life after school. This helps them to form opinions, and become more informed about aspects of adult life, such as, drugs awareness. The careers and vocational educational element of the subject is well established in the school. All pupils have equal opportunities to take part in the experience, as well as to support from the careers service and colleges in the school's 'Industry Days'. This curriculum is in the process of being modified to meet the needs of the pupils with complex learning difficulties.

29. In the past, the great majority of pupils who have English as an additional language have been admitted to the school already understanding, speaking and in many cases writing English to a reasonable level. Support given has therefore tended to be general learning support rather than targeted at developing their English language skills. However, this approach is not suitable for the changing pupil group of the school. Most pupils are now admitted with significant communication difficulties. Insufficient consideration has been given to procedures to distinguish the cause, i.e. between general learning difficulties, specific language difficulties and difficulties in acquiring English as an additional language. Pupils' needs are not properly identified in order for the school to provide suitable help. Current support follows the "old school" pattern and is targeted at improving pupils' literacy skills. This is not necessarily appropriate for these pupils' level of development, for their stage of English language acquisition.

30. The majority of pupils live a distance from the school so that extra-curricular activities are difficult to arrange. However, provision for extra-curricular activities and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning are very good, and enrich the learning opportunities for all pupils. The wide range of activities and visits include, for example, a children's concert at the Barbican, the New Tate Gallery, a number of residential and camping visits, and Heathrow Airport. There are many visitors to the school, some of whom provide curricular links, for example, local artists and the London Symphony Orchestra. The school's links with the community are very good and they support pupils' learning well. A number of local organisations have made donations, which have enhanced resources in school. The school makes good use of the local area. Pupils have visited the courts, sing carols and play hand bells at the supermarket at Christmas. They visit places of natural beauty and historical or geographical importance.

31. The school has developed very effective links with other schools, including arrangements for outreach and integration. Pupils are prepared well for attendance at college, having "taster days". Great care was taken to ensure that pupils who transferred to other local schools last summer were well prepared and moved to this next stage in their education with confidence.

32. The school makes great efforts to help pupils in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an excellent aspect of the school, and has improved very well

since the previous inspection. Pupils across the school have many opportunities, such as, through history and English, to reflect on their lives, the lives of others, and about aspects of life. This is emphasised well in their writing of poetry, their written work, or in their discussions about events, such as, the Holocaust, wars and Remembrance week. A spiritual sense is also developed very well through, for example, pupils taking a pride in their work in design and technology, their new-found skills in physical education, the wonder of birth and growth in science, and the art and music they produce or experience. Pupils take part in regular assemblies and many "Special" assemblies, which celebrate festivals. There is a good range of opportunities to consider other faiths and pupils have visited a cathedral, a mosque and other places of worship. They have dressed up in the special clothes of different religions, and considered others' beliefs. Pupils study the lives of others, and have raised money for causes, such as, a local hospice, the Macmillan Nursing Foundation, the Mozambique flood victims and the Poppy appeal. Many lessons are supported by well-planned visits to museums and art galleries, the theatre, the zoo, where they are often completely awed by what they see, hear and learn.

33. Opportunities for moral development are very good. Pupils learn a strong sense of right and wrong through the very good role models of staff, through tutorials in which they discuss particular incidents and matters of principle, and through the merit system of rewarding very good behaviour and attitudes. Some pupils have visited the Courts of Justice. There have been visits by a judge and by magistrates, helping pupils to talk about what might be right and wrong, and how punishments may not always be right for "crimes". Pupils have written to their member of parliament expressing their moral concern about the transport of calves. They have talked and written, about the moral aspects of war, and about their own feelings in everyday situations as well as imaginary situations.

34. The school also has a very good provision for helping pupils to develop their social skills. In lessons, such as, physical education, pupils learn to work together in pairs or teams. They develop team spirit, and a sense of belonging to their community within the school. In science, and design and technology, for instance, pupils work well together conducting investigations and experiments. They talk and write about their family and friends, their pets and their holidays. Many pupils have been on weeklong residential trips to activity centres, a farm, Whitby and camping in the New Forest. On all of their trips out of school, pupils are encouraged to behave very well in a socially acceptable way. They have very good opportunities to support this learning through their visits to museums, listening to an orchestra, having a picnic in a London park, or having a meal in a London café or restaurant. Similarly, the older pupils have work experience in which they have to find their own way to the careers office in the centre of town, and to their places of work, and back home again. They very successfully learn how to get on with other people, and how to act at work.

35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent. This happens through the school's very wide range of well-organised and well-chosen visits to places of cultural interest, both for the local British heritage, and for aspects of the multicultural society of which they are part. The school arranges many visits into London and further a field, visiting Kew Gardens, a nature reserve, a cathedral, a mosque, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, and the Barbican theatre. Pupils have visited historical centres and experienced "schools" from a different era, such as, in Elizabethan or Victorian times. During the inspection, it was Hindu awareness week in the school. During these cultural weeks, pupils cook and eat foods from different countries as part of their food technology lessons. Visitors to the school also support this development. For Example, a visit from theatre group, musicians and artists, from African Dancers, a mock "Air raid Warden" and a "Roman Soldier".

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides very well for child protection and for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. This is a caring school where there are excellent relationships, and the support and guidance given to pupils by all staff is very good. This results in pupils feeling valued. All staff know the majority of pupils very well, and great efforts have been made by all staff in the primary department to understand the needs, and to communicate with, the pupils who have needs that are more complex. They show very good concern for pupils' welfare. The excellent relationships staff have with pupils and their very good knowledge of pupils, allows them to provide guidance if things are not going well. They keep a careful watch at break times and lunchtimes, and when pupils arrive at school, or depart. The school is a secure environment within which pupils feel welcome and safe, and this positively influences their learning. Parents believe that the school's values and caring attitudes have a very positive effect on their children. The monitoring of attendance is very good. Staff, along with a local Educational Welfare Officer, makes weekly checks on pupils' attendance, and take action if there are any problems or trends with particular pupils.

37. The monitoring and promoting of good behaviour is very good. There is a good system of rewarding pupils for their behaviour and attitudes to the schoolwork, with an on-going record of how many credits pupils have built up each week. These well monitored, and pupils who achieve a certain number of points there are good quality prizes. Pupils may also be chosen as the "Star of the Week" for their attitude or behaviour. Staff arrive at this from the informal assessments that they carry out, and use it as a way of raising standards of behaviour. In helping pupils with their personal development, teachers and learning support assistants play an important role. They are important role models for the pupils by their own good example, and by raising points of principle when incidents occur, perhaps asking, "How would you feel if someone did it to you?" No bullying was observed during the inspection, and there were no reports of any bullying. The school has very good procedures in case of incidents, and these are followed up and logged.

38. There has been satisfactory progress in developing assessment systems since the time of the last inspection. The targets set in the individual education plans are now better than they were, but the school has yet to consider the implications of a changing population of pupils. The school has good procedures for monitoring how well pupils are progressing in their schoolwork. Most subjects have a system of recording of pupils' achievements, and some of these are good. Some, such as English, are well backed up by a range of tests. Others, such as physical education and music, have a series of awards for some aspects such as swimming. However, teachers do not always fill in the checklists, especially in the primary part of the school, where the skills of the pupils with particularly complex needs do not fit well with the assessment system. However, during this term teachers supplemented this with an effective on-going diary system, which allows teachers to observe responses and plan the next areas of learning. To complicate matters further, the school does not always receive pupils' records from other schools before they are admitted, and so teachers cannot use information about prior learning to set new targets. The intention to use the assessment system that is linked to the new curriculum framework for the new intake of pupils is appropriate, but this is not yet fully in place and needs linking to the national curriculum so that the teachers have a more accurate profile of pupils' needs.

39. The school assesses pupils' achievements through the standard system of tests and teacher assessments at the appropriate age for each pupil. The school however does not yet formally monitor the academic progress or personal development of different groups of pupils, such as, girls or boys, or those from different ethnic backgrounds. Samples of work

are kept to support the assessment, and some of these are well annotated. These samples and photographs, along with awards and certificates for swimming, good behaviour or good effort, go towards pupils' Record of Achievements. They are a permanent record of how well they have achieved during their time in the school. Teachers use the results of their assessments well to alter what they will teach, and how they will teach it. For example, it is used when deciding to re-run a lesson the following week because pupils did not fully understand the topic this week, or for setting up new Literacy groups in the secondary department. Design and technology also benefited from a review of pupils' achievements, and now there is a much stronger, and better, emphasis on the design aspect of the subject.

40. At Key Stage 4, pupils are studying subjects that have a built-in system of assessment, such as, DOVE and there is a very well organised externally moderated system. Pupils have been successful in art and mathematics at G.C.S.E. Many pupils have been entered for the Certificate of Achievement awards in subjects such as design and technology, science, food technology, mathematics and English. Music, French and physical education have their own in-school systems of assessing pupils' achievements through tests. This system of external accreditation of pupils' achievements is extremely good. It helps to motivate pupils to do better, as well as providing good targets to aim for.

41. The last inspection identified strengths in the management of annual reviews, but considerable weaknesses in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). A follow-up visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors found that IEPs had improved greatly in quality. Current inspection findings are that IEPs are generally well written, success in reaching the targets is easily measured, and overall they help track pupils' progress over time. However, IEPs do not always include targets for personal and social education, which is a vitally important area for the new group of pupils. Furthermore, targets are often rather ambitious and will have to be broken down into much smaller steps to match the slower rate of learning of these pupils.

42. The Annual Statement Review meetings are based on pupils' annual reports, all of which are written in July, together with IEPs written since the last Annual Review. The long reports, therefore, often do not represent the pupils' current skills, knowledge and understanding, and IEPs do not always stem from the needs written on the Statement. Whilst parents generally attend the Annual Review meeting, other involved professionals rarely attend or submit their views. Review meetings are currently half an hour long which will not be adequate to properly consider the progress and changing needs of the new group of pupils, or to allow the contribution of the full range of professionals involved with them.

43. However, the whole system of setting targets for pupils to achieve, reporting on their progress and reviewing their Statements of Special Educational Needs is no longer appropriate for the newest pupils to the school, who have severe and complex learning difficulties. The school is aware of this, and already has plans to develop and improve the system.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Since the last inspection the school has improved its efforts to link with parents, but despite the many opportunities for parents to become actively involved with the school, only a few choose to do so. Their involvement has not improved since the last inspection. However, the majority of parents report that they like the school and the education it offers very much. They are keen to attend open evenings, the annual bazaar, and a few accompany pupils on visits outside school. There is currently no Parent-Teacher Association although there is the

intention to re-start this, and the school hopes that the parents of the new intake of pupils will be more active in the life of the school.

44. The school is welcoming to parents and they report that they feel they can talk to teachers if they have problems, and the majority indicate that they feel confident that the school will act on suggestions or deal with problems. The school provides open evenings, in addition to the Annual Review meeting for parents to discuss their child's progress. They also provide parents of older pupils with meetings to discuss the arrangements for work experience, information meetings about the National Literacy Strategy, and curriculum focused meetings that are led by teachers, and combined with coffee mornings. The Annual General Meeting for parents provided by the Governing Body is not well attended, and this was reflected in the parent's meeting before the inspection when only two parents attended.

45. The annual reports for parents are satisfactory, but do not clearly describe pupils' progress in each subject, because they do not contain targets against which pupils' progress can be judged. For example, the description of what pupils can achieve in English in the report does not link clearly with English targets for improvement set on the IEP. Parents, particularly, might find it difficult to see the relationship between the two.

46. The other information that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. They receive clear guidance on the curriculum, as well as regular newsletters. The home-school books are regularly used for pupils in the primary department and are an effective means of communicating between the home and school. They are regularly filled in, and provide parents, especially for those whose children do not communicate, with information of what has happened during the day. Likewise, parents use these to communicate with staff about important events occurring at home. These procedures support the very good personal support and guidance that pupils receive. There is a home/school agreement in place, which has been signed by the majority of parents. The annual report for parents from the governing body is clearly written. The prospectus is currently being re-written to reflect the changing intake of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Overall the leadership and management of the school is very good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged that there was insufficient monitoring of the progress of developments, and successes were not evaluated. Monitoring by HMI found that this had improved, but needed further development.

48. Since the last inspection, the school has been part of a radical re-organisation within the LEA. In order for this to proceed smoothly, the leadership provided by the headteacher and the senior management team has had to be clear and positive. The management has ensured that a good quality education has continued to be provided, as well as supporting staff through their uncertainties about the changes, and overseeing the building programme. There has been a very focused and clear intention to continue improving the school, as well as developing a new one and managing the process of change. Thought has been given to the effects of this change on the older pupils who remain at the school, and the standards they achieve. The schools' aims are now very well reflected in its work and standards which are achieved. The management of the school has steadily paced this change so staff have not been weighed down with additional work, for example, with the writing of new policies and documentation. It was recognised by the team that all staff had worked hard to make sure that the school was functioning as normally as possible for the beginning of term. They have had to cope with moving classrooms, packing up and unpacking resources, as well as,

ordering new ones and planning for new pupils. There is an excellent commitment by all staff to make the new school a success.

49. The work of the governing body is very good. It fulfils its responsibilities well, and has been actively involved in all decisions around the future of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Governors have monitored the changing situation and worked with the headteacher to provide stability for staff and pupils. They are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and understand all the difficulties and implications of the changing nature of the school. They, along with the headteacher, have been careful not to rush into developing areas or re-writing policies until the changes in the school have been established. The decision to set up working parties for developing certain aspects is effective. For example, the school is researching and evaluating the most effective practise for setting up a light sensory room. There is a good philosophy in the school concerning the need to provide quality and to get developments right.

50. The monitoring of teaching has improved since the last inspection, and it is mainly carried out by the headteacher. However, the need in the past for curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the standards achieved and the quality of teaching within their subjects has not been a high priority. As teachers become class based teachers and teach all subjects, this will need to be foremost in school development. Part of this process has already started with the support of the LEA. Existing job descriptions are being reviewed in light of the changes in the school.

51. Due to the changes to the school, the priorities for development have been vast. They are very appropriate, are well costed and monitored. However, the school does not set targets for improvement, for example, to improve attendance or reduce exclusions. The management has been very involved in developing the new provision, and therefore the school is not yet at the stage of implementing school self-evaluation. It does not systematically analyse and evaluate the data it produces, for example, in absence rates, or the achievement of boys or girls, or compared how well it does with other schools. There is an awareness by the headteacher that this is essential in the new school.

52. Financial planning and its link with school development and improvement are good. The LEA has generously funded the school so that new fitments, furniture and resources can be bought, as well as funding additional in-service training for staff. This has been effective and the new school is beginning to take shape, but at the time of the inspection, some resources had not yet arrived. The principles of best value are applied when purchasing resources and services, and all specific grants to the school have been used well to support teaching and learning. Due to rebuilding work, computer systems and Internet links are not yet fully installed, and therefore pupils and staff have no access to teaching and learning resources on the Internet. The use of information and communication technology by the management of the school is unsatisfactory. It is used well by the school secretary for keeping records, daily administration in budget control, but there is no other member of the senior management team, including the headteacher, who has the skills and knowledge to understand and use the system. In addition to this, the application of skills are not used to produce, compare and evaluate data.

53. There is a sufficient number of qualified and experienced staff to provide a balanced curriculum that meets the educational needs of the majority of pupils. The exception to this is the present capacity of staff to meet the needs of the newly formed groups of pupils who have complex learning difficulties. The school suffers from a lack of specialist trained staff for these pupils. It has recognised the need for retraining staff to work with these pupils and every opportunity to prepare staff for the changing needs of pupils has been taken, in order to ensure a satisfactory standard of education. This includes formal courses as well as visits to

other schools. However, this process need to be more rapid, as each day more pupils with different needs are being admitted to the school. The head teacher has established a relationship with a mentor school. Staff are benefiting from the opportunities to work in partnership with colleagues who have specialist expertise in working with pupils who have complex learning difficulties. Staff are willing and enthusiastic in welcoming the change but need more practical experience before they are fully able to meet the complex needs of the new group of pupils. There are already well thought out plans to meet this training need.

54. The teachers are very well supported by the team of assistants. Learning support assistants are attached to classes of pupils; this is a very effective use of staff as they provide continuity for pupils as they move round to specialist teachers. They provide a stability for pupils and this has a positive impact on their behaviour and their learning. In Key Stage 1 and 2, welfare staff join teachers and pupils in the classroom for thirty minutes before lunchtime. This provides continuity of care and supports the team approach in working with younger pupils. The collaborative work between teachers and support staff, and the relationships between the support staff and pupils, make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

55. Appraisal procedures and performance management in the school are satisfactory. The new policy has been presented to governors and targets will be set for staff within a term. The head teacher has an annual development meeting with all staff when issues of professional development are pursued. It is a sign of the school commitment to staff training that the school is paying for support staff to update their skills and gain recognised qualifications. At the moment there is no formal induction programme for new staff but any new members of staff would be well supported by the Heads of Department. In view of the need to retrain staff to meet the needs of pupils who have complex learning difficulties, the school is not in a position at this point in time to be effective in the training of new teachers.

56. The accommodation is very good. The school has been undergoing a programme of building development and refurbishment. Any issues from the last report have been rectified, or are no longer relevant in the long term because of the changing focus of the school. Though building alterations have been made to meet the future needs of pupils, the accommodation still meets the requirements of the existing pupils. The school makes good use of the local leisure facilities so older pupils are not disadvantaged by the size of the school hall. The school is working hard to maintain the specialist facilities and staff to meet the needs of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and at the same time prepare for the time when the school will become a provision for Key Stages 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, some rooms had not been equipped, for example, the sensory stimulation room and the soft play room. The library is empty at the moment, but the books and fittings are all ready to be installed. The building is a stimulating and well-maintained environment. The caretaker and her staff take pride in keeping the premises very clean and this is enhanced by classroom display of pupils' work.

57. In all subjects there are sufficient resources and good resources for English, design and technology, physical education, music and French. Resources are accessible and well used. The school is in a state of change, the purchase of new resources is considered carefully in the light of what is needed at the moment, and what the future needs of the school might be. Pupils take good care of equipment they use in school. The provision for information technology is adequate for the needs of the present pupils and the school has long-term plans to make appropriate provision for the future pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The Headteacher, staff and governors need to :

- (1) Increase the effectiveness of all staff, including those who support pupils whose first language is not English, in meeting the needs of the pupils with complex learning difficulties so that they become secure practitioners, by:
 - Speeding up the pace of in-service training in communication, teaching techniques and assessment of these pupils;
 - Increasing their expertise in planning the curriculum to cover the full range of National Curriculum subjects;
 - Providing staff with specialist knowledge about day-to-day management and organisation of classes or groups of pupils.(Paragraphs: 4,12,20,21,24,27,29,38,66,67,87,91,105,125).
- (2) Raise the achievement levels of pupils in Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology by:
 - Increasing teachers' skills and confidence in planning and using it to support pupils learning in all subjects;
 - Assessing pupils' progress and keeping pieces of annotated work as evidence;
 - Assessing the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties and ensuring that the programmes and equipment they use matches these needs.(Paragraphs: 4, 11,23,67,92,106,107,109,111,112).
- (3) Improve the monitoring, analysis and evaluation systems in the school by ensuring that :
 - Co-ordinators monitor the standards being achieved in their subject across the school;
 - Good practise is shared and built on;
 - Trends and patterns are compared and challenged, and targets are set for improvement;
 - Use is made of the information and communication technology systems in the school to provide information.(Paragraphs: 39,51,52,53,93,100,113).
- (4) Improve the procedures for reporting on the progress pupils make, by:
 - Using the information on progress that is recorded in the Individual Educational Plans, in Annual Reports and in the each pupil's Annual Review;
 - Reviewing, in the Annual Review, each pupils' Statement of Educational Need in the light of the progress the pupil has made.(Paragraphs: 41,32,43,46,68,91,112).

The Governing Body should also consider the following minor issue when school development planning:

- Formal induction procedures for staff new to the school.
(Paragraph: 56).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	19	52	24	1	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	65
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.4	School data	2.9

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages

Pupils do not attain the nationally expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 due to their special educational difficulties.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

In the Year 2000, pupils were entered for Diploma in Vocational Education (DOVE), Certificate of Achievement (CoA), and General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE). The following table shows the school's results:

Diploma of Vocational Education	General Certificate of Secondary Education	
	Mathematics	Art
12 passes	1 at D level 1 at E level	3 at B level 2 at D level

Certificate of Achievement				
English	Mathematics	Science	Information technology	Design and technology
8 pass 4 merits 3 distinctions	1 pass 9 merits 4 distinctions	3 pass 6 merits 5 distinctions	3 pass 5 merits 6 distinctions	13 at Grade 3

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	40
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	22	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size – Primary	5
Average class size – Secondary	11

Education support staff: Y1– Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	639136
Total expenditure	611453
Expenditure per pupil	5614
Balance brought forward from previous year	22369
Balance carried forward to next year	50052

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	65
Number of questionnaires returned	9

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	11	11	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	67	11	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	33	0	33	11
The teaching is good.	56	33	0	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	44	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	56	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	22	78	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	0	0	11
The school is well led and managed.	56	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	44	11	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	33	11	22	0

There were very few questionnaires returned, and because of this, the 11 per cent figure represents one return. A few returns were completed and returned by those who were not parents or legal guardians, and therefore invalid.

There were two issues raised by parents. These concerned the range of activities outside school and the amount of homework given to pupils.

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

ENGLISH

59. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully developed strategies to improve pupils' achievements in reading and writing. There is a good balance between the different elements of the subject and the school has taken into consideration the recommendation of the previous inspection to make improvements in specific areas, such as spelling. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced, and is effectively taught across the school. This is having a good impact on the progress pupils make. The school is making very good use of external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4, to recognise pupils' achievements and progress.

60. Pupils in all key stages achieve well in all aspects of English. They make good progress and by the time they leave school at the age of sixteen, they have made sufficient progress to gain distinctions or merits in the Diploma of Vocational Education (DOVE). They achieve well against the targets set for them in individual education plans.

61. The overall progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with complex learning needs is good. In speaking and listening, the lower attaining pupils enjoy listening to stories, participate in the telling of "The Hungry Caterpillar" and are able to retell elements of the story. They understand that pictures tell a story. They follow instructions well. Pupils improve their skills in communication with the support of the speech and language therapist. They understand the instructions that are given, answer simple questions, such as, "What is it? and are able to give the name to the objects. In this valuable session, pupils are learning and consolidating the symbols and signs for new words. By the end of the key stage, the higher attaining pupils listen very attentively to the story of "The Iron Man". They ask, and answer relevant questions. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils become more confident in speaking, both to the rest of the class, to visitors and in front of the whole school. For example, in art, pupils talk about their own work and how they could improve or extend it. They discuss the work of others in the group sensitively and fairly.

62. Pupils' achievement and progress in reading is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils of all ages enjoy books. Pupils in Key Stage 2, who are the lower attaining pupils and have complex learning difficulties, know that books contain stories and pictures, and a few of them sit and look at the pictures, turning the pages carefully. A few are able to recognise their name, but the majority are only at the stage of recognising pictures of themselves instead of the printed word. Higher attaining pupils in years 5 and 6 discuss the illustrations in their books very thoughtfully, and show how they gain an understanding of the simple text by using the information in the pictures to interpret people's feelings and emotions. They read simple stories fluently. In Key Stages 3 and 4, through well-established

routines, and the implementation of literacy sessions, pupils are making good progress in reading. Lower attaining pupils improve their knowledge of the sounds of letters and how to build up words. They use this knowledge and skills when reading. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4, the higher attaining pupils follow a story when another person reads it. They pay good attention to the details, are able to predict what might happen, and the differences between characters. Pupils are confident to read out aloud, in front of the class, passages from their own work or from the class story. They become enthusiastic readers, finding references to explain why they think as they do and making relevant observations. Year 11 pupils discuss the moral issues that arise from a story and enter into mature discussions with the teacher and each other.

63. Pupils' achievements in writing in Key Stage 2 are overall satisfactory. Those pupils who have been in the school a short time and have complex learning difficulties are in the process of having their needs assessed so targets can be set. Reading and writing are combined effectively for these pupils, who, with help, construct simple sentences about what the Hungry Caterpillar eats each day. They practise writing the letters of their name. The higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 make satisfactory progress, and some are making good progress in handwriting. This is due to the careful attention that is paid to the development of writing skills and the correct formation of letters. Pupils write words and simple sentences in workbooks and practise their spelling patterns systematically. Opportunities to practise writing, spelling and reading occur in most lessons throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, and as result pupils achieve well and make good progress by the time they reach the end of the key stage. Pupils use correct punctuation more increasingly as they grow older.

64. The teaching of English is overall good across the school, and during the inspection there were examples of very good teaching, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4. The very good relationship that exists between teachers and pupils has a very positive impact on their interest and motivation to learn. This is especially evident at Key Stages 3 and 4 in literacy lessons, when, for example, the lesson is about writing poetry. Teachers in these key stages have high expectations of pupils' participation, achievement and behaviour. This results in pupils having very good relationships with other pupils, for example, they are expected to work in pairs and groups in a sensible manner, and nominate a spokesperson. Teachers' skilful questioning of pupils and reassurance if they are hesitant about their response, provides pupils with opportunities to think things through and supports their progress well. All teachers plan a variety of appropriate activities and pupils do not have to spend too long on each one. This ensures that the lessons have a good pace to them and pupils stay motivated and complete their work.

65. There is very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants who provide high quality support to pupils and enable them to achieve. Additional support for learning is being provided by the Speech and Language Therapy Service, and the Hearing Impaired Service to support the learning of pupils with complex needs and communication difficulties. This is being used effectively to develop both teachers' and the pupils' skills in the use of symbols and signing. Support for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory for those pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It centres more on supporting their learning difficulties rather than teaching the basics of the English language. However, this method is not appropriate for pupils who come from families where English is the second language spoken, and who have complex learning needs and communication difficulties.

66. The curriculum is good across the school and meets statutory requirements. The use of the Equals curriculum for those pupils with complex learning needs is appropriate, but needs to be more firmly linked to attainment levels of the National Curriculum. Drama and

imaginative story telling make a valuable contribution to pupils' enjoyment of literature. The school arrangements for the teaching of literacy are good. It has been adapted flexibly to reflect the needs of the school, especially in the secondary department where pupils are set according to ability for the lessons. This ensures that all pupils make good progress. The use of information and communication technology is planned for and used, at Key Stages 3 and 4, by teachers to support pupils' progress in English. However, it is under used and not sufficiently planned for at Key Stage 2.

67. Assessment of pupils' progress is good across the school and appropriate targets are set for individual pupils in their Individual Educational Plans. However, there is insufficient emphasis on this in the pupils' reports to parents. There has been a very good start made on assessing the pupils with complex learning needs using a diary. However, appropriate baseline assessment is not yet being use with these pupils so that the teachers can plan specific targets.

68. The two co-ordinators lead the subject well. Before the re-organisation of the school, they have worked together well, for example, in adapting the Literacy Strategy. As the situation has now changed, and the school has two very differing groups of pupils, the co-ordination has become more separate. In doing so, the monitoring the standards of work achieved, especially at Key Stage 2 has declined as teachers have concentrated on learning new teaching skills and improving techniques. The amount of in-service training that teachers and learning support assistants have undertaken is vast, and is supporting the changes that are having to be made to both to the curriculum and the teaching. The accommodation for teaching is good. Although some rooms at the time of the inspection were not in operation, for example the library and the sensory room, they will, if installed according to the plans the school has, support teaching and learning very well. The library with its planned link to the Internet will be very accessible for all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

69. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection. Achievement of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and for pupils in Key Stage 2, achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when it was found that a significant number of pupils in all key stages were underachieving. With the exception of one lesson where teaching was satisfactory, all teaching is good. The issues raised in the last report have been addressed, work is planned to meet pupils' individual needs and new knowledge is reinforced to make sure that pupils understand their work,

70. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and progress overall is good at each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 4, an increasing number of pupils gain merits and distinctions in the Southern Examining Group (SEG) Certificate of Achievement, and gain passes at GCSE level.

71. The achievements of pupils' with complex learning difficulties are satisfactory, as is the progress they make. The achievements and progress of other pupils in Key Stage 2 who are Year 5 and 6 is good. These pupils can identify halves, quarters, thirds and whole shapes. They can order numbers in increasing size and know the days of the week. Higher attaining pupils know their number bonds to ten, can add tens and units, know the months of the year and can identify right angles. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can handle coins and make five pence in a variety of ways. They know that there are a hundred pence in a pound and the more able are able to work out that eight pounds would be the same as eight hundred pence. The two newly formed groups of pupils who have complex learning difficulties make

satisfactory progress in acquiring an understanding of number. They are at the stage of learning to thread and count beads, to name numbers and use counters to count to four, they sort and match objects such as farm animals to make a pair.

72. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress. They cover a range of topics applicable to the programmes of study. They develop their mathematical skills making good progress in their ability to calculate and to solve mathematical problems. They are able to use the four rules of number to solve simple money problems, recognise two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and pentagons and extend this to include three-dimensional shapes. They develop their ability to estimate lines of fewer than twelve centimetres before checking to get the actual measurement. They are able to change fractions into decimal fractions and use squared paper to help them work out areas of shapes. Pupils use their knowledge of tally charts and block graphs to show their findings when they survey for favourite colours and sporting activities. Pupils use their knowledge of addition and subtraction to consolidate their competence in handling money and giving change.

73. During Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress. They apply their skills to topics such as 'The Youth Club' when they use bar charts to show youth club attendance, and their numeracy skills in working out the total of weekly subscriptions and the profits made in the Youth Club canteen. They develop their understanding of time as they make daily timetables and work out total times from a start and finish time. Pupils use maps of central London and the tube system to solve mathematical problems and develop their money skills by writing cheques, and using catalogues to choose and budget for family gifts. Pupils in this key stage use calendars and the twenty four-hour clock as they work out answers to written problems. Their work on statistics includes making bar charts based on traffic accidents and stopping distances, and converting currency. Pupils transfer their mathematical knowledge to other subjects and can use information technology to create bar charts reflecting the popularity of various types of packaging.

74. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Where teaching is good, lessons offer a high level of challenge. Perceptive questioning provokes pupils to explain their answers, and if necessary to re-evaluate their work. In Key Stages 3 and 4, the teacher gives clear instructions at the beginning of lessons so pupils know what is expected. The pupils are managed well and as a result work well. They remain focused on the activities provided and achieving the lesson objectives. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Expectations of achievement and behaviour are high. Work is carefully planned to match ability, interest and age, and is adapted to take account of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The attention of the learning support assistants is focused very effectively on pupils' individual needs. Encouragement and reassurance from adults are good features of teaching in mathematics. As a result, pupils become more confident and feel secure when they are attempting potentially difficult work. In a lesson with Year 10 pupils the teacher shows a very sensitive approach in introducing the difficult topic of percentages, by reinforcing existing understanding and providing appropriate activities to enable pupils to make gradual but secure progress. In all key stages teachers plan effectively and take into account pupils' individual educational and behavioural needs. Many teachers use computer programmes so pupils can have fun consolidating their basic numeracy skills. Pupils reinforce their measuring skills in lessons such as science, physical education and design technology. In teaching the newly formed groups of pupils who have complex learning difficulties, teachers are working hard to improve their own skills in identifying pupils' specific mathematical needs. Staff are also working to develop strategies to increase their competence in meeting the needs of these pupils so that achievement in these groups will be comparable to the rest of the school.

75. Throughout the school pupils are usually well behaved. They join in with activities and try hard to complete their work. Pupils talk readily about the tasks they are doing and Key Stage 4 pupils in particular take pride in the presentation of their work. Support staff make an invaluable contribution to the lessons, they are well briefed and have a very good understanding of pupils' needs. The relationship between the adults and pupils is a strong feature of the lessons and contributes well to the good progress made by pupils in this subject. In Key Stage 2, the calm but firm approach used by support staff as well as teachers has a positive effect on the relationships within the classroom. This is evident in the classes for pupils with complex learning difficulties where pupils are learning to count fingers and match pairs of gloves. On both occasions, the approach from the adults means that the pupils are able to increase concentration, overcome their difficulties and make progress in their mathematical knowledge as well as their social competence. The opportunities given throughout the school for pupils to work co-operatively make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

76. The school's planned work for mathematics is good. Teaching is carried out predominantly by the subject teacher in key Stages 3 and 4 and by class teachers in Key Stage 2. Careful planning and liaison means that the units of work, which link to the programmes of study and the National Numeracy Strategy, are taught to all pupils and establish breadth and balance across the curriculum. The exception to this is the provision for pupils who have complex learning difficulties where staff are assessing the needs of this new group of pupils with the aim of developing appropriate curricular provision.

77. Assessment in the subject is good throughout the school. Pupils are assessed during lessons so teachers can plan future work to meet pupils' individual needs. As pupils move through the key stages, they are regularly assessed on a more formal basis. Assessment folders show very clearly the work pupils have covered, what they have achieved and what they need to consolidate.

78. As the school is in a process of transition there are two co-ordinators for mathematics. The secondary department co-ordinator does most of the teaching of the subject in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the primary department the co-ordinator teaches her own class and liaises with other teachers working within the key stage. Both co-ordinators have participated in training for the National Numeracy Strategy and have co-presented training for the rest of the staff. There is a clear policy, which has been recently revised to take account of the changing role of the school. The policy is supported by appropriate schemes of work for the pupils in the school, though more development is needed for the pupils who have complex learning difficulties. The subject is evaluated on an annual basis so that the budget allowance can be focused on specific curricular requirements. The subject is well resourced. Both co-ordinators support their colleagues when required, however the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring the teaching of the subject and the standards achieved is underdeveloped, and therefore good practice is not shared or built on.

SCIENCE

79. Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress both in learning how to conduct investigations and experiments, and in learning more about different aspects of science around them.

80. The overall curriculum plan for pupils with complex needs is not yet fully in place, although from the examples of work, it can be judged that teachers are making a good attempt to teach relevant learning objectives across the required areas. It is not possible,

however, at his point in time to judge how effective the teaching and learning is for these pupils because no lessons were observed during the inspection.

81. Pupils in all of the other key stages make good progress in science. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to understand the basic principles of how to conduct an investigation, thinking how they might try things out, test them, and see what has happened. They have a good basic knowledge about a wide variety of topics, such as, butterflies and mini-beasts to larger wild animals that live in different habitats around the world. They understand that plants grow in different climates, and can name the different parts of plants and flowers. Pupils know the major features of the human body, and the functions. They have considered the important features of a range of different materials, such as, metals, textiles, paper and plastics. They know that some things are alive, others used to be alive, and other things have never lived. They can correctly classify examples of each into different groups.

82. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a more rigorous approach to investigation work. They make predictions about what they think might happen, and give reasons for their ideas. They set up and carry out simple tests, and then check their results against their predictions. They handle equipment and materials carefully and safely, and follow safe procedures in the science room. They have learned good detail about new topics, and have further developed what they know about topics they looked at in the primary part of school. They have studied in detail various body organs, such as, the eye and ear. They draw the different parts of each, naming them and saying what they do and how they work. They have carried out experiments with heated materials to find out which the best insulators were. They know that some creatures and plants can only live in very particular habitats, and they give the names of some of these. They also know that some animals eat other animals, and that such feeding habits can be classified into food chains and food webs, or "energy chains". The higher attaining pupils work independently, and often work together well. Lower attaining pupils need much more help and guidance, and their work is often very untidy and poorly presented. Their understanding of what they have learned is at a more basic level, and some pupils quickly forget what they "knew" the previous week.

83. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have developed an experimental approach to science, and they sensibly discuss how to create a fair test, and predict more accurately, what might happen. After an experiment, they check their results against their predictions; offer explanations as to why there are differences, and how they might set the investigation up differently on a future occasion. They have learned about the detail of many things, for example, the way the eye reacts to light, the nature of light and colour, reflections and refraction as light passes through water, and the role of light in photosynthesis in making plants grow. Pupils have carried out similar detailed projects to do with, for instance, yeast and fermentation; the human body; magnetism; electricity and how we use it in the home; and the small creatures that live in ponds, woods, hedgerows and streams.

84. Teaching and learning in science are good. During the inspection, all of the lessons were at least satisfactory, and half were good or better. In the main, teachers manage their pupils well, and have good, positive relationships with them. The teaching methods motivate the pupils well. For example, there is brisk pace of lessons, and a very good approach through experiments and investigations. Pupils work well as a rule, despite two occasions when some of Year 11 were disruptive. They make good progress because teachers have high expectations that they will behave, and will be involved in answering questions or making suggestions.

85. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and they plan their lessons well. However, sometimes, plans tend to be about what activities the pupils will do, rather than what pupils will actually learn. For example, in one lesson, where pupils investigated the

patterns formed from iron filings there was no real attempt to assess what had been learned, or to point to differences in the patterns and ask why they were like that. A very good lesson, on the other hand, saw the same teacher reviewing some research work that the pupils were doing, using books, videos, posters and computer programs to find out new information about different planets. Pupils mostly carry out investigations independently, including as part of their homework, and report back on what they have found out. The teacher's questions and prompts help the lower attaining pupils to make progress and prepares them very well for the next lesson, such as, a visit to the planetarium in London.

86. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. At the time of the previous report it was good, and this difference is because the school has not yet fully adjusted to the needs of the younger pupils with complex learning needs, and who are mostly new to the school. A specialist science teacher oversees the subject at Key Stages 3 and 4, and at Key Stage 2, it is taught by class teachers. There is little overview of the planning, teaching and assessment throughout the school as a whole. There is a good subject policy, as plan for the general areas of work that should be taught, including sex education, and good health and safety procedures. Science makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and spiritual development through lessons, such as, those about birth and growth, the planets, light and colour, and through visits to many places, such as, museums, zoos and the planetarium. The accreditation of pupils' work at the end of Key Stage 4 is now very good, and the approach through investigations and experiments is very good. The school has done well to maintain the high standards of work in the senior school, but has not yet fully come to terms with the needs of the younger pupils with more complex needs.

ART

87. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, and the achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 have increased over the last two years. The expectations of pupils' achievement have risen and in art, pupils have gained GCSE accreditation, with grades of 'B' and 'D'.

88. Overall, levels of achievement are good, with pupils achieving satisfactorily at the end of Key Stage 2, well at Key Stage 3, and very well by the end of Key Stage 4. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use paint, brushes, pencil and coloured pens to recreate pictures in the style of other artists, and to make observation drawings of what they see. In Year 6, through their study of Henri Matisse they use coloured papers to recreate one of his pictures, and make progress in their discrimination of shape and position. Pupils in their study of portraits make good links with history and realise that many of the pictures depict people from the past. Their work shows that, following a visit to a fruit farm, they recall what they have seen and paint pictures of fruit, remembering the details and the colours.

89. At Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress and by the time they are in Year 9, they have recorded their ideas into a sketchbook, for example, during and following a visit to a stately home where they studied texture and pattern. They use different thickness and types of pencils to shade and crosshatch. They make imprints of surface rubbings, such as, wood and stone that they use samples of in their pictures of buildings. The work samples show that pupils have studied the work of Gauguin, and they have produced some good examples of still life drawings of African artefacts. The work of Year 8 pupils shows that they make and produce mono-prints and roller prints, using watercolours to produce paintings of landscapes. They design and make abstract collages from labels, paint portraits of cats, and produce art in the style of Mondrian. By the end of Key Stage 4, even with all the disruption due to building work, pupils have made very good progress. In Year 10, pupils use books well

to research for ideas surrounding an underwater theme. They record these ideas into a sketchbook and use them to produce an individual painting. They use these sketch books well to experiment with colours so they can decide on the right tone and shade. In Year 11, following a visit to Tate Modern, the work is more adventurous. Pupils are working in the style of contemporary sculptures, such as, Louise Bourgeois, They produce wire and clay models of spider sculptures they have seen. Their work shows that they make charcoal sketches of still life, and use chalks and pastels to produce portraits of animals. Pupils who gained GCSE accreditation last year made large three-dimensional sculptures of animals, such as, a dragon.

90. The teaching of art is overall good. It is better at Key Stages 3 and 4 than it is at Key Stage 2. In the secondary department, a specialist art teacher, who is also a class teacher at Key Stage 2, teaches pupils. This good use of teacher expertise has a very beneficial effect on the achievements of pupils and the progress they make. There are high expectations of pupils' achievement and all pupils' efforts are valued and recognised. The atmosphere is relaxed, and is very much about pupils become artists. This leads to harmony in the classroom, intense interest from the pupils and highly motivated pupils who are proud of their work. Planning is well thought out, with areas of learning being linked well to the visits, exhibitions and the outside world. Pupils are assessed well, but end of year reports do not reflect the progress pupils have made over the year. Therefore, parents do not have a clear view of the progress being made. The quality of teaching varies across Key Stage 2, but is overall satisfactory. The variation is linked to the expertise individual teachers have and the needs of the pupils they are teaching. Teachers of pupils with complex learning difficulties are still assessing the needs of pupils, and through art are learning to communicate with them. In the other two classes teaching is better, as the pupils have been in the school longer and teachers can meet their needs more effectively. At this key stage, the teamwork between learning support assistants and the teachers is very good, and as a result, the pupils make progress. For, example, in Year 6 on the week of the inspection, the lesson was led by a learning support assistant. This assistant demonstrated good teaching skills in managing the behaviour of difficult pupils, and had a good knowledge of the work of different artists. As a result, pupils were interested, behaved well and were proud of their efforts.

91. The curriculum is well planned and is broad and balanced. Due to the building work and the movement of the art room three times during the last year, the continuity of the planning has been disrupted. For example, there has been no room for three-dimensional work, and the kiln has been taken out and is in still in storage. Therefore, the planned curriculum has not been taught. In order to compensate for this the co-ordinator has made good links with other educational establishments and has been able to use their art facilities. All pupils have equal opportunities to the curriculum and all of Year 10 is to be entered for GCSE. The subject is very well supported by educational visits, which have a positive impact on pupils' social and cultural development. The area of weakness in the curriculum is the use of information and communication technology as an additional way of researching the work of artists, and as an alternative technique to painting and drawing.

92. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There is clear development planning going back to the time of the last inspection, which shows how and when improvements have been made. The co-ordinator has a new job description, but formal monitoring of the standards of work at Key Stage 2, remains under developed. However, the co-ordinator teaches all of the secondary pupils and one class in the primary department, and has a have an overview of achievement. Resources are satisfactory. Access to books is restricted by the present lack of library facilities, and the lack of connection to the Internet. Art is taught in classrooms and at secondary level in a room used also for humanities. There is very little space available for pupils to work, and no space for large sculptures, three-dimensional work or for leaving art

work out to dry. This has not improved since the last inspection and restricts the delivery of the planned curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in pupils' achievements, in their learning in individual lessons, and in the quality of teaching.

94. Pupils' achievements are good overall. They are satisfactory in Key Stage 2, and they are good in Key Stage 3 and 4. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils have taken part in a satisfactory range of activities, and have made a variety of models and artefacts. They have used different materials that can be shaped, such as clay, plasticine and play-dough. In addition, they have used paper, wood, card and straw in making, for example, Tudor houses as part of a history project. They have learned how to join things together using clips, fasteners, sticky tape, glue and pins. They have used building kits and construction kits to make models. In group work they have helped to make costumes and other items, such as, giant sunflowers, for special assemblies. They have prepared and cooked several different snacks, such as, hot cross buns. This provides a sound start for the pupils, although those with complex needs are given much more support to produce their models and artefacts, and their understanding of the design stage is much more limited than that of the higher attaining pupils.

95. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have gained many skills in working with different materials such as wood, acrylic plastic and art straws. They design their models carefully with a view to appearance as well as what it will do. They take pride in the quality of the finished product. Pupils use scissors and craft knives carefully, and chisels, saws, screwdrivers and hammers competently. They design and carve items such as acrylic key fobs to the correct shape, and smooth them carefully. They have used simple circuits and moving parts to make fuse testers, electronic games, a wall clock and model vehicles. They can work, with help, from a design idea to produce a workable article. The higher attaining pupils work independently, with little guidance, while a few pupils need the constant and very capable support of the teacher, classroom assistant or volunteer staff. Pupils have worked with mouldable materials and construction kits to make items of sound quality, with a good finish, and with good knowledge of how to do it better next time. They have made a variety of sandwiches, pizza toppings, scones, mince pies and cakes. They use the equipment in the food technology with supervision. They have used different textile materials, to make up their designs and have experimented using different stitches on the machines and making up their own patterns.

96. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have become very capable, and sometimes, with support very carefully follow the designs that either they have drawn up, or that they have adapted from other sources. Their designs are realistic, and they list the various stages they have to go through to complete the product, including lists of materials and tools. Pupils become confident in making choices of designs, and then choosing one that they think is most suitable, or most attractive. They have made items in wood, such as a storage rack for CD ROMs, and in acrylic, such as a clock. They have become more adept at using the tools and equipment, and have become very safety conscious. As part of their accredited course, they learn how to disassemble items to see how they work, and put them back together again. Pupils use their research skills well and look for further information about their projects, using books, magazines, shops and offices, and computer programs. In their food

technology, they make meals that reflect traditions of other countries, as well as traditional ones, such as, cheese on toast, fruit salads and cakes.

97. Overall, teaching is good. During the inspection, the teaching of this subject to pupils at Key Stage 2 with complex learning needs was combined with the teaching of art. Teaching at this key stage is overall satisfactory. Teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4, where two specialist teachers teach the subject, is overall good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, and this is evident from the detail in their lesson plans and how they are followed. This ensures the learning objectives are precise. Pupils' learn well due to the high expectations teachers have for behaviour, and of their involvement throughout the lesson. As a result, pupils make good efforts and pay attention. They are well motivated by the challenges that teachers set them. They respond well, being very careful about their work, both in the designs, and in the making stage.

98. Much of the teaching is about principles and design, and knowing why they have done things in a particular way. In one good lesson, pupils were making a textile panel to go in the school entrance hall. The lesson plan was clear, with a good design idea being converted into reality. Pupils were on task throughout the lesson, choosing different fabrics, colours and designs, and were very well helped and guided by the teacher and the learning support assistant. The materials were good quality, and the teacher went to great lengths to make sure that all pupils understood what they were doing, frequently checking as the lesson proceeded. Pupils behaved very well because they were well motivated by the challenge and the very positive relationships with staff. Lessons in design and technology very often have a good link with other subjects such as history or science topics, and particularly with maths, including measuring and shape awareness, and English through the write-ups that pupils are expected to complete. The external accreditation in the senior school, for both aspects of the subject, is particularly good.

99. The leadership and management of design and technology are sound, and this is an improvement on the previous situation when it was unsatisfactory. There are two co-ordinators, who work well together, one on food and textiles, and the other on the "resistant materials" or "craft" aspect. There is still some need to develop a better overview of what is happening throughout the school, including at Key Stage 2, and the consistency with which pupils' progress is assessed. The scheme of work is now satisfactory, where previously it was not, although the way that it is taught will need to be reconsidered for the younger pupils with different needs. There is a good selection of materials and equipment, and it is readily accessible to all staff, whether in the classrooms, or in one of the two subject rooms. The accommodation is now good.

HUMANITIES

100. History and geography are two components of the Humanities curriculum. The subjects are taught on a modular basis, this means that in Key Stage 3 no geography lessons took place during the inspection. Humanities are not part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum while pupils in Key Stage 2 have experiences of both subjects each week. The school has made good progress in the development of Humanities since the last inspection. The provision in Key Stage 3 is a strength and is the result of the school's decision to teach humanities with the support of the art department.

101. Overall, pupils' achievement in humanities is good. At Key Stage 2, achievement and progress is satisfactory. Pupils study the water cycle and think carefully about the importance of water in the home for cooking, washing and disposing of waste. They develop

geographical skills by drawing a map of the classroom, and then a map of the school. They examine a map of the locality, a map of Britain and finally a map of Europe. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand that there are different weather patterns throughout the world, that hot weather is associated with summer and cold with winter. They are aware that changes in weather affect lifestyle and that people have to dress according to the weather. Pupils can use a globe to locate England, Pakistan and Australia. They study the Saxons and the Vikings and learn about farming and transport of those times. They produce wall displays as a record of their learning and photographic evidence shows the enthusiasm of pupils as they examine Saxon remains during a visit to a local museum. Other pupils in this key stage study the Romans, and their meeting with a 'real' Roman soldier enhances their understanding of life in Roman times. Year 6 pupils in their topic on The Victorians learn about George Stephenson and the first steam train. They develop their sense of chronology by comparing 'The Rocket' with modern engines. Pupils record their learning by using charcoal to draw a steam engine on railway tracks; they work hard and take pride in producing their best work.

102. Achievement and progress is very good in Key Stage 3. Pupils benefit from the cross-curricular approach of teaching history and geography with art. This results in pupils increasing their understanding of the subject matter by being immersed in a practical experience of the subject. For example, in work about North American Indians, pupils study their way of life and traditions including beadwork jewellery; they then make similar jewellery as part of the topic. They produce aboriginal style art in their study of past non-European societies. In work based on the Middle Ages, pupils had to consider how people in those times viewed heaven and hell. Pupils then showed their understanding of attitudes of the time by producing their own paintings of heaven and hell in medieval style. In a lesson based on World War 2, pupils discuss the reasons for propaganda, who it was aimed at and why. Then they work hard to produce their own propaganda posters to encourage the growing and eating of vegetables during the last war. Great care is taken to use the correct sort of colours and a simple slogan that could be understood by everyone. The subject is well supported by the English curriculum. When pupils study World War 1, they read war poetry and in their project 'What Was Life Really Like On The Western Front?' they write their own war poems empathising with the feelings of people in the past.

103. Teaching of humanities is good overall with very good or excellent team teaching at Key Stage 3. Where teaching is very good or better, the teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and begin each lesson with a question and answer session. There are high expectations of behaviour, and as result, pupils are fully involved. There are excellent relationships between the adults, who are good role models, and the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to enjoy and participate in the lessons. A flexible and supportive approach to working with the pupils in Key Stage 3 increases pupils' self-confidence and encourages them to enjoy the subject. In a lesson based on World War 2, one pupil who belongs to the Army Cadets happily demonstrated to the rest of the class how she would march on Remembrance Day. When the pupils are producing their artwork to support their new learning, teachers and support assistants move around the room giving individual attention, assessing pupils understanding and encouraging the development of personal skills of courtesy and consideration for others. Pupils at both key stages are interested and enjoy the work; they behave well and frequently ask pertinent questions as they develop their awareness of other countries and other times.

104. There is joint co-ordination for the subject. Both co-ordinators are enthusiastic about their curriculum area. They keep an overview of their subject, though both are part-time members of staff. The curriculum for humanities is well supported by the availability of the school mini-buses so pupils can regularly make visits to places of historical or geographical importance. The primary co-ordinator catalogues numerous photographs as evidence of the

work covered on these visits to places such as St Albans Educational Centre, Warwick Castle, Dell Farm and the immediate locality. Social skills are developed as well as writing skills as the pupils write 'thank-you' letters to the guides. Teachers do not always choose to use the mini-bus. On a recent trip to London, the younger pupils travelled by train and by tube as part of their social development. Teachers assess pupils against the programmes of study and have a clear idea of pupils' achievements and the progress they make. However in view of the changing nature of the school, the history and geography curriculum needs to be reviewed so that the educational needs of the younger pupils who have complex learning difficulties are addressed.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

105. There has been satisfactory improvement in this area since the last inspection, but most of it has taken place in the secondary department of the school, where there are new resources and pupils are taught by a specialist teacher. Teaching here has improved greatly since the last inspection. However, pupils' progress and achievement at Key Stage 2 has declined since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2, there is very little evidence kept of what pupils have achieved or the areas of the curriculum they have covered. Due to the new intake of pupils, teachers are now not as confident in using information and communication technology with these pupils, and teaching and learning has therefore declined at Key Stage 2.

106. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are satisfactory overall. However, achievement and progress is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. By the time pupils reach the end of this key stage they use a word processing program to write or copy pieces of work. They are able to locate the program, use a keyboard and control a pointing device, such as, a mouse. There is no evidence in their work that they use a simple database to record information and display it as a graph, or that they can put into the computer simple instructions in order to control a device, such as, a 'Roamer'. Use of multimedia CD ROMs for researching information, for example, on artists or for history topics is not evident. The use of the Internet has been severely disrupted by the building works and it is not currently installed. Pupils in this stage of their education therefore cannot use it to help them gather information. Pupils with complex learning difficulties are not achieving or making progress in their use of information and communication technology to support their learning. The school does not yet have the expertise to assess these pupils' needs in this area, for example, for appropriate programs and access devices.

107. Progress and achievement is much better in Key Stages 3 and 4. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils give a logo program accurate instruction, so that it will create a predetermined shape. They use their mathematical knowledge well and the higher attaining pupils predict the shape, and are able to change the shape by inputting additional instructions. These pupils also create posters using clip-art and paint techniques, such as, brush lines and spray techniques. Some of these posters support pupils' personal development as they centre on issues such as drugs awareness, and drinking and driving. Pupils in Year 8, use simple art programs to create representations of flowers, while higher attaining pupils in this year group create abstract pictures and produce posters. By the end of Key stage 4, pupils create and use databases to sort and display information, edit and use spreadsheets, insert and edit text, and use and select different colours. They understand how and when to use these applications and how it might help them in the future. The external accreditation work shows that the majority of pupils have made sufficient progress to gain distinction or merits at certificate of achievement level.

108. Overall, teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, it is much better at Key Stages 3 and 4, where it is very good, than at Key Stage 2. It is not possible to comment on teaching and learning for those pupils with complex learning needs as this area of the curriculum is not being taught yet. In the other classes at Key Stage 2, it is satisfactory. In the one lesson seen at this key stage the teacher is confident in using the both the computer and the program, so that pupils can follow the clear instructions. Planning is good and the activities include an appropriate emphasis on literacy, for example, the reading of onscreen instructions and the writing of short sentences. However, the pace of the lesson is slowed down by the lack of resources, as the lesson takes place in the classroom where there is only one computer and all pupils have to wait for a turn. The teaching and learning could have improved if the lesson had been taught in the new information technology room that was not being used at the time of the lesson.

109. Teaching and learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 is very good. This is due all the lessons being taught by a specialist teacher who plans activities to meet the needs of the pupils, but also provides them with new skills and capabilities. Planning is precise, with a variety of activities so that pupils are motivated and their interest is held. All lessons start with a very good whole group introduction by the teacher, and questioning is skilfully used to assess their understanding from the previous lesson. From this, the teacher can see who needs additional help during the lesson and this supports the achievement of the lower attaining pupils and the progress they make. There is very good teamwork between the class teacher and the learning support assistant. The decision to deploy the same learning support assistant to one subject is beneficial to teaching and learning as a high level of expertise has developed and this is very well used to help pupils achieve. There is ongoing assessment and evaluation, and all lessons end with a recap of learning. In some lessons, the activities are planned so that pupils work together in pairs and support each other, this has a positive impact on their personal development and behaviour and results in pupils sharing and getting on socially with each other.

110. A new curriculum has been introduced and is very well planned. Its planning is broad and balanced and covers all aspects of the National curriculum. Good attention has been paid to the new requirements of the curriculum 2000, and careful thought has one into how the curriculum should meet the needs of all the pupils in the school. For those pupils with complex learning needs it has been base around the guidance form the EQUALS curriculum and this is appropriate. However, for some pupils in Key Stage 2, such as those in Year 6, who have moderate learning difficulties, it is not entirely appropriate and there is a need to ensure that they are covering the national curriculum at the appropriate levels. However, although at this key stage the planning is in place, teachers are not using information and communication technology in lessons, such as, mathematics, science, humanities and art. There is also insufficient assessment and evidence kept to show pupils' achievement and to allow the co-ordinator to monitor the coverage and the standards across the school. This is unsatisfactory.

111. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the medium term planning ensures that pupils' learning is built on previous learned skills and ensures that pupils make good progress. Assessment is consistent as it is carried out by one teacher and is appropriately recorded, although the end of year reports do not tell parents enough about the progress made from the last report. However, work is kept and marked, so that it provides good evidence of what pupils, know, understand and can do. A weakness lies in the use of these pupils' skills in other areas of the curriculum and there are too few opportunities, other than in English and mathematics, for them to use the skills of research, and data analysis and handing information.

112. Leadership and management of the subject are good. This has developed since the last inspection when the co-ordinator was new to the school. Development planning is systematic and good use has been made of national funding which has come into school. However, due to the building works and reorganisation the school has not yet achieved all it had planned for, such the installation of new Internet connections and the installation a computer in the planned library. The school has made very good progress in the weeks leading up to the inspection, as all resources have been in storage and the room had only been in use for two weeks before the inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of standards across the school is planned for but is not yet fully in place, although the co-ordinator has begun to spent one morning each week giving support to the primary teachers. Resources are good, but are not yet fully being used across the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

113. Since the last inspection, French for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 has continued to develop well. There has been an improvement in the reading and writing aspect of the subject and these now meet the needs of all pupils. The practical resources, in the provision of a new specialist teaching area and resources to be used in lessons, have been improved. Information technology is used for some word-processing activities, but not sufficient use is made of multi-media programs to help pupils learn.

114. Standards of achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 are very good, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening and the matching of written words to objects. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language make good progress. By the time they leave the school, a number of pupils use words, phrases and converse in short sentences competently. Many pupils ask and answer questions in French about a range of topics, including their likes and dislikes of certain foods. They read and write simple sentences and texts, for example, when identifying objects in the teacher's bag, and are developing an appropriate awareness of the French culture.

115. Teaching is very good due to the linguistic skills of the teacher who speaks French fluently. There are high expectations of pupils' responses and pupils are proud of the fact that they are able to sing interesting and amusing songs in French. They are not carried away by their enthusiasm, but articulate the words clearly and with a good accent. Pupils demonstrate great pace and enthusiasm in the opening "warm up" session in which they revise their growing vocabulary through a musical "rap." In Year 11, the teacher places an appropriate emphasis on the conversational use of French in social situations, for example, the café. They work well together, practising many skills as they prepare their French breakfast. The teacher builds up pupils' skills in reading and writing the language by providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to match hand-written words with those written on a computer or printed on a tub of butter or other packets. Pupils carry out these tasks well because they are carefully matched to their abilities. The teacher varies the pace of lessons very thoughtfully and there are times when activities are energetic and move swiftly along. This is followed by a period of concentration when there is particular challenge in the activity, as, when pupils are involved in new learning, such as answering questions from a tape. There follows a calm, relaxing time with music at the end of the lesson when pupils industriously complete their written work and reinforce their learning in the lesson. This variation in the lesson is very effective in maintaining pupils' interest and motivation, providing opportunities for pupils to listen, speak, read and write in French.

116. The curriculum, which has been adapted this year because there is no Year 7 group, is well balanced and adapted well to meet the needs of each group. The teacher, who is a very experienced and able co-ordinator of the subject, maintains very good records of pupils' progress. She ensures that pupils consolidate their learning before they move on to the next stage. Resources for the teaching and learning of French are good and the pupils are enjoying lessons in their attractive new language room.

MUSIC

117. Since the previous inspection, there have been several improvements to the quality of the provision for music. There is a much greater emphasis on music from different cultures, including a day with an African music and art focus. In addition to recorders, some pupils receive tuition from visiting teachers of flute, clarinet and brass instruments. The quality of teaching has improved, with all lessons in Key Stage 3 and 4 being taught by a specialist music teacher. This teacher also gives additional support to some teachers in Key Stage 2 who use a published scheme as a basis for their lessons.

118. Pupils throughout the school, including those with complex learning difficulties and English as an additional language, achieve very well. They enjoy their music making activities. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers and the school's own staff with skills in music, enhances the provision and enables the higher attaining pupils to improve their ability to read and play music. Both primary and secondary aged pupils perform confidently in assemblies.

119. Pupils in Key Stage 2 who have complex learning difficulties join in the singing and playing of action and number rhymes well, showing good control of pitch, rhythm and volume. They join in the songs that accompany their exercises in a morning, and the regular repetition of these helps them to identify body parts. Pupils are learning to handle instruments correctly and confidently select ones they like to play. They follow directions and can play either fast or low as directed. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2, by the time they have reached the end of the key stage, sing tunefully, and confidently play their instruments in time with the music in assembly. They sing songs in two and three parts and maintain their own parts well.

120. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 3, they create music, for example, for a journey through space, and compose simple pieces using instruments and voices. They understand notation and compose their own tune with a two-beat rhythm. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4 they play the keyboard and guitar, after considering the different sound produced by acoustic and electric guitars. Pupils listen to music and give opinions on the pieces they prefer. The school has a group of pupils who are hand bell ringers. They play well-known tunes, read the chart accurately so that their playing is in time. They are successful, produce a very pleasing sound and are confident to perform for audiences.

121. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. Pupils with complex learning difficulties learn to enjoy music and acquire basic knowledge of the names of instruments and how to play them. They play together in a lively manner, responding well to the teaching and management of staff. In Key Stage 3 and 4, the co-ordinator's good understanding of the subject enables her to teach basic skills and knowledge, and the activities challenge and extend pupils' creative abilities. The teacher has very high expectations of what pupils will achieve and this results in pupils being so pleased with their own efforts that they break into spontaneous applause when a recording of their work is played to them. Their reaction that this should be part of an assembly shows how much they appreciate and value their own efforts. Pupils are motivated to consider ways in which to improve their group performance in the next lesson. The very good techniques and

strategies employed by the teacher leads to pupils developing a high level of interest in their work. Pupils who play an instrument, for example, the clarinet or recorder, are encouraged to use the skills when composing pieces of music, and they help others to read musical notation. The teaching of specific skills on the keyboard is carefully and thoughtfully planned, so that every pupil achieves some success in the lesson and feels pride in working from a course book that carries an award. Pupils have many opportunities to listen to, and appraise music and record their impression of for instance, music from the Planet Suite composed by Holst, before tackling their own "Space Rondo."

122. The curriculum for music is well planned and meets National Curriculum requirements. It is greatly enhanced by time spent with visiting artists, such as, members of the London Symphony Orchestra, and visits to theatres and memorable concerts at the Barbican. Weekly "singalong" sessions are valuable and enjoyable opportunities for learning songs and hymns together. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly, and lesson plans are amended when reinforcement is required or pupils are ready to move forward to a new topic. Resources for music include a very good number of keyboards and are satisfactory overall

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. This subject has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. Assessment is improving, but is not yet consistently carried out throughout the school. National Curriculum requirements are now met through a school-wide scheme of what should be taught; and the teaching and learning have improved greatly. Previously, it was poor in the primary department and barely satisfactory for secondary pupils. It is now good or better throughout the school.

124. Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school. Most pupils achieve well or very well. The exception to this is the group of pupils with complex learning needs. Teachers are not yet fully confident, or have the specialist expertise in teaching them. They are still in the process of learning how they should adapt the lesson plans so that the pupils will learn at a better rate. Currently, the teaching of these pupils is satisfactory, as is the learning, but it could be as good as it is in the rest of the school.

125. All pupils have particularly good skills in swimming, gymnastics and games. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils have developed confidence when carrying out movements in floor exercises, on the mats and on apparatus. They move safely and sensibly, without being a risk to themselves or each other, and are beginning to develop sequences of movements and ways of balancing. They run, hop, skip, crawl and slide over, under and through the apparatus. Pupils can throw and catch a large ball, aim it at a target and pass it to a partner. They are learning how to work with a partner in cooperative ways, and listen to instructions. Some pupils move in time with music, and will perform very simple dance movements.

126. They have gained good skills in swimming. These include jumping in, swimming across the pool, swimming with a clearly recognisable and efficient style, and retrieving rings from the bottom of the pool. The pupils with complex learning needs are well taught in swimming, in small groups or with individual attention, and their water confidence is progressing well as a result. They wear armbands or use floats, and will move across the shallow end independently, and put their faces to the water to blow bubbles. In their gymnastics and games skills, these pupils are gaining greater awareness of their own bodies, or movements, confidence on low apparatus, rolling balls, and being bounced on

giant “physio” balls. There is some need to teach these skills with greater direction, and to control the lessons better, although the pupils’ achievements are presently satisfactory.

127. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have gained much confidence in all aspects of their physical education. Many pupils can swim distances of more than 25 metres, and most can jump into the deep end and demonstrate a surface dive to retrieve a ring off the bottom. They swim backstroke as well as front crawl. Pupils, in athletics perform standing and triple jumps, run relay and shuttle races, and throw long distances or more accurately at targets. They have increasing games skills, being able to control a ball, dribble, pass and receive in different games such as basketball, football and hockey.

128. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have developed good ball skills in the various games they play. They are becoming much more aware of the importance of teamwork and of tactics. They are mainly quick and mobile, although most lack the stamina to continue any strenuous activity for any length of time. Pupils take part in fitness routines both in school and at local leisure facilities where they perform a variety of stretches, lifts and exercises with and without equipment. They continue to develop their understanding of the importance of exercise, and its effect on the heart and muscles. They know that exercise is good for them, and most of them enjoy it very much.

129. The teaching and learning are good overall. Often lessons are very, and there was one excellent lesson during the inspection. Teachers plan their lessons very well, showing good knowledge of the subject. They use on-going assessment well to evaluate how well the pupils are progressing during the lesson. Teachers have high expectations for pupils’ involvement and effort, and they keep activities moving at a good pace. This results in pupils who are often highly motivated, and who are learning well, as well as gaining some healthy exercise. Their learning is supported by teachers having a positive and enthusiastic approach, and by the use of a good range of appropriate equipment and apparatus. Teachers look for coaching points to increase skills, and they structure their lessons to ensure that pupils practise particular skills, take part in a real activity or game, and learn more about the health and safety aspects of physical education. In one lesson, for instance, after a warm up and discussion of some safety matters, the pupils were learning basketball skills through a sequence of practice activities that enhanced their ball skills in dribbling with the ball, passing in different ways, shooting, and getting into better positions to receive the ball and shoot. The practice activities were well arranged, and the teacher and support assistant had very good knowledge of the pupils and what the lesson aims were, and they guided and encouraged pupils very well. The final game was strenuous and exciting for the pupils, and the teacher reinforced what they had learned with a discussion at the end.

130. The leadership and management of physical education are good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, and there is a sound scheme of work in place, although it will need some adjustment to cater better for the lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 2. The resources are good, and are well used. The accommodation is satisfactory, despite the hall being rather small for teenagers, and being used for many other purposes. Physical education makes a very strong contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development, particularly through the emphasis on teamwork, team spirit, trying your best, and being able to lose gracefully, as well as to win.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in religious education since the last inspection. Teaching ranges between satisfactory and good and is good overall with

consistently good teaching in Key Stage 4. The only exception to this is the teaching of pupils who have complex learning difficulties. Teachers here are still gaining in experience in meeting the educational needs of these pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has linked with the local authority advisory service for support and guidance in implementing the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Key Stage 4 pupils.

132. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils extend their understanding of the importance of other religious faiths. They gain an understanding of different beliefs and the traditions associated with these beliefs. Achievement and progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The emphasis is on discussion in lessons, and this means there is limited recorded evidence of pupils' learning. In the lessons seen, pupils have a very good recall of discussion from the previous week about Eglantyne Jebb, and the start of the 'Save The Children' organisation. They listen very well to the stories of children in other countries benefiting from this organisation. Other pupils in this key stage study aspects of Hinduism. They sit in a circle as a diva is lit, and listen carefully the teacher explaining the significance of it. As the teacher reads the story of Rama and Sita, pupils show interest by asking questions, and they gain an understanding of the history surrounding Divali.

133. At Key Stage 3, pupils achieve well. They study Christianity as well as other world religions. They know of important symbols for followers of Islam, and they compare the 'naming' ceremonies of Christianity and Islam. They know of the importance of Mohammed as a prophet and they show interest and respect for traditions that differ from their own. They know that Jesus taught in parables, that there were four gospel writers, and the principle facts of the life of Jesus. In discussing the betrayal of Jesus, pupils in Year 9 can empathise with the feeling of being let down by others. As well as studying Old Testament stories of David and Goliath, Elijah, and the Ten Commandments, pupils gain an insight into social and community issues as they study the work of important characters such as Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale.

134. At Key Stage 4, pupils add to their knowledge of famous people as they study Gladys Aylwood, Martin Luther King, and Mother Teresa. They consider the work of early Christians, such as, Saints Alban and Augustine as well as the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas. They discuss moral issues such as forgiveness and the various views on animal rights. During this key stage, pupils develop their understanding that there may be more than one acceptable opinion, and they are given opportunities to consider and voice their opinions on a variety of issues such as 'What is religion?'

135. Teaching and learning overall is good. Planning of lessons is in line with the syllabus and good use is made of resources. For example in Key Stage 2, a pupil was able to model a Hindu sari so pupils could see the length of the material and how it is folded. Older pupils benefit from the use of commercially produced videos to give realistic background to their study of religions. Good teaching is exemplified by careful planning and by good questioning techniques that encourage pupils to think carefully about the implication of religious faith and the effect religion has on people's lives. Photographic evidence shows that pupils join in with church ceremonies, such as, the Harvest Festival and Christmas celebrations. Pupils generally enjoy the lessons and behave well. The frequent opportunities for discussion allow pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The very good relationships evident in the lessons mean that pupils increase their self-confidence.

136. The subject is co-ordinated by two teachers who have good subject knowledge and are committed to promoting this aspect of the school curriculum. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The scheme of work is well used and teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. The lessons are supplemented by assemblies and tutorial times, which further extend pupils

awareness of tolerance and respect for others. The school has an adequate range of resources with good use being made of video material, and is enhanced by the regular practice of school visits. There is some informal monitoring of the subject through teacher discussion and meetings, and assessment is informal. The school recognises the need to review the curriculum so that it can be taught in an appropriate way to pupils who have complex learning difficulties.