

INSPECTION REPORT

HAMILTON LODGE SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN

Brighton

City of Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114619

Principal: Anne Duffy

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 4 - 8 December 2000

Inspection number: 223660

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:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	5 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The proprietor
Name of chair of governors:	Steve Kent
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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13101	Mike Kell	Team inspector	Science Physical education	Leadership and management
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	English Equal opportunities	Quality and range of learning opportunities
15590	Sue Slocombe	Team inspector	Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hamilton Lodge School is an approved independent day and residential school for pupils who are deaf; most pupils have profound hearing losses and ten per cent of the pupils have cochlear implants. There are 77 pupils on roll between the ages of 5 and 17 years; 61 pupils stay at the school four nights a week. Most pupils come mainly from the south of England but some come from as far away as Manchester. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below that expected for their age and pupils enter with varying degrees of linguistic competence. The majority of pupils are admitted to the school after the age of eleven. Pupils aged 11 – 17 are formally disapplied from music and a foreign language. Instead they are taught Deaf studies and have other experiences that supplement learning in those subjects not taught. The school has applied for non-maintained status. The school has a 'child-centred' approach to supporting pupils' language and communication development that incorporates the use of British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported English (SSE) and Signed English according to the perceived needs of each pupil.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hamilton Lodge is an effective school that has some very good and excellent features to its work. The school is well managed and its ethos for learning is very strong. The very good delegation of staff responsibilities and clearly defined roles contributes to the very smooth day-to-day running of the school. Pupils achieve well; their response to lessons is very good and their attitudes to school and work are excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall and contributes positively to pupils' learning; it is strongest in the primary department (5 – 11 year olds), where it is very good. In relation to the standards achieved and the quality of teaching and provision, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision for supporting and enhancing pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.
- The quality of care and the contribution that the residential provision makes to pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to, and enthusiasm for, school are excellent.
- The school's very good procedures for discipline and the way the school manages pupils' behaviour, means that pupils form very good relationships with one another, are polite and respectful and act very sensibly in classrooms and around the school.
- The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in the secondary department is excellent; pupils make excellent use of the Internet as a tool for learning; the presentation of their work in ICT is outstanding; the teaching of art throughout the school, and the music taught in the primary department, is very good. Deaf studies and BSL are very well taught. The teaching and provision in the primary department is a strength of the school.

What could be improved

- Strategic planning, so that long-term planning is sharper, that there is an improved relationship with medium-term planning.
- The role of ICT in supporting pupils' learning in other subjects across the school and for supporting pupils with specific difficulties in reading and writing; pupils' learning and use of ICT in the primary department so that pupils' ICT skills, knowledge and understandings are systematically built upon.
- The opportunities that are provided in subjects for pupils to progress in their use and understanding of the English language and for reading and writing, so that there is more consistency in approach.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning in subjects.
- Assessment in subjects, in relation to National Curriculum expectations, and the way this informs future planning and teachers' awareness of how pupils are performing.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected nearly five years ago, in March 1996. It has built on its previous high standards and increased the range of public examinations and awards pupils take, so that pupils leave school with more qualifications. In order to improve pupils' grades and to maximise opportunities for vocational and college experience, the school has now extended the programme of work in Key Stage 4 so that most pupils now take their examinations in Year 12. Improvements have been made to the curriculum; pupils have more vocational experiences in Key Stage 4 and in Year 12 and the good planning of themes in the primary curriculum helps pupils to make more sense of what they are learning. Assessment has improved and detailed Annual Review targets are now set for all pupils, although not all assessments are clearly related to National Curriculum levels. The residential facilities have significantly improved and further improvements are planned. Girls now have their own separate and individual accommodation with facilities such as high quality, refurbished bathrooms and showers. Financial planning is very good and related well to school priorities; the bursar makes a valuable contribution to the running of the school. Governors are well involved in the school, make it account for standards and quality, and monitor its work directly.

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

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

Pupils' achieve well overall and some achieve very well. In BSL achievement is also good. In the primary department, pupils achieve very well; in the secondary department and in Year 12, their achievement is good. Pupils' achievement in art is very good and many pupils achieve high grades at GCSE. In ICT, the oldest pupils' achievements are outstanding. Many achieved C grade passes the first time the school entered them for examinations in 1999 and the current work is of very high quality. Pupils' achievements in English are satisfactory overall. They could be better if opportunities were more systematically provided in other subjects to promote pupils' understanding of English language and for reading and writing. The school has begun to set targets in relation to what it expects pupils to achieve in GCSE; however, it does not set challenging whole school targets in relation to improving other aspects of its work. Short-term learning targets are not always set for pupils; instead pupils have longer-term targets that state what they should be learning in subjects. Pupils do, however, make good progress in relation to the targets that are set. What they need to learn in relation to their special educational needs is not sufficiently identified and these longer-term targets are not always obvious in teachers' planning and lessons. The way that subject targets are tracked, reviewed and evaluated needs further improvement and those in care plans need to be clearer and more specific.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very interested and responsive in lessons and highly motivated to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils understand clearly how they should behave and are very courteous to staff and visitors; they are very mindful of other's feelings.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate well to each other and show respect for all members of the school community. Pupils are very responsible, caring for themselves and making appropriate decisions and choices.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are very keen to return to school and residence after the weekend and parents are delighted with their response to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-17
Lessons seen overall	very 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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good and excellent features. It is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4 as well as in Year 12. All teaching was satisfactory or better and 76 per cent was at least good. Thirty seven per cent of teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers know their subjects well and are strongly committed to pupils' achievement; their enthusiasm captures pupils' interest and motivates them. Teachers know precisely what they intend pupils to learn. They usually make this clear to pupils so they are clear about what they should do. Lessons are planned thoroughly in the practical sense. However, many written lesson plans have objectives that are too broad to be assessed. Support staff make a positive contribution to lessons, supporting individual pupils well. They are not always effectively deployed, however, when the teacher is teaching the whole class and they then have little to do. Teachers aim to meet the needs of all the pupils in the classes by providing additional support for those with the greatest needs. However, there is little in the way of differently planned activities for them. The teaching of English, mathematics and PSHE is good. Teaching is satisfactory in science and outstanding in ICT in the secondary department. British Sign Language and Deaf studies are taught very well. The school supports pupils' learning and language acquisition through its 'child-centred' approach to communication and a number of teachers and support staff use this very effectively. However, the teachers' use of differing approaches is not always consistent. This is particularly so with respect to the place of English language and the auditory input used with some pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Very good opportunities outside lessons in clubs and activities. A very wide range of careers, and vocational work is provided. The primary curriculum is well planned and helps make learning relevant for pupils. The good secondary curriculum provides a wide range of courses that leads to pupils attaining a large number of awards and qualifications.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Excellent assemblies provide spiritual opportunities for pupils to reflect upon families and children where pupils can experience great joy or even sadness. Clear and consistent boundaries allow pupils to develop a very clear sense of right and wrong and self-discipline. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to mix with others and form relationships, including with pupils from other schools and out in the community. There are many exciting displays of pupils' and other artists' work around the school that reflect the very wide range of cultural opportunities pupils receive.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a strong culture of care in all aspects of the school and staff know pupils very well. The relaxed and easy atmosphere is supported by firm discipline and high regard for pupils' health and safety. Pupils enjoy their experiences while living at the school and feel safe and secure. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory; teachers do need, however, to ensure that their recording of pupils' progress is in relation to National Curriculum attainment levels and progress is better tracked in some subjects. Pupils' progress would also be better supported if the most important things pupils needed to learn in relation to their special educational needs were identified as targets and taught and applied by all staff. The residential provision is very good and significantly enhances pupils' opportunities to develop personally.

The school's links with parents are good. They have positive views of the school's work. The school works hard to include parents in the work and life of the school. Despite the considerable distances pupils live from the school, functions are well attended by parents. A good number always attend special events such as meetings about the progress of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Good. The principal provides clear educational direction and is well supported by senior staff. As a result there is a good, shared sense of purpose. The contribution of staff with delegated responsibilities to the smooth running of the school is very good. The school's strategic planning needs to be sharpened so that it covers all aspects of the school's work necessary for long-term development, as well as ensuring all levels of planning link well with each other.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors have a clear view of how their responsibilities contribute to the leadership and management of the school. As a result of the way they monitor the effectiveness of the school's work, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are suitable plans to evaluate teachers' performance, based on government recommendations and to continue to develop the school's existing system of review which includes all staff and not just teachers. There is a positive climate, which could be enhanced by further self-review, and better evaluation procedures. There is good quality monitoring of teaching by the principal and deputy but subject co-ordinators' roles in monitoring all aspects of their subjects is under-developed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There are clear procedures and financial planning is very well tied to school development priorities. Governors regularly monitor budget spending.

The school applies best value principles satisfactorily. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. The very good quality residential facilities, including the ICT network, extend pupils' learning very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are keen on school. • They quickly grow in self-confidence. • Parents are kept well informed; information is good. • The school responds promptly to concerns. • Residential care and provision is good. • The pupils leave with relevant qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of encouragement for day pupils to join in activities after school.

Inspectors' judgements agree that pupils are very keen to attend school. The general atmosphere of care and support promotes growth of self-confidence well. Parents are informed about what goes on at school, week-by-week. Their involvement in the annual review process, and the information provided by the school, means that they know how their children are progressing. Many pupils leave with a good range of qualifications. The school responds well to any concerns or suggestions expressed by parents. The quality of the residential care is high; all pupils are encouraged to participate in after-school activities, including the small number of day pupils. However, a lack of flexible transport arrangements locally means that day pupils sometimes miss opportunities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand, and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.*

2. The pupils achieve well and some very well by the time they leave the school. Their achievement is particularly strong in the primary department where pupils achieve very well during their time in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because of the very good teaching and the strong way in which the curriculum is constructed, which makes learning relevant. Pupils' achievement in the secondary department (Key Stages 3 and 4, and Year 12) is good.

3. All pupils enter the school with standards which are below those expected for their age and pupils enter with varying degrees of linguistic competence. Some have had a variety of educational experiences before admission and many are new to using BSL as a form of communication. The majority of pupils are admitted to the school after the age of eleven.

4. The range of examinations and awards has increased since the last inspection and gives pupils a much wider opportunity to leave the school having gained some form of accreditation. The range and type of awards pupils are entered for depends on their level of attainment and achievement and this varies from year to year based on the school's population at the time. Results also vary from year to year. The school's recent change in policy regarding pupils taking examinations means that the majority will now take these in Year 12 in order for them to gain better results, as well as experience greater vocational and college opportunities. This is based on the time taken for pupils' linguistic competence to develop, especially those who enter the school with limited language skills, including limited signing ability. This arrangement meant that only a very small number of pupils took GCSE examinations in 2000, only one of whom was in Year 11. Previously, in 1999, pupils mostly achieved grades in the range from B to E. In design technology pupils are all entered for GCSE and achieve grades in the range from C to E. Pupils generally achieve well in art each year and in 1998 four gained A grade passes and one an A*. The school entered pupils for ICT for the first time in this year and the majority of pupils gained a C pass; a good achievement given their lack of experience on entering the school. Although pupils took a limited range of Certificate of Achievement examinations in 2000, most achieved a merit or silver grade and in previous years pupils have always done well in English gaining many distinctions each year. Pupils also gain awards in General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) at Foundation and Intermediate level in health and social care and the Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE) in social and health care. A small proportion of pupils gain gold passes in food technology awards each year, but many gain the silver award. Many pupils also gain Stage 2 in the Council for the Advancement of Communication for Deaf People (CACDP) – the BSL award.

5. The school has begun to set targets in relation to what it expects pupils to achieve in GCSE; however, it does not set challenging whole school targets in relation to improving pupils' achievements in other aspects of their work. Short-term learning targets for individual pupils (the most important things that pupils need to learn) are not always set; instead pupils have longer-term targets that state what they should be learning in subjects. Pupils do, however, make good progress in relation to those targets that are set. What they need to learn in relation to their special educational needs is not always sufficiently identified and these longer-term targets are not always

obvious in teachers' planning and lessons. The way that subject targets are tracked, reviewed and evaluated needs further improvement and those in care plans need to be clearer and more specific.

6. Pupils' achievement in English (including literacy) is satisfactory overall. There are occasionally good, and some very good features, to this. In some cases, pupils' achievements could be better if opportunities were more systematically provided in other subjects to promote their understanding of spoken English language and its use for reading and writing. Although ICT is used to support pupils' English work throughout the school, particularly for word processing and for research, there are still missed opportunities in lessons, when ICT would enable pupils to write more independently and support their reading skills.

7. Self-expression is strongly supported and pupils can discuss aspects of literature well in writing and BSL by the time they leave the school. They can also present their points of view in this way. Less strong, but still satisfactory, are the more formal aspects of English, including grammar and punctuation. Higher attaining pupils are effectively supported in their work towards GCSE. Pupils' achievement by the time they leave the school, and their independence, in reading and writing is satisfactory, but strengths only just outweigh weaknesses.

8. Pupils' achievements in English are good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in Year 12. Progress, however, is not uniform within and across attainment targets. Pupils enter the school at varying ages, but most enter at Key Stage 3. All have delayed English language skills and some have limited skills in both BSL and English. On entry, many have very little confidence in their own skills in English and some are very reluctant readers and writers. Lively and imaginative teaching and a good balance of discussion and written activity give pupils' confidence that their views are important and help them towards more effective presentation of ideas, particularly through the use of BSL or SSE and very positive attitudes to the literature and poetry that they study in their English lessons.

9. Pupil's achievement in mathematics (including numeracy) at the end of the primary phase is very good. The quality of learning, and their subsequent good progress, is directly related to the high quality of the teaching during these key stages. Although ICT is used to record and represent data, an increase in its use could further develop pupils' appreciation of data handling and their presentation of the information. Pupils' achievements by the end of the secondary phase, in Year 12, are satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory but their opportunities for learning are too reliant in some lessons upon the use of worksheets that have not been planned to meet the needs and abilities of the different pupils in the classes. Pupils also tend to view progress in terms of how many sheets have been completed and compare this with what other members of the group have achieved. Achievement is better in Key Stage 4. It is good because of the way the pupils are grouped by ability and work is planned better according to their individual needs and abilities.

10. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress in science are satisfactory. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Key Stage 1. The topics in the primary department are sufficiently well planned and designed to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced subject curriculum and that the learning is made very relevant for pupils. Specialist teachers in the secondary department have good knowledge of the subject and use resources well as they provide a range of suitable activities that meet the needs of pupils. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 3, following a broad subject curriculum. By the end of the key stage, pupils have extended much of their scientific knowledge and understanding. In addition, pupils are given many research and investigation opportunities so that by the end of the key stage they have developed a number of scientific skills. Pupils are able to predict and draw simple hypotheses and communicate their findings graphically, using some appropriate scientific vocabulary. The Key Stage 4 and Year 12 science curriculum places an increasing emphasis on experimental work as pupils complete GCSE investigations and Certificate of Achievement modules. Good planning and carefully chosen activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop these investigational skills. Some higher attaining pupils can also evaluate their results and suggest improvements for future work. By the end of the secondary phase, pupils have

made satisfactory progress in extending significantly their knowledge and understanding of the living and non-living worlds.

11. In ICT, pupils' achievements by the end of Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Strengths only just outweigh weaknesses, however. This is because ICT skills are taught through activities that take place relating to other subjects. The scheme of work for ICT in the primary department adequately outlines what should be taught in each aspect of the subject but it does not identify how skills should be built upon each other and when they should be taught. This lack of systematic planning for ICT as a subject limits pupils' progress, their knowledge, skills and understanding and means that they are capable of achieving more. By the end of Key Stage 4 and Year 12, pupils' achievements are excellent; they are highly competent users of ICT. The very high quality of teaching, the very well constructed programme of study, including GCSE and Certificate of Achievement syllabus, and the ease of access to the school's network in class and in the residence support this excellent achievement. The excellent way the teacher has planned the work in themes and topics, which builds in real life simulations and modelling, really grasps the pupils' imaginations and motivates them to work very hard. All pupils make excellent progress and many achieved C grade passes in GCSE when the school first entered pupils for this examination in 1999.

12. Pupils' achievements in BSL at the end of the primary phase are good. Their actual level of attainment depends upon their knowledge of BSL prior to entering school and their age at entry. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are able to relate their own experiences as sign language users, and analyse and suggest improvements in their presentation of BSL. They reflect on the differences between the Deaf and hearing culture. In Key Stages 3 and 4 and in Year 12, pupils' achieve very well in Deaf studies. The pupils who have attended the primary department make very good progress with their signed communication skills and the new entrants to the secondary department gain a good grasp of the course content in Deaf studies lessons. Most of these pupils also learn to communicate fluently using BSL. There is a good improvement in their fluency over the time they are in the school and the ease with which they make themselves understood. By the end of their time in the school, all pupils have developed confidence in their communicative abilities. They are sure of their own identity and higher attaining pupils can relate and contrast their own experiences to those of hearing people. The effect of the Deaf studies lessons is evident in the manner in which some of the older pupils respond to the different forms of communication used within the school.

13. Personal, social and health education is a major focus of the school's work. The promotion of pupils' personal development and Deaf identity makes a significant contribution to their personal development, as does the school's work in drama. Pupils and students make good gains in PSHE at all key stages. They achieve well. As they progress through the school, they develop their confidence, their self-esteem and their maturity in line with their individual abilities because of the effective opportunities provided for them.

14. Pupils' achievements in drama, art and design, food technology, and music in the primary department are very good. In geography, history and religious education, achievement is good. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in design and technology (resistant materials), and physical education.

15. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or regarding pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to their work, and to the life of the school, are excellent. They are interested and responsive in lessons and highly motivated to learn. They sustain concentration for long periods and persevere with their work. The expertise of the staff in communicating with and

supporting pupils, both in school and in the residential provision, contributes significantly to pupils' very positive attitudes.

17. Pupils are very sociable, both with one another and with staff, and participate with interest and enjoyment in the wide range of activities available at the end of the school day.

18. Behaviour throughout the school and in the residential provision is very good. Discipline is relaxed but with clear expectations, understood by the pupils, of how they should behave. Pupils are courteous and responsive to staff, visitors and each other, and are mindful of others' needs and feelings. Teachers and assistants provide positive role models and promote a happy purposeful atmosphere in which pupils are able to learn. Clear information and comprehensive guidance aid staff in managing well any inappropriate or immature behaviour. Positive behaviour is always praised and rewarded and this has a positive effect on the way pupils behave. Both pupils and parents are pleased with the very good standards of behaviour the school achieves. Very good procedures are in place to deal with any incidents of harassment, discrimination or bullying. No such incidents were observed during the inspection. There are no permanent exclusions from the school, but a very small number of pupils who were deemed by the school to be inappropriately placed were excluded for short periods of time.

19. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils relate well to each other, and show consideration and respect for all members of the school community. Staff understand well pupils' needs and abilities, and value their contribution to the life of the school. This creates a climate where pupils feel safe enough to risk undertaking tasks about which they are uncertain and has a positive impact on their progress. The pupils are encouraged to socialise with young people in the local community; staff making every effort to facilitate this.

20. Pupils' personal development is very good. Self-care skills are well promoted both in school and in the residential provision. Pupils are expected to accept responsibility for their own actions, and to take care of their personal property. They do this particularly well. At meal times, they cooperate well with each other and with staff, in helping to lay tables and clear away afterwards. Older pupils have increased responsibility in caring for themselves and making appropriate decisions and choices. They are confident in making visits into town and travelling independently on local buses. Work experience and attendance on college courses contribute to the opportunities for pupils to mature and develop the skills they need when they leave school.

21. Parents are delighted that their children are so keen to come to school. Pupils arrive looking animated and glad to be back. Attendance is very good. When any lateness does occur, it is usually due to transport circumstances on a Monday morning, which are entirely beyond the control of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching and learning overall

22. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there are some very good and, occasionally, excellent features. Teaching is strongest in the primary department where, at Key Stages 1 and 2, it is of very good quality. In Key Stages 3, 4 and in Year 12 it is good. Seventy six per cent of teaching is good or better and 37 per cent is very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection and the quality of teaching has improved well since the last inspection, when one tenth of the teaching was unsatisfactory.

23. The quality of teaching in music, where it is taught at Key Stages 1 and 2, in art and design, and drama (as part of English) is very good. The teaching of English, mathematics, history, PSHE, and religious education as well as food technology element of design and technology and geography in the secondary department, is good. Teaching is satisfactory in science, and physical education. British Sign Language and Deaf studies are taught very well. The school supports

pupils' learning and language acquisition through its 'child-centred' approach to communication and a number of teachers and support staff use this very effectively. However, the teachers' use of differing approaches is not always consistent in the secondary department. This is particularly so with respect to the place and use of English language and the ways in which teachers encourage pupils to use their hearing, their hearing aids and other amplification equipment such as radio aids.

Teaching and learning in the primary department

24. The quality of teaching in the primary department is very good. The very small classes, the intimate knowledge that the teachers have of their pupils in terms of their learning, their communication needs and their personal circumstances, mean that the teachers plan for the small steps in pupils' learning well. In some subjects however, teachers' written planning is too general and is more about what pupils will do or learn in the longer-term, than about what they will learn in individual lessons. The teachers' practical planning in terms of the resources that they provide and devise for the actual work pupils will do, is very good overall. There is careful building on pupils' skills and the pace and challenge of lessons for individuals is very good. This also means that pupils are planned for on an individual level and that work is very well matched to their needs. Pupils with additional special educational need are particularly well catered for in the primary department. Teachers and support staff know their needs very well and provide a range of very appropriate activities that support and challenge these pupils effectively.

25. Literacy is taught very well in the primary department and planning closely follows the National Literacy framework. The teachers' approach is particularly successful in promoting pupils' self expression and laying the foundations for literacy. There is often a smooth transition by teachers from one form of communication to another, so that in an English lesson about *The Train Ride* in Year 2, for example, there was a smooth transition from BSL to SSE. The teachers' good knowledge of teaching literacy helps pupils recognise parts of words such as letters and match these to sounds or to finger spelling, and teachers also use other means of supporting communication and reading, for example, symbols. This ensures that all pupils are able to access the elements of literacy being taught, and key skills are being supported carefully and progressively built on. In a literacy lesson in Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils were able to pick out key words from text using symbols to support them. In Key Stage 2, there is good modelling by the teachers to support pupils' listening to and reading of text. Teachers offer explanations that move pupils' understanding and thinking on well. Very good use of these techniques and sensitive questioning means that by the end of the key stage pupils retell stories such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, with some detail, although the sequence of events is not always made clear by lower attaining pupils. The teaching of numeracy in the primary department is very good because of the teachers' very good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. A good pace to lessons motivates pupils well and probing questioning constantly challenges pupils to think about the ways they use to solve mental problems. Good use is made of pupils' mathematical skills in other lessons and this supports pupils' learning and progress well.

26. Literacy and numeracy sessions are over an hour long in the primary department but teachers ensure that there is a variety of activities in the lesson which stimulate and motivate the pupils to try hard with their work and this keeps them concentrating well for quite long periods for their age.

27. No specific teaching of ICT could be seen during the inspection in the primary department as it is taught as part of other lessons. However, although there is good use of the Internet for research, there is insufficient systematic use of it to support the teaching and learning of other subjects as well as for improving pupils' ICT capability. As a result, pupils' could achieve more in ICT than they do.

28. Support staff in the primary department are well deployed and very effectively used to assist individual and group learning. They have excellent relationships with other staff and pupils and make a major contribution to pupils' progress.

Teaching and learning in the secondary department

29. The quality of teaching in the secondary department is good and in some subjects, such as ICT, the excellent knowledge of the teacher positively affects the quality of the learning experiences the pupils receive. At the beginning of most lessons pupils are clearly told what they are to learn and staff review the lesson well with pupils at the end of the session. This supports pupils' understanding and learning well and helps teachers to be clear about what pupils have gained during the lesson. Sometimes, however, too little time left at the end of lessons for a full review and opportunities are lost for reinforcing the key points of a lesson. Lesson planning is good overall though learning objectives in some written planning are too general for teachers to be able to fully assess what pupils have learned. The teaching of art is particularly strong. The range of materials used and the subject knowledge of the teachers, coupled with very good relationships, mean that pupils are always motivated and interested and try their best. In Deaf studies, the very good teaching is characterised by excellent relationships and understanding of pupils' needs, use of a range of techniques and teaching styles, including the use of video and careful assessment of what pupils have learnt. The teaching of food technology is also very good and provides very well for pupils' basic skills, as well as carefully supporting their understanding of specialist terms and skills. Teaching in English is good overall in the secondary department and strongest at Key Stage 4 and Year 12. This is because the demands of the courses pupils will take, before they leave school, challenge and motivate pupils and teachers are often very creative in the ways in which they approach and deliver this work. The use of mind mapping, for example, enabled a number of pupils to be more independent in planning their written work and to demonstrate the quality of their ideas. Teaching is satisfactory in science, where there is a need for more challenging and additional work to be provided for more able pupils. Teaching is good in history, geography, design technology and religious education. Teachers' use of questioning and careful explanations in these subjects supports pupil learning well.

30. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory in the secondary department. Pupils' self-expression is well supported and so is their ability to express ideas about their English work in BSL or SSE. However, opportunities to help pupils develop effective strategies for their reading and writing are occasionally missed and the work is not sufficiently challenging for some pupils. The teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 3 is strong in relation to the good quality individual support pupils receive during lessons from teachers and support assistants, but is weakened by the over-use of work sheets; there are missed opportunities for some pupils to consolidate what they are learning and for others to extend their learning rather than proceeding through worksheets which do not always meet their needs. It is better at Key Stage 4 because the work is better matched to their needs. ICT is excellently taught in ICT lessons in the secondary department. This is largely because of the teachers' excellent knowledge of the subject, and the superb way lessons are practically planned with high quality teacher-made support materials. These are very effective in helping pupils to learn, in motivating them, and act as excellent models for pupils' presentation skills. Some design and technology work takes place in ICT in Years 11 and 12, for instance, and pupils investigate art forms relating to their work using the Internet. The design and technology co-ordinator has just received some CAD/CAM equipment. However, although there are opportunities for subject contributions to be the focus of some ICT teaching in Key Stage 3, ICT is not used enough to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

31. The school's policy of appointing good quality subject specialists in the secondary department as the main criteria for selection means that most teachers at this key stage have very good specialist knowledge of their subjects and a range of effective techniques in their teaching. In addition, the quality of induction support for new staff and the specialist training as teachers of the deaf that most staff have means that the majority of the staff are very skilled in delivering their subjects with pupils' special educational needs as a result of their deafness in mind. However, this is not so in all cases. Although there are identifiable plans and programmes for pupils who have other special needs in place which help staff in their planning for these pupils, there is a need for more guidance to be given as to how all pupils' priority learning needs, such as those related to their communication levels and literacy level, should be met in subjects, so that all teachers' planning and delivery meets these effectively.

32. Learning support staff make a strong contribution where they are deployed to lessons, although there is limited support in some practical lessons, such as science, where pupils could benefit from this. They are very well used in lessons such as drama, where they intervene skilfully to help move pupils' thinking on, or act as critic and audience as pupils try out their ideas. Sometimes, however, particularly at the beginning of lessons, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, support staff have little to do and not all teachers plan with the support assistant role in mind for this part of the session.

33. The teaching of pupils with additional special educational needs is satisfactory in the secondary department with some good and very good features. Sensitive staff support for these pupils' communication skills and good relationships, support pupil self-esteem and expression well. Staff work hard, in conjunction with support staff, to ensure that they are effectively included in lessons. Good use of role-play and of shared reading activities at Key Stage 3 for example meant that all pupils were able to understand and follow a lesson in English relating to a Christmas Carol. However, although pupils who are lower attaining or who have additional special educational needs are well supported by support staff, not all teachers plan activities that are specifically designed to engage and challenge these pupils. Sometimes different resources are provided for pupils, but many would benefit from more activities being prepared beforehand and which would enable them to learn in smaller steps. Pupils with additional needs sometimes have additional support in the form of an adult and some support assistants are specifically assigned to individuals as part of the pupils' Statement of Special Educational Needs. Some support staff are particularly adept at modifying activities for pupils, such as in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where pupils were using their knowledge of multiplication and division. One pupil with additional needs was initially struggling with this work but a highly competent support assistant saw that he needed smaller steps to achieve this and arranged to give him much more reinforcement of his basic knowledge. ICT is underused by teachers to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and particularly those with very delayed reading and writing skills. There were a number of occasions observed when the use of ICT would have allowed pupils more independence and provided more motivation in their learning.

34. Relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are very good. All pupils are very effectively managed and the school's strong discipline code means that pupils are clear about how they should behave and respond in lessons. Very occasionally when the pace of a lesson is too slow or the activity lacks challenge, pupils do get restless or act slightly silly. Generally, however, they settle down to work quickly and are keen to discuss their work. As pupils progress through the school, they accept more responsibility for the organisation of their work and the teaching strategies help to promote this growing independence. Older pupils carry out research using sources provided ICT and, with limited help and guidance, organise and present their work to a very high standard. As their communication skills improve, pupils contribute to discussions with growing confidence. They readily ask questions for information and clarification and use the information gained well.

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

The range and quality of pupils' opportunities for learning

35. There has been good improvement in pupils' opportunities for learning since the last inspection. At that time, the school had just introduced a number of curricular initiatives, including schemes of work and more balanced timetables. The need to continue and develop this work was a key issue. These initiatives have been consolidated and built on well. This is the result of policy reviews, more systematic monitoring of planning, the introduction of an extended range of accredited courses, qualifications and awards. It also stems from the introduction of schemes of work or a review and production of more detailed schemes of work in most subjects. All pupils now take a range of awards and a broader range of GCSE; Certificate of Achievement and GNVQ

courses are now provided, although most pupils take these in Year 12, rather than Year 11. Taught time at Key Stages 3 and 4 follows government recommendations and links between the primary and secondary department for overall co-ordination of the curriculum are on the whole good, although there are still some subject areas such as ICT, science and art, where these links need further development to ensure pupils' learning is effectively built on and planned for. Support for pupils' literacy has been strengthened through the school's response to the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2, though some aspects of literacy are still not systematically developed in all subjects, such as science and history in the secondary department.

36. The curriculum is now good overall and has many very good features. It is broad and relevant to the needs of pupils and is balanced in almost all subjects. Religious education is included and the programme follows the local agreed syllabus. Personal, social and health education is taught separately and provision for sex and drugs education is made within this and also in science. The Deaf studies curriculum adds much to pupils' personal development and especially to their self-esteem.

37. All statutory elements of the National Curriculum are met – a requirement of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs in this independent school. Although there is now no provision for music and modern foreign languages in the secondary department, the school does provide a range of musical and foreign/cultural experiences for its pupils that meet some aspects of the recommended programmes of study for these subjects at secondary level. The decision to formally disapply pupils from these subjects was the result of appropriate discussion, within the context of the school's aims and values, and of the specific needs of the pupils that it provides for. The school is aware of the need to regularly review decisions in relation to these subjects for pupils of secondary age, particularly given the good achievement of the pupils in music at primary level and the support that both subjects give to pupils' broader understanding, communicative and cultural growth. Curriculum provision is satisfactory in English, science and design and technology. It is good in mathematics, religious education, geography and history. The curriculum for art is also good across the school, although the written planning for art in the secondary school is weak. Provision for ICT as a subject is excellent in the secondary department, though it is not used as much as it might be across the curriculum and strengths only just outweigh weaknesses in ICT in the primary department.

38. The curriculum has been broadened through the introduction of Deaf studies and appropriately linked awards at Key Stages 3 and 4, and through the teaching of BSL in the primary department. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils receive a good balance of vocational experiences alongside the National Curriculum. Media studies and child development courses also add to breadth of pupils' learning opportunities. The extended three-year Key Stage 4/ Year 12 course has enabled vocational experiences, work experience and college links to be extended and is enabling more pupils to take higher level qualifications. The quality of these vocational experiences is very good and the school and college are planning to extend them further.

39. The curriculum provided for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and has some very good features. A combination of staff expertise, effective planning and strong schemes of work in most subjects ensures that the topic approach used to support learning in subjects other than mathematics and English is highly effective. The curriculum in the primary department places an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' communication, personal development and basic skills. Day-to-day planning establishes suitable learning objectives for individual and groups of pupils and these are suitably informed by the assessments and profiles of the pupils' needs, understandings, skills and knowledge as well as by subject/ topic schemes of work. The primary department's planning for English and mathematics takes good account of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teaching within these takes up over half of the school day, but careful planning and links between texts and language studied in the literacy sessions and in mathematical activities in the numeracy lessons mean that other subjects such as history, geography and science are supported well through these. Similarly, most aspects of literacy and numeracy are well supported through the topic approach. This is a strength of the current curriculum for almost all subjects, although the curriculum for design and technology is only just satisfactory at primary,

because there are too few planned opportunities that ensure pupils' understandings and skills are systematically supported in all aspects of the subject. ICT is used satisfactorily in the primary department to support aspects of individual pupils' writing, reading and topic work. However, the provision for ICT as a subject is only just satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. ICT is taught within other subjects rather than separately. The limitations of the scheme of work, and the lack of detailed monitoring of skills and curriculum coverage, mean that pupils' experiences in ICT are inconsistently developed and built on throughout the primary school.

40. The quality and range of the curriculum is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is strongest for ICT where carefully planned programmes of support build on pupils' prior learning very well and support them becoming increasingly independent learners. ICT is used well within the timetabled lessons to support pupils' skills and understandings in ICT and their work in other curricular areas. However, it is not used sufficiently in subject lessons and opportunities are lost for ICT use to enable more independent participation in follow-up activities by pupils with more delayed reading and writing skills. The use of ICT to support these pupils' specific reading and writing skills is also underdeveloped. The school has particular strengths in its provision overall for art, media studies, drama, and food technology at Key Stages 3 and 4. Its provision for English is satisfactory with some good features and the school now offers accreditation in English at GCSE and Certificate of Achievement. Carefully planned programmes support pupils' understanding of literature and their attending to, and appreciation of, others' points of view particularly well. Drama and media studies also support pupils' English and PSHE skills well and prepare them effectively, through the range of modules explored, for aspects of citizenship. Pupils consider issues relating to an ideal society, smoking, bullying and Deaf issues, and presentations in advertisements and such like, from a range of different perspectives. The provision for Deaf studies and for BSL is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' self esteem, PSHE and awareness of issues relating to citizenship. Provision for PSHE, history, geography, and religious education is good – in all of these subjects the extension of accreditation and the careful revision of schemes of work has meant that pupils' experience an appropriately balanced curriculum, which builds carefully on previous work. The curriculum and learning opportunities provided in science and mathematics are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4, although there is an over reliance on worksheets in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 3, and the quality of the day-to-day planning to meet need is restricted by these. It is better in Key Stage 4 where pupils are taught in groups designated by their mathematical ability.

41. The school provides a good range of vocational courses which support pupils' transition to college and to the next phase of their education well. At Key Stage 4 and in Year 12, these programmes, including pupils' college based work, support pupils' personal and social development and their self-esteem well. The accredited vocational courses include GNVQ Foundation Level in Health and Social Care and Certificate of Achievement in Child Care. A good range of GCSE and Certificate of Achievement courses are now available for completion in Year 12, although the school retains some flexibility for pupils to also take qualifications in Year 11. The school recognises the need to continue to offer this option, particularly for higher attaining pupils and also to have a broader range of college based courses available. There are good contacts with the local careers service and information gained from this is shared with students' local services to enable as smooth a transition as possible to further education or employment. Work experience from Year 10 onwards further supports pupils' curricular experience, communication, confidence and preparation for the world of work.

42. The curriculum is strongly supported by the school's approach to communication. The 'child-centred' approach carefully assesses each pupil's skills and needs on entry and recognises that pupils have been referred to the school because of their need for some form of sign support to their acquisition of English and for exposure to BSL as either a first or equal language. The very good provision made for pupils through the BSL and Deaf studies curriculum is further supported by the teachers' use of BSL in their teaching of subjects. This supports pupils' acquisition of BSL and their learning in subjects, as well as their personal development, self-esteem and confidence. Some teachers and support staff change their form of communication very effectively to meet individual pupil's communication needs; for example, a primary teacher used Sign Supported English (SSE) and voice with one pupil and BSL without voice to communicate with another. However, in some

classes there is insufficient auditory and English language input for certain pupils. This means that the support for English language acquisition, whether as a first or second language, and for literacy is variable in subjects and classes and not simply determined by the pupils' identified needs. A significant minority of pupils do not make as much progress in these areas as they could, particularly at secondary level. The school's development plan rightly identifies the need to review its language and literacy policy and practice across the curriculum carefully. The school is also planning to extend its response to the National Literacy Strategy into Key Stage 3, to improve its literacy provision and to raise standards further.

43. Current provision for literacy is good in the primary school where almost all aspects of the National Literacy Strategy are being implemented. The provision for pupils' writing within the primary department is good and very good for discussing what they are reading and what they want to write. Provision for literacy across the curriculum is less strong in the secondary school and particularly at Key Stage 3. In some subjects, such as food technology, teachers are careful to support pupils' understanding of written English and provide good comparisons with the way in which BSL grammar might express similar ideas. Good examples of translation and comparison with the child's first language as well as support for broader literacy skills were also seen in subjects such as geography. Throughout the school, however, when pupils meet words they do not know in their reading or need help with spellings or grammar in their writing, some teachers and support staff provide the answers too readily, rather than first trying to help pupils to work it out for themselves. Policy and practice in relation to extending pupils' writing abilities and use of reading strategies needs further development, particularly for those pupils with very delayed reading and writing skills. In some subjects, such as history, science and geography, individual pupils' lack of progress in these areas impacts on their achievements and attainable levels in examinations. More systematic provision for literacy across the curriculum would raise pupils' literacy and broader attainment further.

44. The curriculum for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. It is good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 and particularly strong at Key Stage 2 where the identification of pupils' additional needs is well established; staff work hard to provide for these pupils' targets within lessons as well as in special sessions such as the movement club. The curriculum provision for pupils with additional special educational needs in Key Stages 3, 4 and Year 12 is satisfactory with a number of good features. Support staff are used to enable pupils to access the curriculum, but more use of ICT in all subjects would support pupils' access further. For those pupils with cochlear implants and others who are hearing aid wearers, there is a need to ensure that use of hearing is given a higher profile in some subjects and lessons.

45. The very good provision for study support and after school activities extend pupils' experiences well and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal and social development as well as their confidence in communicating with others. A very good range of on-site clubs allow pupils to exercise choice, gain skills and co-operate well with each other and build on their school learning. Homework clubs ensure pupils take some responsibility for their learning and parents and after-school staff ensure that homework contributes well to pupils' further learning. Pupils have good but carefully considered opportunities to gain independence and these, plus the goodwill of the local community, support their inclusion into the local community well; for example local bus drivers have asked for lessons in learning to sign. A good range of visits, drama, sport and music activities and groups enrich the curriculum in school and after school further. The school draws on the local community well to extend pupils' understanding and their inclusion.

Links with the community and partner institutions

46. The school has very good relationships with the local community, including business and community organisations, schools and colleges.

Inclusion

47. The school began a pilot inclusion project with a local school and Brighton and Hove Local Education Authority (LEA) in January 2000. The partner school is a primary and nursery school of 240 pupils aged three to eleven years. The main aim of the project is for pupils from both schools to

develop learning and social skills that are appropriate to their age or stage of development and the project is part of the PSHE programme for pupils of Reception age and Key Stage 1.

48. The two schools work closely together to provide good opportunities for joint learning and teaching. Staff jointly plan and teach the PSHE programme and pupils attend joint lessons in each school. In addition, pupils share some subject lessons such as art, physical education and topic work, and Hamilton Lodge School staff are careful to ensure that the curriculum in these areas links into that of the primary mainstream school.

49. The school has identified clear objectives and goals for the project, and these are carefully reviewed and evaluated against set criteria. The school provided interim reports to the governing body and Brighton and Hove LEA in April and July as part of this monitoring and evaluation process. The project has been very successful in enabling the school to provide planned inclusive social and learning opportunities for its pupils. Parents comment positively on the success of the programme, and pupils are making expected or better progress against individual targets for this inclusion.

Links

50. The school has developed very good links with a wide variety of local organisations and businesses, making effective use of contacts gained through 'Common Purpose', 'Business in the Community' and the 'Professional Firms Group'. These have resulted in both the improvement of physical resources, such as the refurbishment of the library, and the extension of valuable learning opportunities. For example, the well-organised work-experience programme has been extended and rendered more effective; good relationships with local shops and agencies enable pupils to see differing applications of ICT; help from a local bus company is imaginatively used to enhance the pupils' independence programme. A very good system of vocational training taster courses has been developed in collaboration with Brighton College of Technology.

51. Links with the careers service continue to be very good. Pupils are offered encouragement to think imaginatively about their future plans, and are given realistic and valuable help in making important choices.

52. Effectively used links with national and local specialist organisations and agencies provide pupils with an expanding list of very good experiences and resources. These include adventure holidays, attendance at a local youth club, membership of local sports clubs, participation in arts events and festivals, and experience of other countries and cultures

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

53. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Assemblies, the residential provision, art, music, drama, religious education, PSHE and media studies lessons, provide very good opportunities for development in these areas and for achievements to be celebrated.

54. Very good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness are provided in many lessons and assemblies. For example at a whole school assembly, pupils were invited to reflect upon families and children and the feelings situations in families can bring of great sadness and joy. They were shown an overhead projector picture of *Damilola*, the boy who was killed by bullies and asked how his family must have felt at his funeral. They also looked at a picture of the '*Hand of Hope*' of the surviving Siamese twin holding onto a parents' fingers. They then reflected on the joy shown in a picture of a member of staff, with her baby born earlier in the week. Other assemblies challenge pupils to reflect on why there is war and the terrible results of such conflicts.

55. The school's written aims include providing clear and consistent boundaries, which allow pupils to develop a sense of right and wrong and self-discipline. This is achieved very well. In all lessons, clear guidelines are given of expected behaviour and these are reflected in the 'Pupil Guidelines', which the school council helped to develop. They state pupils should 'watch and listen and think about others'. There are many examples of pupils being very thoughtful towards each other and to staff and visitors, and of pupils being challenged to reflect on moral dilemmas. For

example, in assembly they were asked to think about whether people should intervene or walk on by when arguments begin in the street. In drama, pupils explore or experience dilemmas and social problems in the security of a fictional situation. They imagine their own 'Hamilton Island' where there are no difficulties for Deaf people. Such work helps them to develop empathy and express their emotions, and challenges them to think about the moral issues around a theme that is of central importance to them. In personal, social and health education lessons, they discuss moral issues. For example they learn about ways of coming to decisions, in a lesson on people's rights and 'democracy'.

56. The school aims to support pupils as 'confident young deaf people'. This is achieved by providing a wide range of opportunities for them to mix with others, form relationships, take on responsibilities, attend clubs and integrate into society. Very good role models are provided by deaf members of the teaching and care staff and they demonstrate to pupils the success to which they can aspire. There are also opportunities to meet deaf students attending Reading University, who are undertaking a Theatre Arts Education and Deaf studies course, and to relate directly to these young people. Opportunities to take on responsibility within school include becoming prefects, head boy and head girl and representing a form on the school's council. The council has made a video giving information about Hamilton Lodge School and pupils discuss improvements that they feel could be made to the video and to the school environment. The residential provision enables pupils to have frequent positive social occasions when they discuss topics between themselves and with staff in a mature way. For example, while they wait at tables or in a queue to collect their food at meal-times they use this time to converse with each other by signing, and they show politeness and good table manners. At Annual Reviews, pupils are encouraged to make their views known to social workers and to the school and to be empowered to begin to take responsibility and make decisions towards the shape of their future. Some pupils have opportunities to mix with pupils in mainstream schools and the school has plans to extend this. Year 12 and Key Stage 4 pupils attend work experience in a variety of work placements.

57. The school provides very well for cultural development. For example within art lessons, pupils learn about the lives of artists and study their work, learning to integrate this with their own ideas and imagination in a creative way. This can be seen from the many exciting displays of pupils' and artists' work around the school. Art also provides a very good opportunity for learning about other cultures. For example, an excellent display of Oriental art provides the stimulus for finding out about Chinese and Japanese art and culture. Pupils research on the Internet and use the information to support their art. In religious education and assemblies, they learn about different people's beliefs and how they celebrate special occasions. For example, in one assembly they opened the door of an Advent calendar for Christianity and found some chocolate and compared this with eating doughnuts to celebrate Hanukkah in the Jewish faith. They learned that a candle can symbolise a time to think about what you believe in, for Christianity and the Jewish faith and in many other faiths. Such experiences broaden their understanding, supported further by their studying of a range of multicultural literature, poetry and music and the school's bi-annual visits to and connection with Europe.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Health, safety, care and the monitoring of personal development

58. A strong culture of care pervades the whole atmosphere of this school. All staff know pupils very well indeed, and the relaxed easy relationship between staff and pupils makes for a valuable family feeling throughout the school. Consequently, there is good informal monitoring of pupils' personal development, and this is backed up by a written system of personal care plans for residential pupils. These are generally good in identifying key areas for development, but many of them contain neither clear and time-bound specific actions, nor success criteria.

59. Co-operation between care staff and teaching staff is very good. Pupils feel safe and valued within the context of the residential provision, and they enjoy their time spent living in the school.

Teaching staff make very good use of opportunities to guide pupils and express their care for them as they occur in the course of lessons.

60. Arrangements for the general health and safety of pupils are very good. Procedures for risk assessment, both in the confines of the school and whenever pupils are taken out into any new environment, are commendably thorough. All written policies relating to health, safety and care matters are full and comprehensive, and are understood in practical day-to-day terms by staff.

61. Child protection procedures are very good, and they are supported by good relationships with relevant outside agencies. Procedures for checking and cleaning hearing aids are regular and well documented. Staff do a commendable job in ensuring that, given the physical constraints of the design and technology workshop area, hazards are reduced to a minimal level. However, because of the raised pathways around the building an accident has occurred. Safety would further be enhanced by better signage on machinery and clear floor markings to denote the working zone around equipment. It should be of distinct advantage to the overall safety regime when the plans for the replacement of that facility are realised.

62. The very good procedures for promoting good behaviour, and eliminating oppressive behaviour, contribute enormously to the orderly conduct and safe, happy atmosphere. The positive reaction of pupils is largely responsible for the fact that the narrow staircases and corridors do not constitute the threat to safety, which could otherwise be envisaged. This was raised as an issue in the last inspection; it has been well assessed and risk is minimal because of the very good way pupils conduct themselves around the building.

63. The school improvement plan recognises the need to raise the status of audiology within the school, and to improve pupils' acceptance of hearing aids. Current school policy recognises the right of pupils to choose whether or not to wear hearing aids in the evenings and in Year 12. The school's communication policy does not have a specific focus on developing pupils' listening skills through the planned, systematic and consistent use of appropriate amplification. During the course of the inspection, there were a number of occasions where personal hearing aids and radio aid systems were not being used effectively to support learning.

64. Although there is currently no educational audiologist employed by the school, two teachers have the responsibility for co-ordinating audiology in the primary and secondary departments. One of these is covering a temporary vacancy because of a maternity leave and has only had audiological responsibility for a few weeks. The school's current on-site provision and arrangements for audiology satisfy the basic requirements of providing a routine daily checking and maintenance programme of hearing aids, but limited support exists within the school currently as to how best to promote more extensive use of hearing by some pupils and how to evaluate their use of hearing in lessons effectively. The audiological scientist from the local health trust is able to offer support and guidance to the school's co-ordinators and provide specialist oversight of pupils' amplification needs and monitoring and review of their hearing levels. He also contributes to the testing programmes for radio and hearing aids. However, there is a need for the support for hearing aid usage and pupils' listening skills to be more integral to the school's provision, if its aim of raising the profile of audiology is to be realised and pupils' progress in this area to be maximised.

Assessment, support, and the monitoring of pupils' academic progress

65. Procedures for assessment, support and monitoring of pupils' progress are satisfactory overall and have some good, and occasionally very good, features. The school has made a satisfactory improvement in its assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress since the last inspection when it had recently extended some of its arrangements, but needed to consolidate these and develop them further. Its procedures for Annual Reviews and the quality of the reports associated with these are now good and have some very good features. Parents and older pupils feel that they are involved and that their views are valued in these reviews and appreciate the reports that they receive. The reports are comprehensive, detailed and set subject targets, as well as broader learning targets for the year. Sometimes it is not clear, however, which are the most important things that pupils need to learn (their priority learning targets) for the year and how all

teachers will support these. Parents have a range of other opportunities to talk with teachers about their children's progress, which allow them to understand targets and review progress well.

66. The school's policy is that not all pupils should have shorter term learning plans (individual education plans) and these are in place only for pupils who have additional needs, other than those relating to their deafness. There are very good systems in place for identifying these pupils, particularly in the primary department, and some very good programmes in place as a result. However, the current system means that for other pupils broader learning needs are not sufficiently considered by all teachers, especially those relating to areas of key skills – for example in language and literacy, numeracy, thinking and problem solving skills. Not all teachers know pupils' targets and levels in these areas and so they do not always challenge them in their learning as they could. Pupil profiles are given to all teachers for the groups that they teach which identify their current BSL and English as an additional language (EAL) levels (the stage they are perceived to be at when learning English as a additional language) and other aspects of their academic and social attainment. These are stated according to the school's own assessment framework, and are not related to QCA differentiated performance criteria, National Curriculum levels and the EAL levels currently identified nationally. As a result, not all teachers are clear about pupils' levels in English and how they should take these into account in their subject teaching and planning. There is a need to make pupils' learning targets and their implications much clearer to all teachers and for lesson planning to be monitored to see how these are taken into account. This would ensure that support for key areas identified in pupils' statements and at Annual Reviews is systematic across the curriculum and enhances pupils' progress further.

67. A range of assessments are carried out on pupils which then inform the school's planning and provision for them. All pupils are entered for the appropriate statutory assessments at the end of each key stage and a broad range of examinations and awards are now in place. External moderators' reports reveal the school's arrangements for moderating course work within these to be sound. The deputy principal carefully documents and monitors all pupils' progress over time in these assessments and across National Curriculum subjects, as well as using information from the specialist assessments that the school carries out. This information is also used to help set school targets such as those for GCSE results, but the school does not analyse the data sufficiently to set challenging targets which could help raise achievement further. As its use of such information becomes better established, this should help the school considerably in evaluating its work. The additional use of ICT, to record pupils' assessment data, should support this analysis, as well as help the school to be more efficient.

68. Other language assessments are also used by the speech and language therapist and teaching staff to help explore pupils' English and BSL levels further. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' BSL skills is very good and there are very good contacts between the staff who teach these areas and staff in other subjects, such as for example through the classes for teachers and support assistants that they run. This means that there is a number of formal and informal mechanisms for discussing the implications of assessments in this language. Mechanisms for exploring the implications of English assessments and what pupils should now learn and do next and how this should influence lesson planning and delivery in subjects are less well developed.

69. Assessment in English is satisfactory; it is good in the primary department where the introduction of the literacy strategy planners has led to teachers looking carefully at their own teaching in each area of the framework and also monitoring pupils' work carefully in relation to these. The close working with a local school has also allowed teachers to keep informed of assessment practices and compare levels of work. There are also good systems within the secondary department in the assessment of pupils' course work and within the context of the modules of literature and English that are taught. There are some inconsistencies, however, in the use of the information gained – particularly in reading and writing. For example, reading assessments are carried out using a reading test at secondary level - and at primary level where appropriate - but an analysis of pupils' skills and needs in reading is not given to subject staff, to support their teaching and ensure that these staff also support pupils' literacy development appropriately. The school has identified the need to address this and the English department is

currently devising a detailed assessment for monitoring pupils' reading and writing progress. It is essential that the information gained is then shared with other staff to help them in their planning and teaching.

70. Assessment procedures and practices are at least satisfactory in all other subjects except in art at Key Stage 3, in physical education and in science where it is underdeveloped and too general. In a number of subjects, however, such as ICT, although assessment procedures are good, and carefully document pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, they are insufficiently related to National Curriculum levels. Not all teachers know pupils' current National Curriculum levels, or what they are currently working towards. Assessment is good in music and in history where records carefully document what pupils know and understand, not simply the work covered, and planning is clearly informed by these.

71. The school's monitoring procedures mean that pupils' and teachers' files are monitored regularly and so teachers' practice in relation to assessment is now much more consistent than at the last inspection. There are still instances, however, in relation to the ongoing and day-to-day monitoring of pupils' progress, where practice is not consistent. For example, the quality of comment in pupils' reading records and the consistency with which they are entered is very variable. Comments made and records in science are too general and in other subjects such as geography records sometimes concentrate too much on work pupils have covered, rather than the geographical understanding gained. Monitoring of progress is generally strongest in the primary department, where the groups are small and teachers know the pupils and their needs and targets very well. The system of teaching in modules in some subjects in the secondary department, with a module evaluation on its completion, is ensuring that most teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress in subjects is increasingly effective.

72. The school, through its satisfactory portfolios of pupils' work, is now attempting to collect information about pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding more systemically for pupils or order to demonstrate progress. These are good in the secondary department and for English, mathematics and science in the primary department. There is a need to develop these further for the non-core subjects in the primary department and for the annotation to identify the context of the work, the support given and the National Curriculum level of attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

73. Parents express great satisfaction with all that this school does for their children. A commendable effort is made by the school to overcome the natural disadvantages of a widely dispersed population. The weekly newsletters are a good channel of communication through which parents are kept informed of what is going on and what is planned. Their informal and attractive style effectively reinforces the good family atmosphere of the school.

74. Parents are also kept well informed about pupils' progress. Reports are generally good and informative, though some could be sharper and more precise in describing both achievements and targets. Parents are very pleased with the extent to which they are fully involved in annual reviews. The process of preparing for the reviews, the way they are conducted, and the care taken in any follow-up, are all good.

75. Home/school agreements and homework diaries help parents to become involved in their children's learning, and they take good advantage of the opportunities thus given. The school's distance from some families plays an adverse part in the extent to which parents are able to actually help in the day-to-day workings of the school, but they say that they always feel that they are made very welcome. A good number always attend special events, many travelling considerable distances. Attempts are currently being made to establish a parents' support group. Given all the constraints, the overall impact of parents on the work of the school is satisfactory

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The leadership and management of the school

76. The principal is providing a clear educational direction for the school and is well supported by senior staff and the governing body. The leadership and management of the school is good and some elements of its work, such as the contribution of staff with delegated management responsibilities and the linking of financial planning to school development, are very good. Day-to-day management of the school is very good. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, although the governing body has responded particularly well to the key issue identified during the previous inspection that it should become more involved in the management of the school.

77. The principal, deputy and head of care provide good leadership and management and the governing body is becoming increasingly effective as it gets more involved in supporting the work of the school. As a result, the school's shared sense of purpose and direction is good. This is reflected in the school's recent application to the DfEE to change its status from independent to non-maintained so that it can access specific additional funds and apply for capital grants. However, some aspects of the school's long-term strategic planning are less effective and the new chair of governors recognises the need to sharpen the strategic development plan. There is no obvious link between the strategic plan and the school improvement plan and so the school's short-term planning cannot be seen in the context of its overall strategic direction.

78. Although the annual development plan is not driven by the strategic plan, there are effective and systematic processes and procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school. A cycle for reviewing whole school and curriculum policies ensures that the school regularly assesses their impact on school improvement. Annual audits of all areas of school life identify priorities for the forthcoming year and these form the basis of the school improvement plan. As a result, the principal and governing body have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development that are needed in order to raise the standards of education and care. Financial planning is clearly linked to the improvement plan and so the school is able to determine its spending in line with clear targets. In addition, as the improvement plan is a fixed agenda item for all governors' meetings they are able to maintain oversight and make changes as required.

79. Governors have a clear perception of their overall responsibilities and how to carry them out and so the governing body has a good understanding of what goes on in the school. Governors find out for themselves what is happening in the school through focussed visits and via its committee structure. The focus of governors' visits is agreed in advance and they have observed a number and range of lessons assessing, for example, the implementation of lesson plans, and they are required to record their observations. In addition, there is an efficient and effective system of governors' committees. These committees are properly constituted with clear terms of reference and a regular programme of meetings that enables them to report to the full governing body.

80. The roles of the principal and deputy principal have changed since the last inspection, as earlier in the year governors approved changes in the internal management of the school to reflect the changing role of the principal. The new structure has been formally in place since September and as a result of these changes the principal is now also chief executive, and the deputy principal has the additional title of head of school, being responsible for its day-to-day management. Current job descriptions reflect these new roles and responsibilities.

81. The additional roles of the principal (becoming the chief executive) and deputy principal (becoming the head of school) were planned well in advance, they have been implemented smoothly with no disruption to the day-to-day running of the school. Consequently, the school's internal management structure and individual roles and responsibilities are clear to all staff. The senior management group comprises the principal, bursar and heads of school and care and this group has a clear and specific role; its weekly meeting provides a forum for sharing information from

all departments. A second tier of management is represented at the weekly heads of department meeting, when cross-department planning takes place. These arrangements, plus the line management structure, are very effective systems for ensuring efficient communication and for providing opportunities for staff to make proposals for school improvement. However, the curriculum links between primary and secondary department could be further strengthened in order to provide better continuity for pupils learning opportunities in some subjects.

82. The school carries out regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of some areas of its performance. The heads of the primary and secondary departments (and subject department heads) regularly monitor planning and the head of school monitors and evaluates the curriculum and the quality of teaching. The education and care departments are monitored formally twice yearly when the principal devotes a week to observing practice in both departments. This procedure enables the principal to gain an overview of the quality of teaching and care within the school and its impact on pupils' learning. The results of these observations are presented to individual members of staff and as a summary report to the senior management group and heads of departments. However, a weakness in the school's practice is that secondary subject heads of department do not monitor the teaching of other staff in their department, and this restricts the development of good practice.

83. The three of the four three senior members of staff in the school are already in the performance management cycle and have personal development targets. The school is proposing implementing a performance management process for teaching and care staff based on the government's recommendations. However, the school is awaiting the outcome of its application for non-maintained status arrangements before it proceeds further.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

84. Overall, staffing levels are good in the school and in the residence. The numbers, qualifications and experience of teaching staff are good and very good for the learning support assistants (LSAs) and care staff. There are more than enough staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum.

85. Teachers' qualifications are well matched to the requirements of the curriculum. All full-time staff are qualified teachers of the deaf with the exception of the two who have joined the school in the last two years. These two teachers are to be offered the opportunity to train as teachers of the deaf in the near future. One teacher is to begin a course in 2001 while another other will start training the following year.

86. There is a high number of part-time staff, the majority of whom are not qualified teachers of the deaf. The school prefers to employ subject specialist teachers in the secondary department and then train them as teachers of the deaf. This is an effective policy and, as a result, staff have a good subject knowledge with the practical experience of working closely with deaf children while developing their skills as teachers of the deaf.

87. There has been an increase in the number of Deaf people employed by the school since the last inspection. The school aims to increase the number of appropriately qualified Deaf staff whenever possible in order to provide the pupils' with valuable role models and to reinforce cultural identity.

88. The very good numbers of experienced learning support assistants make a valuable contribution towards the pupils' learning and their achievements. All of the staff have recognised qualifications in BSL and may support pupils using BSL in a lesson where the teachers are still developing their BSL skills. The LSAs are well deployed by the teaching staff, and work well in partnership with them. They play an important role in pupil development and support pupils very well. The residential areas are very well staffed with a high number of residential care staff. These personnel are all qualified to at least NVQ Level 2 standard whilst others are registered as assessors for NVQ Child Care courses. This ensures a very high level of expertise in the residence and a thorough knowledge of the pupils' needs by key workers. Residential care staff provide good

support for the pupils' communication skills and their personal and social needs by creating a safe, supportive environment. There is a good range of evening activities which are well supported by care staff and the ICT facilities are available for pupils to complete their homework. There is a high level of good quality administrative support for school staff and the bursar.

89. The school has a well-defined policy for the induction of all new staff. The good quality professional development programme readily identifies the training needs of all staff. Staff keep a log of the courses they attend and feedback reports are provided to colleagues. The school purchases training from a range of providers and staff members are themselves employed as trainers by local organisations, particularly with regard to Deaf awareness. There are also plans to provide support for deaf children in other local areas work with some rural authorities to provide advice and support for children using BSL as a form of outreach from the school. Within the school there is good provision for the development of signing skills leading to Council for the Advancement of Communication for Deaf People (CACDP) qualifications. This is particularly relevant to new members of staff who need to develop their BSL presentation by interacting with deaf members of staff.

90. The accommodation is good overall. The site is fairly restricted in size but the school has made very good use of all its available space. The school buildings have developed from the conversion of three Victorian houses and the renovation and refurbishment of these four storey dwellings has been achieved by making well-planned and imaginative modifications. The narrow corridors and stairways somewhat restrict pupils' movement around the school. This was identified in the previous inspection as a potential safety hazard. However, the very orderly and polite manner in which the pupils respond to these restrictions helps to alleviate the difficulties and this is no longer an issue. A risk assessment has been carried out and staff and pupils are vigilant about maintaining very good order. The buildings are well maintained internally and externally.

91. There is a good range of subject specialist rooms in school; those for science, art, food technology and ICT are all of a high standard. The well-resourced ICT room contains networked computers and there are additional networked computers in the residential accommodation which benefit pupils really well when doing homework and for general research and leisure purposes. However, the organisation of the science room leads to some overcrowding and is due to be altered in the near future. The library has been recently refurbished and the new accommodation, combined with the purchase of new fiction and non-fiction books, has greatly enhanced the provision and accessibility of reading material. Pupils access books more readily using the school's new library computer, and bar code database. The design and technology workshop has been re-organised since the last inspection although the approach to it is somewhat hazardous. The workshop, itself, mostly conforms to health and safety requirements, although there is a need for the clearer marking of working areas around machines. The school plans to erect a new workshop behind the main body of the school in order to improve the quality of the working environment and increase accessibility.

92. High quality display areas throughout the school create a stimulating environment. The boards and cabinets are put to very good use, displaying pupils' work and highlighting current affairs. This reinforces the pupils' pride in their own achievements and provides information about school and national events. The same quality of display is also evident in the classrooms.

93. There are good facilities for younger pupils; an outdoor adventure playground offers good opportunities for physical play. A good quality astro-turf pitch is used for games periods and for after school sports fixtures, such as football matches with other schools.

94. The residential facilities are of a very good standard, having been recently re-decorated and fitted with new furniture. The Year 12 accommodation is designed to facilitate independent living, particularly the boys' residence which is a separate house at the rear of the school. The other boys reside in a separate house removed from the teaching areas. The girls' accommodation is housed in the same building as the primary department of the school and while the two areas are carefully divided the school has suitable plans to remove the primary department from the building in order to

maintain a clearer distinction between residential and teaching areas. All of the residential facilities have computers in the study areas which are networked to the school's ICT room and which are regularly used for research and homework.

95. The school's resources to aid pupils' learning are good. The ICT resources are very good; the network is a very well used facility, and although not extended into classrooms yet, this is planned for and already pupils are making good use of it in the residence. The use of video equipment to assist pupils' signing skills is a strength and has a very beneficial effect on the development of pupils' BSL skills. There is also good access to a range of text phones, such as Minicomms, in the residential facility to enable pupils' access to communication with people outside of school. Resources in the primary department are also good. The many teacher-made materials have been added to the range of purchased resources. These materials are of a high quality and display a good awareness of pupils' needs.

Financial planning and best value principles

96. The financial planning of the school is very good and there are clear procedures and appropriate controls in place. The finance, premises and staffing committee of the governing body meets regularly to monitor budget spending. The school has built a considerable contingency fund over the past two years; this is well planned for and targeted in respect of the school's future needs and development. Financial planning is closely related to the school's development planning and whole school priorities are identified annually. In addition, subject bids are made by the heads of department based on their forecasts for development and are appropriately prioritised. The financial implications of these are considered well and, when approved by the senior management team, form part of the school's improvement plan. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection when planning did not include budget setting or evaluation of cost effectiveness of expenditure and the accounting system made the identification of expenditure on staffing and resources difficult.

97. As the school is independent it does not receive government grants. The school has applied for a non-maintained status, which would give it certain financial advantages, for example, such as funds for training in respect of ICT. The relevant government department is, at present, considering this application. Money, gained through fund-raising by the school, or given from a voluntary body for a specific purpose, is used appropriately for that purpose. The same principle applies to extra fees charged to authorities for pupils with additional disabilities, for example, where there is an agreed need for a learning support assistant.

98. The bursar makes a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school and takes responsibility for many aspects of the financial procedures. The principal and the bursar are trained in using a commercial software package for managing the school's finances and the system has full back-up software in the case of damage.

99. The auditors' report for the academic year ending 31 August 2000, only just completed, shows very good planning and control of the budget. It contains no recommendations for changing the present arrangements. In all areas reviewed, the financial procedures were found to be in place and functioning correctly.

100. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The principal uses information from other schools for the deaf as a mechanism for comparison in pupils' performance at the end of key stages as well as GCSE results. Other comparisons include fees and the breakdown of fees, for example of the educational and the residential elements, class sizes and additional support. The principle of challenge is also applied through the monitoring and evaluating of performance in some aspects of the work of the school. This is also reflected in the school improvement plan and strategic planning. The governors forecast pupil numbers in the longer term and consider the implications of this in their financial planning. They have developed good relationship with the Brighton and Hove and East Sussex LEAs and buy into their advisory service for support, for example, in physical education, English and design and technology. The school also has a service level agreement with Brighton and Hove LEA for the provision of an Educational Psychology

Service. As part of its consultation process, the school seeks, records and evaluates the views of pupils and parents. Verbal feedback is received from the local education authorities that place pupils in their school and these, and parents, are consulted when any changes to the curriculum are proposed, such as when French was to be withdrawn from the curriculum. The school competes to maintain its place in the 'marketplace' of deaf education and as a result its pupil numbers have risen since the last inspection. Staff also promote the work and successes of the school within the field of education by publicly announcing examination results and other successes in the press. The school implements a consistent process of tendering for services brought in by the school and support their finances through fund-raising efforts and voluntary support.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

101. In order to improve further the educational standards the principal, senior management team and governing body should:

- (1) Improve strategic planning in order to ensure that it covers all aspects of the school's work necessary for long-term development, as well as ensuring that all levels of planning link well with each other;
(Paragraphs 77, 78)
- (2) Ensure that the school's communication policy is more consistently applied with particular reference to the support for pupils' understanding and use of the English language across the curriculum*;
(Paragraphs 102-115)
- (3) Ensure that ICT
 - is fully used to support pupils' learning in other subjects and especially reading and writing*;
 - is fully taught in the primary department and that the planned programme implemented builds progressively on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject*;(Paragraphs 102, 178, 184)
- (4) Improve pupils' opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills across the curriculum*;
(Paragraph 114)
- (5) Fully develop subject co-ordinators' roles, and especially with regard to monitoring, in line with Teacher Training Agency guidance and strengthen whole school co-ordination of subjects;
(Paragraphs 82)
- (6) Improve teachers' use of the assessments* they make of pupils' learning in subjects in relation to the National Curriculum and increase their awareness of how pupils are performing in relation to attainment levels.
(Paragraph 67-72)

** targets relating to these key issues are already identified in the current school improvement plan*

In addition, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Providing work which is appropriately matched to the differing abilities of pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 3;
(Paragraph 125)
- The use of target setting and assessment information to plan for pupils' individual needs.
(Paragraph 66)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	145
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	34	40	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	77
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13*

* this mainly relates to pupils whose parents use BSL as their main method of communication because of their deafness

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6	School data	0

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 1, 2, and 3

In Key Stage 1 in 2000 no pupils were eligible to take the National Curriculum tests.

In Key Stages 2 and 3 the number of pupils was too small to report the results of the National Curriculum tests or of the teachers' assessments.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Only one pupil was entered for GCSE examinations in Year 11 in 2000. The remaining 13 pupils will take these in Y12. The school has recently changed the year in which most pupils will take their examinations. The numbers of pupils gaining other awards are too small to report.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.3
Average class size	5.5

Education support staff: YR – Y12

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	899

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	1809799
Total expenditure	1762763
Expenditure per pupil	23000
Balance brought forward from previous year	187017
Balance carried forward to next year	234053

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	91	6	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	33	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	27	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	72	25	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	18	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	94	6	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	81	9	6	0	3

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

ENGLISH (INCLUDING DRAMA)

English

102. The school's provision for English is satisfactory overall and has some good features. Since the last inspection the school has made a satisfactory improvement in its provision for English as a subject. GCSE and Certificate of Achievement courses in English have been developed and all pupils now have the opportunity to take an award in English. A GCSE course in drama is also being delivered. Information and communication technology is used to support pupils' English work throughout the school, particularly for drafting and re-drafting, for word processing in general, and for research. There are, however, still missed opportunities in lessons, when ICT would enable pupils to write more independently and support their reading skills.

103. Pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory throughout the school and has some good, and occasionally very good, features. It is strongest for self-expression, presentation of points of view of others and discussion of aspects of literature and text in writing and BSL, and in attending and watching. It is less strong, but still satisfactory, for understanding and using the more formal aspects of English, such as grammar and punctuation. Pupils' English skills are systematically supported towards completion of their course work in Key Stage 4 and Year 12. The policy of taking GCSE in Year 12 means that a small group of pupils should achieve a GCSE result in the coming academic year, who would not have done so otherwise. Others will achieve a higher GCSE grade. This prepares these higher attaining pupils effectively both in terms of confidence in the subject and for pursuing other subjects in the next stage of their education. Throughout the school, pupils' attainments in English are considerably less than pupils of their age in mainstream schools. However, at each key stage there are individual pupils who achieve closer to national expectations, particularly in their reading and writing.

104. Pupils' achievements in English are good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in Year 12. Progress, however, is not uniform within and across all aspects of English. Pupils enter the school at varying ages, but most enter at Key Stage 3. All have delayed English language skills and some have limited skills in both British Sign Language and English. Most have very little confidence in their own skills in English and some are very reluctant readers and writers. Lively and imaginative teaching and a good balance of discussion and written activity give pupils' confidence that their views are important. It helps them towards more effective presentation of ideas, particularly through the use of BSL, SSE and SE, and very positive attitudes to the literature and poetry that they study in their English lessons.

105. Progress in speaking, listening, signing and watching is satisfactory overall – it is good for pupils' signing and watching within English lessons. Progress is strongest in the pupils' ability to discuss what they are reading and writing or other aspects of their English work. Pupils at all key stages and Year 12 make good progress in their signing and watching skills and satisfactory progress in their understanding of SSE and SE, although some make only very small gains in their spoken language and listening skills. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to contribute to class discussions and begin to make more relevant contributions to the discussions around their big books such as *The Train Ride*. Some are able to recall elements of a recent story and draw simple comparisons between that and the story today. They have a growing vocabulary of English words and BSL signs, including those for the topics such as transport that they are studying. They use the language of classroom routines effectively. Higher attaining pupils understand that you use voice when communicating in English and do so when asked to read and pick out individual words. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress in their understanding and use of BSL to discuss their English work and in their use of Sign Supported English and Signed English. Higher attaining pupils also make sound progress in their understanding and use of spoken English. By the end of Key Stage 2 they are beginning to translate from BSL to English, to understand that the two

languages 'say' things in different ways and grammars and to ask 'how do you say that' when they need a new word in English, that they already can express in BSL. These pupils can retell a story using BSL expressively and with accuracy, but also can incorporate aspects of English into this, such as what characters have said and what key words mean. In their discussions of texts, such as *The Lion*, *The Witch and the Wardrobe*, they can explain the meaning of key vocabulary. They listen and watch carefully as their teacher explains imagery such as 'trembled with fear' and 'like a giant cracking a plate.' All pupils watch carefully as their teachers tell stories and demonstrate understanding of key ideas, an appreciation of characters and their emotions and can retell the story in BSL or SSE, retaining the key events. They have an understanding of key words in English such as 'word', 'sentence', 'letter' and 'sound'.

106. At Key Stage 3 sensitive teacher questioning and consistently good extension of pupil ideas by teachers support pupils' self expression and understanding of English and how it differs from BSL. Pupils happily share their ideas and use teacher feedback effectively to extend and improve them. They watch and listen with interest to each other and extend their vocabulary of key English phrases and subject vocabulary. Most make significant gains in their use and understanding of spoken English supported by sign, using English more consciously and confidently during English lessons. Pupils increasingly present their point and explain their views well to others. Their progress in the presentation of ideas and of material that they are studying continues to be good at Key Stage 4 and Year 12. The majority use their hearing and radio aids to support this. Although pupils' language skills in BSL and in English are assessed carefully, there is a need for this information in relation to spoken language competence, supported by sign, to inform teachers' programmes in English and in other subjects more. It needs also to be used more effectively to monitor the adequacy of pupils' progress in relation to both National Curriculum programmes of study and to their competence in use of English as a means of communication. Some pupils could make more progress in their understanding and use of spoken English, if this was in place.

107. Pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory overall. It is strongest in the primary department where the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is ensuring that teachers plan carefully for and support a broad range of reading skills and approaches. At all key stages, the school makes much use of shared reading techniques, modified text and discussion around texts, with both adults and pupils taking part. This enables all pupils to take part in the lesson and to have views about what is being read. It promotes understanding of the ideas of the text being studied and supports pupils' self-expression well. Pupils' ability to discuss and have views on what they are reading is carefully nurtured by all staff. Expressive reading and story telling by teachers, whether of big books in the primary department, or of classics such as *A Christmas Carol* in the secondary department, supports pupils' enthusiasm for books further. At every key stage there are very good examples of pupils being asked to think about the characters within stories or classic literature, predict what might happen and reflect on what they have just read together. However, other reading strategies that would enable pupils to be more independent readers are less systematically supported and some pupils' independent reading skills are underdeveloped because of this.

108. In the primary department the youngest pupils look carefully at books, are keen to share them and are beginning to point out letters and words that they recognise. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils read whole words well and notice differences and similarities in words that they are reading, such as that 'half' and 'hard' begin with the same letters. This interest in letter sounds and word shapes is fostered well by staff within both literacy and topic lessons. Literacy sessions in Key Stages 1 and 2 provide appropriate support for word, text and sentence level reading and writing skills, although not all teachers are as confident and systematic in helping pupils to see the relationship between letters and their sounds. Pupils make sound, and sometimes good, progress in their reading during and by the end of Key Stage 2, when the most able reader reads fluently and with understanding and very close to the levels of similarly aged pupils. Careful choice of reading materials and the use of a variety of teaching styles, including the use of symbols for some pupils, mean that all pupils are included in group reading lessons at Key Stages 1 and 2. In addition, learning support assistant time is well employed to help those pupils with additional needs progress in both their understanding of what they have read and their reading skills.

109. Pupils in the secondary department and Year 12 make satisfactory progress in their reading skills and attitudes overall. They make good, and sometimes very good, progress in the class and small group reading activities provided and in particular in their study and understanding of key texts such as *Of Mice and Men*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Lord of the Flies*, of aspects of poetry, and of other writing forms. Class and group discussions, led by teachers support such understandings well. Vocabulary and aspects of written style are carefully explored and compared with BSL. This enables pupil to build up their sight and sign vocabulary of English words and means that they have a good understanding of the story or issues involved in the texts they are studying. Those pupils who enter Key Stage 3 with established reading skills make steady progress in their independent reading skills and some are fluent readers by Years 11 and 12, coping with simple versions of classic texts well and able to discuss what they have read with insight. However, many pupils enter the secondary department with low reading levels and some of these make limited progress in their ability to make sense of unfamiliar texts by themselves. Not all teachers help pupils to work out word and sentence meanings for themselves. This means that although pupils are very interested in books and keen to discuss them, many have few strategies for working out the meanings of unknown words and phrases, even by Year 12. A significant minority are still struggling to make sense of very simple texts, but do not have detailed individual educational plans or measurable targets to ensure that their literacy needs are systematically supported by all teachers. The school has recognised the need to improve this aspect of its work in its school and English development planning.

110. Pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory at all key stages, although it is weakest in the secondary department, where there is little support in some classes for pupils to improve the form of what they are writing. Progress is good at Key Stage 1 and 2, where the literacy approach ensures that pupils' have a range of writing experiences and systematic coverage of writing skills. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils write their news and construct simple sentences about their topic work, using word and sentence cards or teacher prompts to help them. They take care with handwriting and take great pleasure in trying to remember key word spellings. Good teacher support in discussing their writing means that they are happy to write and improve their writing effectively. They write for a range of purposes about their topic work and their writing improves in length, form and style over the Key Stage. Pupils' writing continues to progress in these areas over Key Stage 2, where careful support is given for writing for story, for recording their topic work, for news and diary work. There is a good balance of more structured writing, the use of writing frames and freer writing activities that allow the pupils' writing to reflect their current English levels. This means that pupils' motivation to write is maintained, they settle down to write well. Teacher feedback and writing correction helps pupils to understand how they can improve their writing. The good range of activities and challenge in most work provided means that all pupils including those with additional special educational needs have appropriate tasks that enable them to make gains, such as in their planning of their work or in their understanding of the need for their writing to start appropriately or include details about characters.

111. Although pupils' progress in writing in the secondary department within English lessons is at least satisfactory and often good, the lack of support in other subjects means that pupils do not transfer the skills they learn into their general writing work. Pupils who enter the school at secondary level often have very limited writing skills. Careful support for course work means that these pupils do make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their writing for different purposes and particularly in the quality of ideas that they express. Higher attaining pupils by Years 11 and 12 produce competent course work of GCSE standard about a range of literature and which demonstrates their understanding of literature and other writing styles. Other pupils' writing is strongly influenced by their grasp and understanding of English itself. There is currently no systematic analysis of the relationship between each individual's English level and their writing; this limits the programmes that teachers put into place to support both. It also means that some pupils' writing improves little in grammatical terms, and they do not always receive appropriate feedback from teachers and other staff as to how to do this. Other aspects of their writing – such as the way in which they plan and structure their stories and report writing do progress well. The school makes good use of techniques such as 'mind mapping' to help pupils to plan what they are going to write and to link their ideas more effectively. The primary department's response to the National Literacy

Strategy is working well in supporting most aspects of pupils' reading and writing development and ensuring an integrated approach to pupils' progress in these areas. The school is now seeking to extend this initiative into the secondary department and to focus more systematically on the assessment of reading and writing skills to inform this and this should help to secure the progress of all pupils in these areas.

112. The teaching of English is good overall. It is very good in the primary department where is particularly successful in promoting pupils' self-expression and in laying very sound foundations for literacy for all pupils. It is satisfactory with some good features at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 and Year 12, where teachers' need to cover all aspects of the qualifications and examinations that pupils are studying for ensures that a broad range of English skills are systematically addressed. In the primary department teachers' planning is strong and carefully linked into the National Literacy framework. It also takes account of the National Curriculum programmes of study for English, although these links could be made stronger in addressing the broader aspects of English. Teachers themselves have a detailed understanding of pupils' English levels and needs. Where teachers are less experienced in meeting the language needs of deaf children, the close links and the monitoring of teachers' planning by the English co-ordinator mean that these teachers plan for, and extend, pupils' language and literacy well. Higher attaining pupils are given work that extends and challenges them and there is very good use of praise and written comments to help pupils understand how they can improve their work further.

113. At Key Stage 3 most teaching is well planned, has good pace and challenge and links carefully into the school's schemes of work for English. Pupils' self expression and ability to express their ideas about their English work whether in SSE or in BSL is very effectively supported. However, opportunities to help pupils develop more effective strategies for their own reading and writing are occasionally missed and the work is not challenging enough for some pupils. Planning at Key Stage 4 and Year 12 is good and is supported by the need to cover all elements of the awards that the pupils will take in English. Teaching is lively and often creative in the ways in which key aspects of literature and language styles are explored with pupils. Very good use of written marking and discussion enables pupils to improve their written work and presentation and helps them to be more critical of their own work. Through out the secondary department a strength of English is the way in which pupils are clearly told what they will learn and, in most lessons, the opportunities that are taken at the end of sessions to review what they have done together. Learning support staff are generally used very well in English throughout the school and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The speech and language therapist plays a key role in assessing and advising on pupils' current English levels and teachers value the support she gives. There is a need, however, to carefully to consider the most effective use of this resource within the context of individual pupils' English and other language needs and the other forms of learning support available. Information and communication technology is used effectively in English for research and to support pupils' presentation and redrafting of their work. However, it is underdeveloped as a resource for those pupils who have difficulties in reading and writing, particularly in the secondary department.

114. The curriculum for English is good at Key Stages 1 and 2 where the National Literacy Strategy and the National Curriculum underpin it. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and 4 and Year 12. The scheme of work at these key stages and the assessments used to document pupils' progress need more careful and systematic tying into the National Curriculum programmes of study and levels. Although baseline assessments are carried out in English and BSL when pupils enter the school and ongoing assessments are made, not all teachers understand how these should then influence teaching programmes in English and aspects of reading and writing in other subjects; opportunities are lost to support pupils' priority learning needs in English and literacy as a result. Careful reading records are kept in the primary department and are completed systematically for most pupils. The records of older primary pupils are less useful as documents of their reading experience and skills. Day-to-day reading records are also more varied in their quality in the secondary department, although most pupils do read regularly some records just describe the books that pupils are reading, rather than provide insights as to the reading skills they are developing. The school is currently reviewing its approach to reading and writing and the assessments linked to these; it has quite rightly identified the need to review its language and literacy policy across the

curriculum. This should ensure that all pupils, including those who are lower attaining, receive more systematic support, have priority learning targets in English language and literacy and that all teachers are sure about how best to support pupils' progress towards these.

115. English is well co-ordinated in both primary and secondary departments and there are strong links between the two departments that support the pupils' progressive development of skills. Development planning has already identified the key areas of English that now need to be addressed. A good start has been made on detailing these aspects. The co-ordinators are aware that they need now to tie this in more closely to the more detailed National Curriculum levels and the QCA differentiated performance criteria now available to ensure that all teachers, parents and pupils understand what the assessments mean. Resources for English are good and include a range of video, ICT software and high quality teacher made materials.

Drama

116. Drama plays an important role in the school – both to support other subjects and the delivery of English, through role-play, and through the separate timetabled lessons at secondary level. Teaching and learning in drama is very good. Pupils enjoy the lessons, are clear about what they should be doing and have excellent relationships with staff and with each other. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives and the work is both challenging and creative. Not only does the teaching support pupils' understanding of drama and drama skills but it makes a strong contribution to pupils' self-expression, understanding of relationships and aspects of citizenship. Pupils' gain considerably in their self-awareness and confidence through their drama work and are enabled to consider others' feelings and reactions in very practical ways.

117. The curriculum in drama is good and has a range of relevant and challenging activities that challenge pupils to think, to express emotions and develop empathy. They develop and extend their presentation skills through performing to each other and through larger scale productions that include the whole school. Links with outside theatre groups and with Reading University extend their drama work. Pupils now have the opportunity to take either GCSE or a Certificate of Achievement course and the school have worked hard with Reading University to set up this initiative. A subject specialist, who is very effectively supported in her teaching by learning support assistants, leads drama very well. These staff are particularly sensitive in the work that they do in supporting pupils' planning in their drama work, without dominating it, in extending pupils' ideas and self-expression and in acting as 'audience' as ideas are being developed.

MATHEMATICS

118. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the overall provision for mathematics since the last inspection. The secondary department has maintained its previous standards and there has been a good improvement in the primary department (Key Stages 1 and 2). The pupils' achievements in mathematics are now good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented in the primary department and all pupils have a dedicated mathematics lesson on a daily basis.

119. The school's response to the National Numeracy Strategy has been good and the programmes of study have been placed into eight topic areas such as 'money'. This approach maintains the breadth and balance of what is taught, whilst placing the content into areas that focus very much on the practical aspects of the topics and their application. This means that most pupils make good progress in their mathematical skills, despite their often-limited vocabulary. This good quality provision is well supported by the resources that have been purchased and those produced by members of staff. An introductory mental mathematics period is helping to sharpen pupils' thinking skills and is followed by individual or group work in which pupils have good opportunities to further develop their problem solving skills. The time allocated to each element is appropriately varied according to pupils' responses and how well the pupils work together. Good opportunities are

provided for pupils to learn from and work with each other and staff are particularly adept at gauging how to balance each section to keep pupils' interest and motivation.

120. Pupil's achievement at the end of the primary phase (towards the end of Key Stage 2) is very good in mathematics. The quality of the learning, and their subsequent good progress is directly related to the high quality of the teaching in the primary department. Pupils in years 5 and 6 are aware of the four rules of number. The higher attaining pupils can use their understanding of tens and units, when subtracting amounts up to 100, to make calculations easier for themselves; they have learned multiplication tables up to 10 and can use them in their calculations. Lower attaining pupils are consolidating their use of numbers up to 10, placing them into the correct order and recognising that they are larger and smaller than a given amount. Time is taught as a topic, giving pupils the opportunity to sequence events, estimate the time taken to complete different events and recognise time in written in digital and analogue forms. Higher attaining pupils extract information from a bus timetables, calculate which bus took the longest time to complete the journey and how frequently the buses leave the depot. Shape and space is also presented as a topic area and all pupils' know the names and characteristics of simple shapes and three-dimensional objects. Higher attaining pupils classify shapes according to angles and symmetry

121. Pupils construct tally tables and bar charts, identifying the sweets pupils prefer in a survey activity. They know how to organise the information into those sweets that are the most popular and those that were not well liked and can explain their findings. However, although ICT is used to record and represent data, an increase in its use could further develop pupils' appreciation of data handling and their presentation of the information.

122. Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 12 are satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory but their opportunities for learning are too reliant upon completing a series of worksheet activities, rather than activities that have been specifically designed to meet the needs and abilities of the different pupils in the classes. Pupils themselves tend to see the desired outcome of the lesson and the measure of their progress as being how many worksheets they or others have completed, rather than focussing on the specific mathematical skills and ideas that they are meant to be learning. In addition additional support materials are often not available for pupils who have completed the relevant worksheets, but do not yet understand the mathematical operations involved. For example, pupils in a Year 7 lesson were relating decimals to fractions. The six worksheets progressed from determining the number of tenths remaining on a bar of chocolate and the decimal equivalent, to the addition of decimals, before ending with similar work on hundredths. Pupils who were unsure of place value and decimal equivalents were not given further reinforcement before progressing onto the addition of decimals. This meant that although they did complete the mechanical exercise of working out which decimals and fractions were equivalent, some did not understand why they were doing what they were doing, when and where to apply this knowledge and how it might help them in other contexts.

123. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have a sufficient level of attainment to undertake the GCSE course in Key Stage 4 and year 12. The four rules of number are firmly established with pupils being able to add, and subtract decimals to two places. They are quick to recall multiplication tables to 10 and recognise the corresponding division; for example, $8 \times 7 = 56$, $56 \div 8 = 7$. Higher attaining pupils apply these rules and develop their own strategies for quickly solving mathematical problems. The understanding of place value has been firmly established, so that pupils clearly understand what a particular digit represents in a whole number or decimal fraction. Higher attaining pupils order and add negative numbers. Pupils' ability to work and interpret shape is well practised and reinforced and all pupils are able to reflect simple shapes and find the perimeter and areas of these shapes. Data-handling work is a prominent element of the Year 8 programme of study. Pupils successfully produce graphs, diagrams and pie charts, interpret results and draw conclusions. More use of ICT to produce charts and graphs, as well as for geometrical simulations, could help the pupils to achieve a greater level of understanding when they are handling data. Spreadsheets could also be used to process the data and different forms of charts produced and compared.

124. The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 4 and Year 12 is good. Pupils are placed into different ability groups determined by their expected GCSE grade and although worksheets are still a dominant part of the lessons, those used do allow pupils to practice their skills, before progressing on to the next mathematical skill or stage. Pupils undertake GCSE examinations at Foundation and Intermediate level. There is also provision for lower attaining pupils to follow a Certificate of Achievement Course, if it is felt that GCSE levels will not be attainable.

125. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of teaching shows a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. It is strongest in the primary department, where it is very good. These teachers display very good subject knowledge, develop the pupils' previous learning very well and pitch lessons at an appropriate level in stimulating ways. The improvement in the quality of teaching, coupled with the response to the National Numeracy Strategy, is having a direct influence on the gains these pupils make, because teachers have high expectations and pupils respond very well to the challenge. A good pace to lessons is maintained in all key stages, but this is particularly the case during the dedicated mathematics lessons in the primary department. The teachers' probing questioning constantly challenges pupils to think about how they are tackling problems and to fully explain their answers. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory but it is too dependent upon worksheets. These sheets need to provide greater opportunities to consolidate and reinforce the pupils' learning. This would enable pupils to increase their understanding of mathematical ideas as well as the mechanics of the subject. The teaching in Key Stage 4 and Year 12 is good; the way in which pupils are placed in sets and the framework of the qualifications and awards, pupils will take, help teachers plan effectively and provide appropriate support materials.

126. The linguistic ability of the pupils has changed since the last inspection. Many pupils require a longer period to learn the content of the mathematics curriculum and to reinforce their understanding of mathematical ideas. The content of the mathematics curriculum has also changed, such that pupils are expected to be more capable of using their linguistic ability to interpret problems and analyse data. In order to meet these new demands, the school has extended Key Stage 4 to include a Year 12. This means that the GCSE course will run for three years not the normal two years. This enables some pupils to obtain a GCSE qualification when they would not have previously and allows the school to consolidate pupils' mathematical understandings further. All pupils will be given the opportunity to follow the three-year course once the current Year 11 group have left the school.

127. There is a good use of pupils' mathematical skills to support work in a range of other subjects. In food technology in Year 7 pupils confidently weighed and measured required amounts using scales and different sized spoons. They were also dividing pats of butter into fractions and successfully estimated amounts at an age appropriate level. In the primary department pupils displayed their knowledge of time during a topic lesson concerning Florence Nightingale.

128. There are separate subject co-ordination arrangements in the primary and the secondary departments. Both co-ordinators have established a good scheme of work and monitoring procedures for the curriculum content. However the head of department for the secondary curriculum does not monitor the teaching of the subject or assist staff development by evaluating teaching and learning within the class. This does not help support inexperienced or new teachers to the department, especially where mathematics is not their specialism and there is a need for whole school co-ordination of mathematics, including the monitoring and evaluation of the subject and its teaching to be developed further.

SCIENCE

129. There has been satisfactory improvement in science since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils continue to follow GCSE and Certificate of Education courses, although examinations are now not taken until the end of Year 12. This change in practice meant that no

pupils took externally accredited science examinations last summer. Two subject specialists teach all science in the secondary department, but recent staff changes mean that one of these specialists has only been in post since September. There is now a better range and quality of resources, but the lack of a preparation room and no technical support are two issues identified during the last inspection that have not yet been addressed.

130. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory, although they achieve well and make good progress in Key Stage 1. Science is taught through a cycle of topics in the primary department and these are sufficiently well planned and designed to ensure that pupils still receive a broad and balanced subject curriculum. For example, following the 'My World' topic, pupils know about physical processes such as the forces of magnetic attraction and gravity, and light. They extended their understanding of light by carrying out an investigation and discovering that green plants need light in order to grow. This topic approach also encourages early investigative work in other areas, as pupils carry out activities like planting seeds to find out the conditions required for growth, and predicting the waterproof qualities of different materials before testing them. By the age of eleven, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have been on a minibeast hunt and recorded their observations; they know the temperature at which water freezes and that changes such as this can be reversed.

131. Specialist teachers in the secondary department have good knowledge of the subject. They use resources well and provide a range of suitable activities that meet the needs of pupils. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 3, following a broad subject curriculum. Therefore, by the age of 14, at the end of the key stage, pupils have extended much of their scientific knowledge and understanding. They know about chemical and physical changes and have explored the idea of pollution caused by acid rain. They understand atomic structure and have considered a number of aspects of inheritance through a study of simple genetics, including the differences between natural and artificial selection. Pupils also have a range of research and investigation opportunities, so that by the end of the key stage they have developed a number of scientific skills. They can use simple laboratory apparatus, such as reading and recording measurements from thermometers and force meters, and some pupils are beginning to understand the requirements of a fair test. These pupils are able to predict and draw simple hypotheses, communicate their findings graphically and use some appropriate scientific vocabulary.

132. The Key Stage 4 and Year 12 science curriculum places an increasing emphasis on experimental work, as pupils complete GCSE investigations and Certificate of Achievement modules. These investigations range from examining the effect of different exercises on the rate of heartbeat, to identifying the factors that cause rusting and how it might be prevented. Good planning and carefully chosen activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop these investigation skills. Therefore, by the end of Key Stage 4, some higher attaining pupils are able to record information and display it as block and line graphs; they can extract information from results that are presented in similar ways. They also evaluate their results and suggest improvements for future work. By the end of the key stage all pupils have made satisfactory progress in extending significantly their knowledge and understanding of the living and non-living worlds. They sort materials according to specific criteria (such as metals and non-metals), know the characteristics of different animal groups and use simple keys to classify and identify living organisms.

133. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils are always well managed. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and, as a result, pupils develop ideas about scientific enquiry and increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. When teaching is good, lessons are well prepared with a range and variety of activities that interest and motivate pupils. As part of their topic on 'Transport' a group of five and six year olds increased their understanding of movement as the teacher provided good activities that matched individual needs, and also improved their literacy skills. The effective use of a learning support assistant, and games that encouraged a range of communication skills, ensured pupils' participation and focused their attention. As a result, pupils made good progress in their understanding of different methods of transport and how to write, spell and sign these.

134. Lessons in the secondary department take place in an orderly and structured environment, and, therefore, teachers are able to present pupils with a range of learning opportunities that develop their scientific understanding. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory and there are some examples of good teaching. In these lessons pupils respond well, as the lessons have clear learning objectives that enable pupils to develop an increasing depth of understanding of scientific principles. The teachers' use of a combination of strategies, such as carefully targeted and probing questions, description, discussion and investigation support pupils' learning and thinking about science very effectively. Such techniques enabled a group of Year 8 pupils to achieve well when they began a study of food chains and webs. Similarly, Year 10 pupils increased their knowledge and understanding of static electricity and electron transfer because good teaching used a variety of carefully chosen tasks to promote effective learning for all pupils. Pupils were asked to predict outcomes and could write an account of what they had done; good support from the learning enabled one pupil with additional special educational needs to be challenged and to achieve.

135. At other times teaching does not always provide extension activities and, on these occasions, there are not appropriate tasks to challenge more able pupils in particular. For example, a lesson that introduced 12 year olds to key ecology words and ideas did not give them the opportunity to research information for themselves. This lack of challenge can sometimes also be seen in experimental work, when pupils are often too directed and not given the chance to carry out scientific enquiry. For example, Year 10 pupils were instructed how to set up particular circuits in order to light bulbs, rather than being required to discover how to do this for themselves. This represents missed opportunities for learning. On rare occasions, pupils are restless in lessons when there is a lack of pace and teaching lacks vigour.

136. Primary and secondary science is managed separately, with different co-ordinators; this arrangement restricts the raising of standards, as it affects a co-ordinated whole school approach. Secondary science is managed satisfactorily, although systems for recording pupils' achievements, and assessing their progress towards targets, are still being developed. Current arrangements are much too general as they simply identify broad curriculum targets rather than taking note of individual pupils' learning needs. As a result, planning is not linked tightly to pupils' needs and learning outcomes are not clearly assessed in terms of pupils' understanding and individual targets.

137. There is good accommodation for teaching science in the secondary department. A well-equipped laboratory provides good opportunities for investigative work although its layout means that the practical area is rather cramped for larger groups. Pupils benefit from having classroom access to ICT and the Internet, although this was not seen being used during the inspection. There was some limited evidence from pupils' work that they use computer programs for specific purposes to support their learning, such as to produce block graphs as a means of displaying results, but generally ICT is underused.

ART AND DESIGN

138. Achievements in art and design are very good overall. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 they are good and at Key Stage 4 and Year 12 they are very good. Examination passes at GCSE have been towards the higher grades, with many pupils achieving A and B grades. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and the school has built well upon the previous good achievements. Pupils gain a good foundation of skills, techniques and confidence at Key Stages 1 and 2 and consolidate these and extend them further in Key Stage 3. This means they become independent learners and take responsibility for the development of researching the work of other artists and building up their own ideas. This enables them to make very good progress at Key Stage 4 and Year 12.

139. At Key Stage 1, pupils choose colours, carefully paint and add glitter to salt dough Christmas decorations they have made in a previous lesson. They show their work to adults with great excitement and say that they will put a ribbon through the hole and hang them on silver twigs for their class Christmas tree. At Key Stage 2 pupils make observational pencil drawings of a doll

wearing a Victorian christening gown, sitting on a chair draped with red velvet. They complete their drawing to the best of their ability learning to look carefully at the composition in front of them. Higher attaining pupils' pictures include detail of the lace work on the christening dress. By the end of Key Stage 2 they continue to make good progress. They are helped to look up information on Pablo Picasso on the Internet. They choose which one of four of his paintings to copy. Then they choose one of his paintings from the Internet and copy that. Their paintings are carefully drawn and painted with a good choice of colour.

140. By the end of Key Stage 3, they continue to make good progress and learn many new techniques. For example, they use Chinese brushwork to paint in the style of Oriental Art. They put a water wash onto circles of rice paper and create an underwater scene by looking at stones, plants and fish in a goldfish bowl. They also paint onto black or white fans combining different aspects from the display and looking at real flowers. Higher attaining pupils show they are beginning to combine the design ideas of other artists in original combinations and they extend sketches they have made, in an imaginative and creative way.

141. Pupils work on a GCSE course at Key Stage 4 and in Year 12. Past and present predicted grades show that pupils largely are in line with national expectations (being predicted grades between A and C/D). Work is built on the good foundations of the previous years and pupils become independent and original in their artwork and make very good progress. For example, they use sketch books very well to try out ideas and develop their own styles based on famous Artists such as Kandinsky, Salvador Dali and Henri Moore and styles from other cultures such as using an Eagle Dance Mask from North American studies. They show skill in using a range of techniques and mediums. For example, they design patterns and print in different ways onto material and make cushions, waistcoats and shoe bags.

142. Teaching and learning and pupils' attitudes to learning, their relationships and behaviour are very good across the school. Teachers' activities are well organised and resources are readily available. The objectives of lessons are shared with the pupils, so they are clear what they are doing. Methods are varied, stimulating and interesting and this means that pupils are very well motivated, listen and watch well, enjoy their lessons and are very mature in their approach to their work. There is a very good use of sketchbooks throughout the school and pupils are helped to extend and develop their ideas by good questioning and input from teachers. Pupils are able to talk to visitors about how they have developed their ideas and show a good understanding of their learning. Very good feedback is signed to pupils on what they are doing well and why this is good and how they could improve and develop their work. If this was also provided in a written form, which could be part of assessing what pupils' know, understand and can do, this could help pupils to extend and develop their work even further, particularly at secondary level.

143. The curriculum is good across the school. There is a wide range of activities, including: painting, printing, using clay, designing and making lanterns, designing patterns for fabrics and making garments. Good stimulus material is provided which motivates and inspires the pupils. For example there was an exciting display in the secondary department of Oriental Art during the week of the inspection. This included books, clothes, lanterns, pots, dragon models and masks, which were displayed in an attractive and stimulating way that is very inspirational. The written planning in the secondary department does not fully reflect the excellent standard of the display. The primary department curriculum has a good coverage of a range of skills such as drawing, painting, designing and making and a very good use of sketchbooks.

144. Assessment overall is satisfactory. At Key Stages 1 and 2 and Key Stage 4 and Year 12 it is satisfactory, with a framework being provided by GCSE for older pupils. However, at Key Stage 3 it is pupils' progress could be better assessed and recorded. As the work in the secondary department is mainly based around the same stimulus, it is not always clear what individual pupils know, understand and can do within the different techniques and skills as there is no formal system for recording this. However, there is very good photographic evidence of work completed and pupils work is organised very well. Art across the school, including very good displays of pupils' work,

makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to reflect on the lives, ideas, and styles of art and culture of different Artists.

145. Art is co-ordinated by the head of design technology who delegates the leadership and management to the two part-time teachers, who are both artists. The pupils benefit greatly from the stimulus of working alongside such enthusiastic and talented artists. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The teachers work very closely together, sharing ideas and communicating very well. However, links with the primary department are not formally arranged. The resources are good and are supplemented by both teachers' own books and stimulating art objects. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used, for example, to look up about the lives of artists on the Internet. However, the studio does not have a computer and consequently opportunities are missed for pupils to extend their work by using computer graphics as part of their art experience.

DEAF STUDIES AND BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

146. The school's provision for Deaf studies and BSL is good overall and has some very good features, especially relating to the way pupils are taught. Since the last inspection the school's policy and practice in relation to the language and communication approaches used, has changed. A review of the pupils' use of language within the school concluded that the first language for a large majority of the school population was not English but BSL. The school makes good practical provision for sign users. The school's communication policy focuses on a 'child-centred' approach to language, which is evident in the support provided for BSL users in classes where staff are communicating using BSL and SSE. The support available for pupils who have more developed English language usage is less evident in classes where teachers are using BSL. The status of BSL in the school and the use of BSL in lessons supports pupils' progress and attainment in the language itself and their access to curricular skills and understandings.

147. Deaf studies curriculum is based on a well-defined policy with clear aims and objectives and detailed modules of study. In the primary department the focus is on the nature of BSL, developing communication and analysing how well pupils are able to use their BSL skills to communicate. This also includes helping pupils to think about their deafness and aspects of deaf culture. The manner in which deaf people relate to each other and to hearing people is developed through work that explains the difference between deaf and hearing culture. This format is also used in the secondary curriculum and helps to ensure a consistent approach and supports pupils' developing understanding of these issues as they progress through the school.

148. Pupils' achievements at the end of the primary phase are good, but their actual level of attainment depends upon their knowledge of BSL prior to entering school and their age at entry. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils are able to relate their own experiences as sign language users, analyse and suggest improvements in their presentation of BSL and reflect on the differences between deaf and hearing culture. High attaining pupils are capable of discussing their own feelings about being a deaf person and discuss deaf identity. For example, a Year 6 pupil felt that he had not yet accepted his deafness, but was no longer annoyed that he was not a hearing person. Pupils are always attentive and eager to develop their BSL skills during lessons. They display a very good awareness of the lesson content and are supportive towards one another when analysing video presentations.

149. The quality of teaching and learning opportunities in Key Stages 3 and 4 and Year 12 results in pupils' very good level of achievement. The pupils who have attended the primary department make very good progress with their signed communication skills and the new entrants to the secondary department gain a good grasp of the course content in Deaf studies lessons. Most of these pupils also learn to communicate fluently using BSL. There is a good improvement in their fluency over the time they are in the school and the ease with which they make themselves understood.

150. All pupils have a strong sense of their own identity and are very supportive of each other when analysing each others' course work videos, or discussing Deaf identity. At the end of Key Stage 4 and Year 12, these aspects are reinforced by the focus on leaving school, the use of deaf groups and clubs, and how to access support. This helps the pupils to extend their social groups and develop an appreciation of adult life. Throughout the secondary department pupils are interested and enthusiastically involved in what they are learning, are very well behaved, and concentrate particularly well.

151. By the end of their time in the school all pupils have developed confidence in their communicative abilities. They are sure of their own identity and higher attaining pupils can relate and contrast their own experiences to those of hearing people. The effect of the Deaf studies lessons is evident in the manner in which some of the older pupils respond to the different forms of communication used within the school. For example, pupils change their own method of communication in response to the teacher; using voice when attending a class in which the teacher was using SSE, and BSL (without voice) with a teacher who presented in BSL.

152. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. The lessons are well planned and very good in terms of the pace, the content and the use of video material. The teaching environment is stimulating and emphasises the different elements of the course. For instance, a pupil commented on a new display, which concentrated upon hand shape. The subject is taught by deaf teachers who are extremely well versed in the content. Deaf staff provide very good role models for pupils and emphasise the school's recognition of deaf identity and the cultural standing of deaf people. The inclusive nature of the school and the very good relationships between deaf and hearing adults and pupils, further reinforce and support pupils' use of BSL and understanding of the Deaf and hearing issues studied in these lessons.

153. Pupils' BSL skills are assessed on entry to the school and a very thorough and detailed record is produced which defines the pupils' BSL level in terms of the school's own eight level scale. This scale follows a well-defined series of levels that clearly state the pupils' achievements. Key Stage 4 pupils take Level 1 and Level 2 CACDP examinations at the end of the course. The majority of the pupils achieve Level 2.

154. The room is very suitable for small groups of primary pupils as it helps to create a supportive environment. However, it is not as conducive to the education of larger secondary groups who are confined within this small space and do not have the room to work in smaller groups.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (INCLUDING FOOD TECHNOLOGY)

155. There has been a good improvement in the provision for design and technology since the last inspection. Staff changes have occurred and this has resulted in an enhanced quality of teaching. The implementation of new schemes of work and a clearly defined subject policy have helped support the pupils' learning and achievement.

156. Pupils' achievement overall in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Design and technology is taught as part of a range of topics at Key Stages 1 and 2 (which include elements of geography, history and science) rather than as a separate, discrete subject. Therefore, no specific lessons were observed in the primary department during the inspection. The school wishes to make the learning as relevant as possible for the pupils and they study, for instance, 'machines and movement' where they design ramps for cars and examine different designs of vehicles. There are some topics which relate well to the National Curriculum 2000 programmes of study; for example the 'houses and settlements' topic relates to 'homes', but the curriculum overall for these pupils is too narrow. A clearer focus on the subject itself, through the new programmes of study, should help to improve pupils' learning even more. Primary pupils have some opportunities to use the specialist facilities the school has available and they do make occasional use of the food technology room to

make pancakes and bread, for example. They have very limited use of the materials workshop, however, and this, plus the limitations of the current curriculum, means that their skills in shaping and joining, for instance, are limited. Pupils' do display knowledge of how to plan, evaluate suitability of objects and the choice of materials to make different constructions. An increased access to tools, in order to learn how to use these with a wide range of materials and constructions, should help to develop pupils' skills and raise their attainment further.

157. The achievement of pupils at Key Stages 3, 4 and Year 12 is good, as is their progress over time. In Key Stage 3 pupils successfully plan their own work and improve draft designs to suit particular requirements. Their work demonstrates a good understanding of structures and the appropriate use of a range of materials. The pupils carefully evaluate the finished articles and much of their work is of a standard expected for their age. A review of the pupils' work clearly demonstrates this analysis and makes very good use of photographic evidence and small-scale models. Key Stage 4 and Year 12 pupils successfully develop their previous knowledge in order to follow the designated GCSE and Certificate of Achievement courses. These aspects combine to provide a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills and demonstrate their achievements.

158. The opportunities for pupils' learning in the secondary department are reasonably well balanced, with a good breadth of study; this has a positive effect on pupils' achievements. There is some electronics work incorporated into the design-and-make briefs, although there is little on pneumatics, and hydraulics. The curriculum provides for a very good range of practical experiences within the use of resistant materials and in food technology, as well as in the GCSE graphicacy course undertaken in Key Stage and Year 12. This course develops the pupils' drawing, sketching, and drawing skills plus an awareness of environmental signs, packaging and the use of ICT in design. Key Stage 4 pupils are also offered a motor vehicle option as part of their programme of work. This option will form an integral part of the curriculum next year, when the graphicacy course is withdrawn. This should not significantly reduce the breadth of the curriculum; many aspects of the work are already incorporated into other courses, such as attention to packaging design within food technology. The department appreciates that it needs to provide the pupils with a greater experience of Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Machine (CAM) equipment in order to enable pupils' achievements in control technology to be better. The use of this technology will give pupils' a better understanding of production methods and the equipment, which is now being used by companies in the work place. A recently purchased CAD programme will be linked into the ICT network and CAM vinyl cutter will be installed in the DT workshop. The purchase of additional programmes and the use of new 'smart' materials that can alter their shape should also help to raise the pupils' achievements.

159. The teaching of design and technology in the secondary department, including food technology, is good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and much commendable teaching in food technology.

160. The teaching of the food technology is consistently good and has some very good features. The style of presentation in the food technology lessons supports pupils learning, both of the Food technology skills and understandings and in areas such as literacy and self-expression. Lesson content is from clearly structured schemes of work, which build on pupils' prior learning well. A range of teaching materials and styles, such as the use of pictures, photographs, worksheets and demonstration, makes the specialist knowledge and skills accessible to deaf pupils, clearly motivates them and maintains their interest and involvement in what they are making. There are very good opportunities to promote cultural development and good links with geography, when pupils learn about and prepare food from other countries. Carefully designed opportunities are provided for pupils to use their number ability practically, and this supports their numeracy skills very well. What the pupils will learn is clearly outlined in the teacher's planning. Pupils are in no doubt about what they are to do; recaps at the beginning and end of lessons show that pupils have a good understanding of what they have previously learned. The teacher's use of key words and instructions, using pictorial material helps pupils' understanding very well. Pupils' progress is

regularly assessed and the use of photographic evidence reinforces the pupils' pride in their achievements.

161. The teaching in resistant material technology is satisfactory. Pupils' learning is good and the skills developed from previous learning opportunities are consistently evident in the quality of the work being produced and the way pupils use tools, join and form materials and evaluate what their work. The teachers' planning is good and has been developed to ensure that deaf pupils will understand the content. Adapting the written language, the form of presentation of activity and design briefs, has done much to support this and is of great benefit to the pupils' learning. The pupils' work is clearly presented and shows a well-planned step-by-step approach that helps pupils build on what they have learned previously. The work begins with an analysis of the task and the detailing of initial ideas concerning the design. Designs are then contrasted and compared, alterations are made to designs as a result of an analysis concerning their suitability and the appropriate materials and tools are clearly detailed in the plans. Three dimensional drawings and small-scale models are constructed prior to the production of the finished article. This ensures that the pupils' have a thorough understanding of the task, are always developing their previous knowledge and understand the various stages a design idea must go through. Homework is well explained and the teacher ensures that all pupils' are clear about what is expected.

162. The co-ordination of the subject throughout the primary department is the responsibility of a teacher within that department, whilst co-ordination within the secondary department is the responsibility of the head of the design technology department. The secondary department have regular departmental meetings to co-ordinate the content of the curriculum, discuss pupil progress and review resources. The head of department also organises a technology day for the whole school in order to raise the subject profile and this is also used to help the transfer of Year 6 pupils. Although the management of the subject is good overall and the secondary head of department is working with the primary staff to revise and develop their curriculum, an further strengthening could help pupils' progress to be even better. The food technology room has been designed and fitted to a high standard and has been specifically arranged to meet the needs of deaf pupils. Pupils' communication needs have been well considered and cookers and food preparation areas, for instance, face into the room and help pupils see each other and the teacher. This supports effective communication and teaching, as well as general health and safety. The design and technology workshop has been re-organised since the last inspection and now meets health and safety requirements in most ways, although there is the need for clearer marking of working areas and signage around machines. The school has identified the materials workshop as an area for development in its provision; it is small, cluttered and has limited storage. Plans are in place to provide purpose built accommodation in another part of the school.

GEOGRAPHY

163. Good improvement has been made in geography since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching in the secondary department, the new policy and schemes of work, and the planning of the subject across the school, have resulted in an improvement to the subject that is reflected in pupils' progress. An increase in the number of accredited courses available to older pupils has given them the opportunity to study for recognised qualifications before leaving the school.

164. In the primary department geography is taught as part of a topic. Due to the timetabling of the subject no lessons were observed during the inspection. It is, therefore, not possible to report on the quality of teaching and learning in this department. Judgements about pupils' achievements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' lesson planning and recording.

165. Pupils' achievement and progress in geography are good overall in the primary department. Clear lesson plans and the teachers' extensive knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and abilities produces good opportunities for learning. Learning objectives are clearly identified and pupils' progress evaluated well. Pupils are beginning to develop geographical skills through, for

example, their work on the local area. They are beginning to understand simple differences between living in a town or in the countryside, and following a walk in the immediate locality can, with support, remember and place buildings accurately on a map they have drawn. By the end of Key Stage 2, in Year 6, pupils understand a good range of geographical terms. They use atlases and textbooks to obtain information and can identify and use grid references well. A piece of work on the water cycle indicated they possessed a good understanding of the mechanics of this natural phenomenon.

166. In Key Stages 3, 4 and Year 12 achievement and progress are good. This is directly related to the high expectations the teacher has of the pupils, the use of good communication skills and the way in which the subject is presented. Previous learning is used as the basis of future planning thus ensuring continued development of subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils cover a range of topics relevant to the prescribed programmes of study within the National Curriculum. They are able to discuss the changes in farming over the last fifty years and the effect this has had on the landscape, showing a good understanding of the issues involved. Pupils work well on mapping skills and using atlases can explain and demonstrate the meaning of latitude and longitude. A piece of work on world development in Year 9, focussing on the reasons for large families and populations in some countries, was initially difficult for some pupils, but was completed with a good understanding by the end of the lesson. In Years 10, 11 and 12 pupils work towards accreditation in geography through the Certification of Achievement or General Certificate of Secondary Education. Pupils were observed working on a survey of land use in the locality. They had a clear understanding of the set task and displayed good skills in their work. Their confident use of information communication technology (ICT) to research the subject was very good.

167. In both Key Stages 3 and 4 teaching and learning is good overall and has some very good features. Lessons are well planned and organised with a good range of interesting activities that help pupils to develop their skills and understanding. The work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, and good tasks to extend learning are provided for higher attaining pupils. Lessons are relaxed yet purposeful with very good relationships between staff and pupils. Literacy is reinforced with the reading and spelling of the vocabulary used for a particular piece of work. Support staff make an important contribution to lessons and are deployed well. They provide good support in helping pupils with additional special educational needs to understand and complete work. Pupils' interest and concentration are maintained in lessons by a lively pace, good communication and a variety of well-used visual resources. Good displays around the school contain some well-presented pieces of written work, but because there is an emphasis on completing worksheets, there are missed opportunities for the development of writing. Behaviour is very good; pupils follow instructions well and enjoy the subject. Pupils' progress is evaluated on lesson plans and through pieces of work assessed against the subject targets set. However, comments are not always specific enough to measure progress accurately and formulate new targets.

168. The subject is well managed. Lesson plans and teaching are monitored and written feedback provided. Resources are good and plans are in hand to develop these further. Good liaison between the primary and secondary departments ensures smooth progression and continuity in providing information on pupils' progress, needs and abilities.

HISTORY

169. Improvement in history is good since the last inspection. The new policy, schemes of work and planning, and the appointment of a specialist teacher have resulted in an improvement in the subject that is positively reflected in pupils' progress.

170. During the inspection only two lessons could be observed in the primary department judgements about pupils' achievements are based only on the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' lesson planning and recording.

171. Pupils' achievement and progress in history is good overall in the primary department. Pupils, who on entry to the school may have very limited communication, gradually develop relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. Good lesson planning with clear objectives, which includes arrangements for assessing and evaluating pupil's work and progress, identify a wide range of learning opportunities. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of past and present and how things have changed in the intervening years. For example they can sequence pictures of family members according to age, and identify means of transport used in the past and in present times.

172. By the end of Key Stage 2, in Year 6, pupils have studied a number of topics covering the major events in history. They display an understanding of why events happen, and identify the people involved. In their work on the Victorians they discuss the features of Florence Nightingale's work and her role during the Crimean War; they show a good understanding of the different uses made of artefacts, for example, the multiple use of cooking pots. With help they made good use of information communication technology (ICT) to research aspects of the Crimean War.

173. Achievement and progress are good in Key Stage 3 and 4, where a number of lessons were observed. Pupils build on their knowledge and skills. They discuss areas they have studied, identifying issues well and drawing conclusions from text and pictures when prompted. For example, in studying the structure of society in Norman times, pupils expressed opinions as to the fairness of the system. Work is sufficiently challenging. In a lesson on the Tudors and the Reformation, pupils displayed a wide range of knowledge about the people and events of the time. They found the religious differences difficult to understand, but persevered well. In discussions on the Industrial Revolution, Year 9 pupils are able to identify and evaluate issues that caused protest and discontent at that time, showing a good understanding of cause and effect. In Key Stage 4 and Year 12, pupils work towards gaining external accreditation through the Certificate of Achievement and General Certificate of Secondary Education. Pupils were observed working on the history of Brighton. They could identify the significance of individuals in promoting the growth of Brighton and explain why the town had expanded. Nearer the present time, pupils showed good research skills in their work on the Vietnam War, using ICT very competently. They expressed views and opinions that demonstrated good understanding of the situation.

174. Teaching and learning are good overall at all key stages. In the teaching in the primary department activities and strategies are particularly well chosen to match the needs and abilities of the pupils, which together with good support from learning support assistants, enable pupils to concentrate and make good progress. Positive teacher interventions, clear explanations and questioning help pupils to learn more easily. In the secondary department, good subject knowledge by teachers and their enthusiasm for the subject are well conveyed to pupils. They concentrate and are eager to learn, asking questions when they are unsure. Lessons are planned with appropriate objectives and tasks, and activities are mostly well chosen to interest pupils and engage them in learning. Occasionally the pace of lessons is too slow, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Resources such as books, worksheets, videotapes, photographs and overhead projector are used well to ensure the lesson is as visual as possible, and to aid communication. Pupils' work is evaluated on lesson plans, but comments are very general and not specific enough in some cases to be an accurate measure of progress. Written tasks are not always completed to a good standard. Appropriate homework is set to consolidate learning. Behaviour is very good. Pupils work well with each other and with staff. Pupils with additional special needs are well supported and encouraged. They make good progress.

175. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and the newly appointed teacher working as a team with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Lesson plans are monitored and evaluated consistently. Present resources are good. Additional resources required to support new schemes of work have been identified.

176. Comprehensive liaison meetings between primary and secondary staff enables pupils to enter the secondary department with their needs and abilities, and the topics completed, well known. This provides a good basis for continued planning and delivery.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

177. The provision for ICT is very good. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Resources in ICT are now very good. A network with file server has been installed, which is well managed by the part-time technician. There is now a separate room for the teaching of ICT in the secondary department with sufficient numbers of computers for each pupil in lessons. A small number of computers are networked in the residential accommodation and pupils have very good access to these for homework and research after school. There are an adequate number of computers in the primary department and, although they have only limited networking at present, they do enable pupils to have access to the Internet to research topics for their work in lessons.

178. Pupils' achievements in the primary department are satisfactory. Strengths only just outweigh weaknesses, however. This is because ICT skills are taught through activities that take place relating to other subjects, so that pupils in Year 6, for instance, practise their word processing skills when writing and re-drafting their story and poetry work in English. Although the scheme of work for ICT at Key Stages 1 and 2 is adequate in outlining what should be taught in each aspect of the subject, it does not identify how skills should be built upon each other and when they should be taught. This lack of systematic use of and systematic planning for ICT, as a subject, limits pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and they are capable of achieving more. Teachers keep profiles of pupils' work to record progress, although little work has been entered in these recently. They do show that some pupils make progress over time in some aspects of the work, but there are insufficient samples to gain a full overview and to track progress fully. There are good examples of pupils using computers in lessons for research for obtaining information; for instance, there are examples in relation to the Crimean War in topic, where the focus was history in Years 5/6, and of data handling in mathematics in Year 3 / 4.

179. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make progress in using different fonts and displaying information such as pictures and other graphics in their presentations and in their appreciation of layout of text. Some higher attaining pupils have created pages using software that helps to link pages of information. They talk about their layout, their use of the Internet and search engines as well as CD ROMs to extract the pictures. They can describe the skills they use to produce their work and have a good understanding of the editing facilities available. Throughout the key stage pupils have good experience of using desktop publishing, including some painting programmes, although only basic skills of drawing on the screen are developed. Their opportunities for using control technology are limited, although some pupils in Year 4 are able to move houses and roadways around a screen, to create a town scene. Very good attention is given to presentation skills and the work is very well produced; it is attractive, eye catching and pupils are clearly taught to consider the reader in their designs.

180. By the end of Key Stage 4 / Year 12, pupils' achievements are excellent and they are highly competent users of ICT. The very high quality of teaching, the very well constructed programme of study, including GCSE and Certificate of Achievement syllabus, and the ease of access to the school's network in class and in the residence supports this excellent achievement. The excellent way the teacher has planned the work in themes and topics, which builds in real life simulations and modelling really grasps the pupils' imaginations and motivates them to work very hard. It also helps them to think about what they are doing and the work helps them solve real life problems. Many pupils enter the school in the secondary department with very limited computer skills. All pupils make excellent progress and many achieved C grade passes in GCSE when the school first entered pupils for this examination in 1999. The school's change in policy, to enable pupils to attain better GCSE grade through taking these examinations means that some will not be taking these again until 2001. However, during the inspection many pupils in Year 11 were working within the national expectations for their age and the school can enter pupils earlier, based on their performance.

181. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 make good progress in communicating with their peers using the school's email facility. They choose a range of topics to write about such as their favourite food and respond their peers' replies. They are becoming familiar with terms such as

'outbox' and understand that if the network connection is broken the message may not be sent. Towards the end of the key stage pupils use the Internet to research Deaf issues and to create their own page of information to a high standard using desktop publishing. They know the difference between 'co.uk' and 'com' when exploring Internet addresses. They also use the Internet for research in subjects, as part of their ICT programme, and pupils are able to explore web pages on Chinese art, in order to select and download pictures for their own work. They are careful to select pictures which exemplify the work they are doing, and discriminate well what will be useful and what will not. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are highly competent in the technical aspects of using range of software, including beginning to prepare presentations which link information and topics. They are more creative in their ICT work and their attention to layout and detail is to a very high standard. At the beginning of Key Stage 4, they construct spreadsheets, building on their previous knowledge of setting them up to make calculations; their new spreadsheets contain text, numerals and graphics for staff wages in the 'Sunshine Restaurant'. They use their software library of pictures and photographs, giving careful attention to layout and presentation. Year 11 pupils develop a user guide for the control devices they use, when creating simple programmes which switch lights on or off. This is developed further in Year 12, where students produce computer controlled models which relate to child care, such as producing a rocking cradle, making light flash if a baby walks or sensing when a baby wets. Pupils have to design, program and build the devices and ensure the timing of motors, movements of cams and sensitivity of switches are all appropriate for the intended user. They do this with a clear understanding of the processes involved and with insight and enthusiasm for the task.

182. No direct teaching of ICT was seen in the primary department; it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in the secondary department is excellent. The highly skilled teacher, who has extensive ICT knowledge, presents ideas in an interesting and challenging way that makes pupils think about what they will do. Pupils are always presented with 'problems' to solve and they rise to this well. Support materials, guidance sheets and examples are prepared by the teacher to a very high standard of presentation and are excellent role models for pupils to follow. Her excellent knowledge of individual pupils' skills means that all support provided is appropriate and ensures that work set is challenging and motivating and moves pupils on to the next stage in their learning. This very individual approach to pupils also enables to teacher to gain an excellent insight to how pupils are learning and what difficulties they are having. Her manner is highly enthusiastic; it motivates and inspires pupils. Very good use of praise, encouragement, and exemplification of pupils' very good work, helps maintain pupils' attention, even when some aspects are difficult for them. ICT is supported well by the part-time technician, who attends to the technical and administrative aspects of the network, as well as occasionally working with individual pupils.

183. Assessment is good overall, although there needs to be better assessment and tracking of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the primary department. In the secondary department the teachers' high level of attention to the skills required for each module, and the assessments and records kept, enable her to have a thorough knowledge of pupils. These records, however, are not linked to National Curriculum levels but to the school's own system.

184. ICT is used well to support aspects of pupils' work in other subjects as part of the ICT lessons in Key Stage 3, although the focus is mostly on improving pupils' ICT capability. There is little use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, except through the good use of the Internet for research purposes. Lower attaining pupils and those with additional special educational needs could specifically benefit from greater use of ICT. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate in their taught ICT work their motivation and interest in ICT as a learning tool; there are many occasions in English and in other subjects where their confidence and motivation to write could be supported through ICT, and their independent reading and writing, facilitated. There are, however, currently no network facilities in classrooms to facilitate this. This is planned for, as part of the future development for ICT, and the school is also considering the development of an Intranet as part of a learning resource for subjects.

185. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There are two separate co-coordinators, one for the primary department and one for the secondary phase. There are informal links between primary and secondary departments, although the role of the co-ordinators in overseeing the whole of the ICT provision as well as the monitoring and evaluation elements of the role are under-developed. Stronger and more formal links need to be forged to ensure better continuity and to share ideas, especially given the high level of expertise in the secondary department.

MUSIC

186. The improvement in the provision since the last inspection overall is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in music are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2, and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection at these key stages. However, pupils at Key Stage 3 are now formally disapplied from music on their Statements of Special Educational Need. All pupils do have opportunities to experience music, for example at assemblies, school performances, the school's 'Signing Choir' and workshops offered by visiting musicians. Judgements about teaching relate to pupils taught at Key Stages 1 and 2.

187. At Key Stage 1 pupils join in with singing and signing and use their voices. They listen and watch for the beat on a tambourine and run like a mouse or walk like an elephant to correspond to the rhythm being played. They perform in front of the class, playing on tone bars in time to *The Wheels of the Bus* being played on the piano. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have made good progress. For example, they are helped to identify instruments being used in a recording of Handel's *Water Music*. They identify whether notes that are played on tone bars are higher or lower. Pupils with additional special educational needs at Key Stage 2 beat out the rhythm on a drum from musical notation. They sign and use their voices to *Four Little Snowmen* accompanied by the piano.

188. Older pupils in the signing choir perform to the song *You Needed Me* in a whole school assembly. Video evidence of school productions shows that the whole school work together to produce a high standard, with accompanying music. Visiting companies, such as 'The Red Zebra', extend the pupils' experience of instruments and music of other cultures. Pupils take it in turn to ask different instruments to be played by other children, and thus compose their own music, which they also conduct.

189. Teaching and learning and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are always very good. The teacher's knowledge of teaching music to deaf pupils, and of these pupils' levels and needs, is excellent. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives and pupils concentrate and listen and watch well. The activities are very motivating and fun and, as a result, pupils' behaviour is always very good and sometimes excellent and they learn an appreciation of music and performing. The approach, very well supported by learning support assistants, is positive and enthusiastic with firm boundaries being set on expected behaviour and involvement in the lessons. Pupils rise to this and are very interested in all the activities and try their hardest.

190. The curriculum is good. Activities are motivating relevant to pupils' needs. They include signed singing, instrumental work, music reading, the training of auditory skills, plays and stories with music, movement and dance and music and dance. Music provides a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about music from other cultures and gain knowledge and some appreciation of classical and popular music. There are good assessment procedures in place that clearly show what the pupils know, understand and can do in music. Resources are good and appropriate for the pupils and include a range of appropriate instruments and tone bars with specific acoustic, vibratory and rhythmic qualities.

191. The leadership and management of music are very good and are informed by the teacher's high level of subject expertise, commitment to the role of the subject in supporting deaf pupils' learning needs and understanding of the needs of the pupils.

PERSONAL, HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

192. Personal, social and health education is taught in all classes and is a major focus of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and deaf identity. Pupils and students make good gains in PSHE at all key stages. They achieve well. As they progress through the school they develop their confidence, their self-esteem and their maturity in line with their individual abilities because of the effective opportunities provided for them.

193. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the school is involved in the curriculum to 'Promote Alternative Thinking Strategies' (PATHS) in a pilot project with the National Deaf Children's Society. The curriculum is designed to develop self-control, self-esteem, emotional awareness, relationships and interpersonal problem-solving skills. It is also integrated into the religious education module 'Feelings'. In Key Stages 3 and 4 at the beginning of the present academic year the school adopted the title personal, social and vocational education to reflect the changing components offered in the curriculum. At Key Stage 3 it continues to incorporate the personal, social and health education. In Key Stage 4 the Diploma of Vocational Education in Health and Social Care and GNVQ Health and Social Care are included as part of the curriculum.

194. At Key Stages 1 and 2 staff provide a good range of activities that enable the pupils to interact well and gain social confidence and self-esteem. An example of this is in their collective worship when they celebrate each birthdays and achievements. At Key Stage 3 they develop a sense of responsibility and regard to the dangers of smoking and drinking, the importance of caring for others and sharing. At Key Stage 4 and in Year 12 the curriculum is extended to include the accredited qualifications. Outside agencies are invited to school to speak to the pupils. Good use is made of people who serve society to help pupils understand aspects of civil and public law such as a local policewoman on British laws on arrest. Pupils have an opportunity to meet in person a police constable, question her on procedures and what to do if the police did not know they were deaf. Pupils gain a good understanding of positive policing and, in particular, that the police are there to help people in need as well as stop trouble.

195. No teaching could be seen at Key Stages 1 and 2 and, therefore, no judgement is made on the quality of teaching at those key stages. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3, 4 and Year 12 is good overall and it often has very good features. Where teaching is very good, activities are well organised and time well used to support pupils' learning, for instance, in the lesson on drinking and smoking pupils were made aware of the effects on themselves, as well as on other people. The pupils' responses are spontaneous and positive and they learn to make appropriate associations regarding the effect of certain social habits upon health such as smoking with asthma and drinking and driving with road deaths. Pupils demonstrate their learning and appreciation of such issues in other lessons, such as drama, and there is very good support for PSHE in other subjects and in the residential context.

196. The vocational programme that leads to accreditation at Key Stage 4 embodies a broad-based personal, social and health education in practical terms. A major strength is the integration in the local college where pupils work alongside their peers in specially organised courses. This strengthens their self-confidence and self-esteem. In food technology they put their understanding of hygiene issues into practice; they wash their hands and wear aprons for cooking. In other areas of the curriculum they learn to dress appropriately for a particular activity, for instance, in physical education.

197. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has maintained its high quality of teaching recognised in the last inspection and has extended the curriculum to meet the present needs of its pupils and students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

198. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in the provision of physical education (PE) since the last inspection. All pupils have the benefit of being taught by a specialist teacher and they continue to receive a broad and balanced subject curriculum through a variety of activities. This is ensured through very good planning by the subject co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is extremely enthusiastic and has produced a very detailed subject handbook in the short time she has been appointed. However, assessment of pupils' achievements is not sufficiently rigorous and there are no procedures for recording what pupils can do.

199. Pupils were able to demonstrate satisfactory achievements and progress during the wide range of activities that was seen during the course of the inspection. Appropriately chosen activities in lessons mean that pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring and practising new skills in ball games, such as hockey and volleyball, and appreciating aspects of fitness and health. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in dance activities and swimming. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can develop imaginative movements as part of a short dance sequence in response to a theme, for example waking up and going outside in stormy weather. Whilst younger pupils are still developing water confidence or at the very early stages of swimming can swim competently, using a stroke that is technically correct and surface dive to retrieve a rubber brick from the bottom of the pool.

200. At the age of fourteen, at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know about the importance of warming up and recovering after exercise, and have some understanding of how different exercises contribute to certain aspects of fitness. They do this through a variety of endurance activities, as they begin to develop individual exercise programmes. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have improved their skills in a number of ball games. They demonstrate some of these skills in game situations and understand many of the rules, such as the difference between winning the serve and winning points in a volleyball game. Pupils also have the opportunity to display their skills and knowledge of these games in competitive team matches against other schools. However, these occasions are much more than just competitive team games. They make a very positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development as pupils entertain visitors, are required to be involved in teamwork and must observe the rules of fair play.

201. Teaching is satisfactory overall; a particular strength is the good relationships between staff and pupils. Swimming is well taught by both the PE teacher and a member of staff who is a qualified coach. Primary age pupils achieve well in improving their levels of performance in swimming because all pupils have clear targets and activities that meet their individual needs; they were all full participants in the lesson. The less competent swimmers have very good individual support, including two learning support assistants in the water with them. Both the PE teacher and the swimming coach are knowledgeable about the subject, effectively picking up the coaching needs of individuals, and they encourage pupils well with clear instructions and demonstrations. This ongoing assessment is used well, and pupils are keen to demonstrate their improved skills and remain interested and focused, working hard. Equally good teaching, with the same high quality demonstrations and individual support, enabled pairs of Year 6 boys and girls to learn a movement and dance routine. The teacher gradually built up the idea of a sequence of actions that required pupils to move in different ways and, at the end of each movement, to adopt a different body shape. By carefully structuring the lesson in this way the teacher enabled pupils to improve patterns of movement. The activity also encouraged the development of sequencing and memory skills as pupils built their routine; it supported collaboration, communication and social development as they worked together to synchronise movements.

202. However, pupils do not learn equally well in other lessons. Time is not always used efficiently as some activities are too prolonged and as a result pupils begin to lose interest. At other times, for example when a group of Year 10 pupils learnt basic volleyball shots, more skilful pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is because not enough attention is paid to motivating pupils to evaluate their actions and to improve the quality of their performance through practice, targeted coaching and by watching others.

203. The indoor facilities for physical education are satisfactory, with sufficient storage space for an appropriate range of equipment. Good outdoor facilities consist of a floodlit AstroTurf area and a grassed area for games. The school makes good use of the swimming pool in an adjacent school and a local leisure centre.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

204. The school has responded positively to the findings of the last inspection. Provision for religious education is now good and the subject embodies the aims and values of the school particularly well. Pupils' achievements have improved and teaching is better. The increased range of artefacts to support learning and make learning more relevant for pupils has led to pupils' learning more effectively.

205. Pupils' achievements are good. Pupils and students in Year 12 make good progress in religious education. They behave sensibly, respond well to questions and take a pride in their work. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the scheme of work is closely associated to the personal and social programme and pupils develop ideas about feelings, being sorry and being happy. They learn about the story of Christmas through art and drawing and develop an understanding about the joy felt by Mary and Joseph. Key Stage 3 pupils are introduced to the different Christian celebrations and develop a good understanding of why christening is important and about what happens at the baptising of a child. The implications of the celebration is emphasised well and the principles involved, for example, becoming a member of God's family are well understood by pupils. At Key Stage 4 and in Year 12 they are beginning to understand the moral implications that lie behind the concept of revelation, and reveal their own personality through role-play exercises. They discuss the revelation by God and the idea of prayer, the reasons for prayer and how God may answer prayer. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of such issues as 'friendship' and 'caring for others' as reveal through religious texts they have read.

206. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally the teaching is very good. Teaching of religious education is the responsibility of the individual class teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 and the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are very well planned and pupils' additional needs very well considered and catered for. What the pupils are to learn is made interesting for them and they particularly enjoy their religious education lessons; their responses in lessons are good. In Key Stages 3, 4 and Year 12 teaching is by the subject specialist teacher and the quality of teaching is also good. The teacher's very good knowledge of the subject is imparted well and in an interesting way using much visual material such as artefacts. This approach brings the subject to life for the pupils. As a result, pupils are good listeners and contribute freely in discussions and they respond enthusiastically to their work and concentrate well throughout the lesson. Teachers' planning is very good, and most pupils' needs well catered for. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils' learning is not extended as much as it could be. A strong feature of all lessons is the way in which teachers know their pupils well and the good relationships they have with them.

207. The co-ordination of religious education is very effective. There is a comprehensive scheme of work that actively serves to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is endorsed by a clear policy that reflects the locally agreed syllabus and is reinforced by links in other subjects such as personal and social education. It is also sufficiently flexible to take account of topical events as they occur and to reflect the faith of individual pupils.

208. The school has invested in a good range of artefacts from world religions to support pupils' learning. These are well used and handled with care and respect. They are displayed at appropriate remembrances and festivals like Christmas. Visits are also planned to local places of worship to enhance their experiences and understanding of the different religions of the world.

209. Collective worship makes a significant contribution to religious education. Stories are told and celebrations held from different religions such as the Christmas story from the Christian faith and the celebration of 'Hanukkah'. The assemblies give the pupils and students time to reflect and meditate. It is also a time of celebration when pupils' achievements are recognised. At all stages pupils learn the importance of sharing as well as the joy of that accrue from building up friendship with their peers and those that they meet in the inclusion sessions that the school organises with the local school and college.