

INSPECTION REPORT

LINDON BENNETT SCHOOL

Hanworth, Middlesex

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102556

Headteacher: Mr. Steve Line

Reporting inspector: Sue Aldridge
8810

Dates of inspection: 13 – 17 November 2000

Inspection number: 223868

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street Hanworth Middlesex
Postcode:	TW13 6ST
Telephone number:	020 8898 0479
Fax number:	020 8893 4630
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Irene Guy
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sue Aldridge 8810	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Science; Music; Equal opportunities.	Standards of achievement; Teaching; Leadership and management.
Marion Cumbers 19677	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Partnership with parents.
Keith Gutteridge 7042	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Ann Leontovitsch 27484	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Physical education; Special educational needs.	Pupil support, guidance and welfare.
Nick Smith 22391	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Religious education; English as an additional language.	Curriculum.
Aileen Webber 3838	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology; Information technology; Foundation stage.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lindon Bennett is a mixed, day, community special school catering for 70 pupils from three to eleven with severe learning difficulties, and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have autism, and several have challenging behaviour. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Although most pupils are white, just over a third come from families where English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lindon Bennett is a good school. Standards are high, teaching is good, and the school is well led and managed; it provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards of achievement in speaking and listening, and in art, are very good. Pupils make very good progress towards the targets they work on at lunchtime.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is excellent. Their behaviour, personal development and relationships are very good.
- Teaching is good, and support staff make a significant contribution to this. All staff are well trained, and show a high level of commitment to the school.
- Arrangements to promote spiritual and social development are very good. There is a high quality sensory curriculum, which is well resourced.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear vision and inspiration for staff.
- There is a very positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils are valued and respected, and they are well cared for and supported.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Pupils' annual progress reports do not meet requirements. The recent governors' annual report to parents did not contain all the information that it should. Registers are not always marked correctly.
- Not all staff have up to date training in child protection. Some risk assessments have not been completed. The entrance to the school and the congested car park give cause for concern. The lack of withdrawal rooms makes it difficult to manage instances of challenging behaviour without disrupting lessons.
- Governors need to further develop their role as critical friends.

Minor weaknesses: Leadership in design and technology needs to be improved, and a formal homework policy developed. Teachers do not always follow their timetables. Staff do not always discourage inappropriate behaviour. Not all pupils have the opportunity to go horse riding.

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

Since the last inspection, two and a half years ago, there has been very good improvement. At that time, there were serious weaknesses in teaching. Teaching is now good. Standards of achievement have improved, and so has induction and staff development. The sensory curriculum has been further developed, and provision for personal, social and health education and information and communication technology has improved. The school has developed skills targets which are used effectively in setting whole school targets for raising standards. The Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented well. Staff expertise in special educational needs has grown. Resources have improved in information and communication technology and in design and technology. Governors have extended their monitoring role, and development planning now extends over a longer term.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	A	<i>very good</i>	A
reading	B	B	<i>good</i>	B
writing	B	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
mathematics	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	<i>poor</i>	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	A		

IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

All pupils make good progress overall. The setting of whole school targets is developing well. The development of skills targets in English, mathematics, personal and social education and information and communication technology has helped to raise standards and demonstrate progress more clearly. Communication skills are very well promoted throughout the school day. The breadth of the art curriculum supports' pupils progress in this subject. High expectations of pupils, skilled target setting and detailed evaluation, all help to promote progress in lunchtime targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show tremendous enthusiasm for school. They enjoy their lessons and work hard at the tasks they are set. Pupils with more complex difficulties co-operate well with the adults who support them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave very well in class, around the school, and when they go out.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is a high priority. It is very well supported by the curriculum, and by the setting of personal targets. Pupils achieve high levels of independence as a result, and they readily take responsibilities. Relationships amongst all members of the school's community are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Although this falls below 90 per cent, pupils' medical conditions and childhood illnesses account for this.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. It is best at Key Stage 2, where over a quarter of lessons seen were very good. Altogether 74 lessons were seen: 16 (22 per cent) were very good, 44 (59 per cent) were good, 12 (16 per cent) were satisfactory, and two (3 per cent) were unsatisfactory. Teaching of communication skills is very good, so is teaching in art. In mathematics at Key Stage 2 teaching is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good across the school. The provision for personal, social and health education, and the sensory curriculum are particular strengths. However, not all pupils can go horse riding because of a lack of special facilities at the stables. Very constructive links with other schools, organisations and the local education authority (LEA) enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Social development is very well promoted, and is effectively underpinned by support for communication. There is very good provision for spiritual development. Arrangements to promote cultural and moral awareness are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment is good overall, and very good where skills targets have been developed. The school, with other professionals, provides very good support and guidance for pupils, which is reflected well in their personal development. There are weaknesses in some adults' reluctance to check inappropriate behaviour. Not all staff have up to date training in child protection.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school's very good practice in encouraging communication skills supports pupils' understanding of English. As a result, these pupils make similar progress to other pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher both have a clear vision, and high expectations of what pupils might achieve. Staff share this vision, and have a strong commitment to improvement. They are well supported by high quality staff development. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in its work. Senior managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are ambitious, yet realistic, about how quickly improvements can be made.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors are supportive and generally well informed. They have established a committee structure that includes a standards committee. This has monitored development in a period of rapid improvement. Governors are aware that they need to extend their roles as critical friends, and have the capacity to do this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Mid-term evaluation of whole school target setting is helping the school to refine this process. Evaluation of developments is best where measurable success criteria are identified. Evaluation of the effectiveness of expenditure is at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all its resources very well, to improve both standards and provision. It invests wisely in developing staff skills and expertise, targets funding in areas that are development priorities, and improves the learning environment as best it can.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-eight parents, representing twenty-the pupils, attended the parents' meeting. Thirty-seven out of 70 (53 per cent) parental questionnaires were completed and returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• They are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• The school is well led and managed.• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few did not feel that their children get the right amount of homework.• A few did not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors support parents' very positive views of the school. They find that although the school has an informal homework policy, and pupils do take some tasks home, there should be a written policy. The school does provide some lunchtime activities, and an after school club once a week. There are firm plans to extend after school activities.

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 the standards they achieve against age related expectations or averages. In this report, therefore, judgements about achievement take account of information contained in pupils' annual reviews and their progress towards the targets set for them. The report also gives examples of what pupils know, understand and can do.*

2. In general, pupils make good progress across the school. The best progress is made in speaking and listening skills, in mathematics at Key Stage 2, and in art across the key stages. Progress towards targets set for the lunchtime period is very good too. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make. For example, at the parents' meeting, one said that her child had started to talk since coming to the school.

3. Children at the Foundation Stage make good progress in all the areas of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is good overall in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, music, physical education (PE), religious education (RE), and in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology. There are no differences in the progress made by boys and girls, pupils of different levels of attainment, groups with different special educational needs, or pupils of different ethnic groups.

4. There has been a significant improvement in standards of achievement since the school was last inspected. Standards have been raised in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history, geography, art, PSHE and at the Foundation Stage. Improvement has been brought about through better teaching, greater curriculum breadth, and more detailed planning and assessment, particularly where staff have developed skills targets in their subjects.

5. Whole school target setting is developing very well. Staff have worked hard in the past two years to develop skills targets in key areas of the curriculum. These provide small sequential steps that teachers use in their planning and assessment. They also provide a system of whole school target setting that is integrated into existing planning and assessment. The school sets targets in literacy, handwriting and lunchtime skills. The headteacher has recently carried out a mid-term review of the whole school targets, and this shows that sound progress overall has been made towards the targets set.

6. In English, pupils make the best progress in speaking and listening. Staff use a good range of methods to encourage communication, and signing is very much part of school life. Communication is encouraged throughout the school day. Visitors to the school are introduced to each pupil in turn, and pupils quickly learn to make a socially acceptable response. All pupils have a means of communication, whether through speech, signs, symbols, exchanging pictures, or by activating switches that produce recorded messages. Some have communication books in which they arrange symbol and text cards to assemble 'sentences'. At the end of the school day, many pupils sign as they sing the hymn in assembly. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils respond to questions and choices with whole sentences; lower attaining pupils respond to their names by making eye

contact, and most pupils can use signs, symbols or words to express their feelings or needs. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils have increased confidence: they hold short conversations with adults, can describe recent events, and say what happens in familiar stories. Lower attaining pupils understand and respond to simple requests from adults: they make themselves understood by using signs, symbols, switches or single words. Most pupils understand and act on simple instructions such as to 'go to the office and hand in the register'.

7. At both key stages, pupils make good progress in reading. The school has a good range of resources to help those pupils with more profound difficulties to understand and appreciate books and stories. For example, there are sensory books in the library, and objects associated with characters and events in particular stories. All pupils enjoy listening to stories read aloud. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils can recognise their own name from a choice of four; they can identify characters from books, and show understanding of the story line when they answer questions. Lower attaining pupils identify their own photograph from a choice of two. By 11, higher attaining pupils read books from the reading scheme without assistance; some have up to 20 words that they recognise on sight. Lower attaining pupils show anticipation of events in familiar stories that are read aloud. They recognise characters from familiar stories, and some recognise their own names.

8. Progress in handwriting is good at both key stages, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils can hold a pencil in a pincer grip and copy over dotted letters of their name. Lower attaining pupils grasp and release objects, and most can hold a thick crayon and make circular or horizontal marks on paper. By the time they are eleven, higher attaining pupils can dictate a short piece of news to an adult and then copy the writing. Some lower attaining pupils copy-write their names, although a few are still at the stage of making marks on paper. Teachers do not always seize opportunities to teach handwriting skills.

9. Standards of achievement in mathematics are good overall. The best progress is made by pupils at Key Stage 2, where teaching is very good. Numeracy skills are reinforced very effectively in other subjects of the curriculum. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils recognise and count numbers up to five, and they sort, by colour for example. They are able to *add one more* from one to five. Lower attaining pupils can choose an object from a choice of two. By 11, higher attainers are confident in their use of number and can add two numbers up to twenty. They understand mathematical vocabulary such as *greater, smaller, more* and *less*. They can tell the time to the half hour and use money when they run the school tuck shop on Fridays. Lower attaining pupils can maintain an activity for a given time and group objects according to their colour.

10. All pupils have individual targets to work towards at lunchtime. Considerable thought has been given to the arrangements at lunchtime, and target setting reflects high expectations of what pupils might achieve. For some, targets are related to their posture, for others to their behaviour, and for a group of more able pupils, targets are related to sitting in a group together and serving themselves in a family setting. All pupils queue for their lunch, some independently and others with adult support. Using airline trays, the higher attaining pupils help themselves to food of their choice. Pupils steadily acquire the social and physical skills necessary to function in this way. They also learn about healthy food options and how much of a portion they can help themselves to without depriving those behind them in the queue. They develop the manipulative skills to eat independently. Staff record detailed information

on a daily basis, as a way of evaluating progress, and targets are frequently reviewed. As a result, pupils make very good progress in the targets set for them, and as they approach transfer to secondary school, many have developed sufficient skills to function with a high level of independence and self-confidence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is excellent; it is obvious that they are enjoying themselves from the moment that they arrive. In discussions, pupils all said they like coming to school and gave examples of lessons and activities that they particularly enjoy. A particular favourite is going to the headteacher to show him their work. They approach visitors with confidence and are pleased to show their work and talk about what they are doing. They are encouraged to be considerate and aware of the feelings of others, and most older pupils show these qualities. The school celebrates successes daily at assembly and those chosen to receive certificates for achievements of various sorts go up to collect them with real pleasure, applauded with great gusto by their peers.

12. In lessons, pupils generally concentrate for a good length of time; they respond well to encouragement to keep trying. Some show great persistence. In a science lesson, one spent several minutes battling with connectors until an electrical circuit had been completed, for example. The staff take every opportunity to encourage growth in self-esteem and to increase competence and confidence. They encourage the pupils to take responsibility, and to be independent whenever possible. When they are able, pupils manage such tasks as dressing and undressing for swimming with much tenacity, only accepting help when they are unable to continue.

13. The lunchtime cafeteria system is a key factor in developing personal skills. During this time pupils develop important self-help skills, as well as social awareness. A three-year-old pupil carries her own tray of food from the cafeteria hatch to her table even though the hatch is almost at head height. Likewise, pupils clear their own tables and pour their own water whenever possible.

14. Relationships between children, and between children and staff, are warm and mutually respectful. Pupils were observed spontaneously helping and caring for each other. The school treats personal development as one of the highest priorities and a number of parents wrote to inspectors about their appreciation of the way in which pupils are treated with respect, and valued as individuals. This encourages pupils' own self-esteem and self-confidence. The comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum provides a consistent framework for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them.

15. Behaviour throughout the school is generally very good and parents are aware of the positive influence of the school on their children. However, staff are occasionally too tolerant of misbehaviour that could become oppressive. A few children hit others, and challenging behaviour is occasionally allowed to disrupt sessions. Pupils are encouraged to try to manage their own anger and frustration, and parents are closely involved in home/school partnerships when behaviour is a problem and action on modification is necessary. There are no exclusions, and no sexism or racism was observed.

16. Most pupils attend regularly. Although attendance is below 90 per cent, this is satisfactorily explained. Absence is usually for medical reasons, because of the severity of the physical problems experienced by many of the pupils.

17. Pupils enjoy the activities provided for them by the school. There is much enthusiasm for horse riding and swimming. Pupils showed great enthusiasm for an after-school club that allows experience of physical activities not regularly available in school-time. One week, this is a sports club, the next it is a dance club.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good, with some very good features. Altogether 74 lessons were seen; 16 (22 per cent) of these were very good, 44 (59 per cent) were good, 12 (16 per cent) were satisfactory and only two (3 per cent) were unsatisfactory. The best teaching is at Key Stage 2, where there is a higher proportion of very good teaching. Particular strengths of teaching include staff expertise in special educational needs, the promotion of communication and numeracy across the curriculum, and lesson planning. The contribution made by support staff is particularly strong, and makes a positive contribution to the progress that pupils make.

19. Teaching is very good in art, and good overall in all subjects except design and technology, where it is satisfactory. The vital skill of communication is particularly well taught. All staff are skilled in signing, and they use this well at all times of the school day. As a result, the youngest children soon pick up signs, and even verbal pupils join in with signing in assembly and in the classroom when songs are used. This helps non-verbal pupils to understand and it includes them in activities. Symbols combined with text are also used well, and pupils who need additional communication assistance have books in which they can arrange 'sentences' made up of a simple sequence of signs. In these books, cards are temporarily fixed in place using velcro. Pupils with more complex difficulties have switches to assist them in communication. For example, one pupil has a red (No) and a green (Yes) switch at either side of his head, and he presses these to make a *yes* or *no* response.

20. As part of the sensory curriculum, pupils work intensively on developing communication skills. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is particularly well developed in these sessions. A very good range of objects, which represent events or activities, are used well to support pupils' understanding. Teachers set clear targets and staff who work individually with pupils, record their responses in detail. This detailed information enables staff to find out which strategies work best with individual pupils, and all make very good progress as a result. A similar level of detail is found in the evaluation of pupils' lunchtime targets.

21. Staff reinforce pupils' numeracy skills well in all subjects and during the school day. In science, pupils were encouraged to count body parts and to score and add scores during a game. In personal, social and health education, pupils have made bar charts about foods. At lunchtime, pupils learn about portions, and how many can share a quantity of food. Older pupils run a tuck shop on Friday mornings, and pupils visit this during their numeracy lessons. They handle money, learn to operate an electronic till, and reserve the right to refuse

credit. Younger pupils learn about making transactions, and how to handle money. The arrangements at lunchtime and the provision of the tuck shop trolley have been very well supported by the LEA school meals service. With their assistance, realistic resources, such as a menu board and the trolley, have been provided.

22. Reading and writing skills are encouraged fairly well across the curriculum. Teachers draw pupils' attention to key words associated with areas of learning in other subjects, and provide opportunities for writing too. However, staff do miss opportunities to directly teach writing skills, such as correct letter formation.

23. Most staff have suitably high expectations of pupils. A particularly good example was seen when older pupils went to a secondary school for a design and technology lesson. Here, they were able to use machinery not available to them in their own school, and they were given tasks that enabled them to learn from their mistakes. For example, when making a jigsaw from a photograph of themselves, those who did not stick their pictures down well found that these came away from the backing when the whole thing was cut into pieces. However, in a very few lessons, teachers did not challenge higher attaining pupils enough: by asking them more difficult questions, for example.

24. Lesson planning is very good. For all whole class sessions, teachers set learning objectives at different levels then assess pupils' achievements against these. They know pupils well, and include objectives from pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) as well as subject specific objectives. Support staff are well informed; no time is lost in on-the-spot briefing, and they work successfully with individual pupils. Resources are to hand, so that most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. On a few occasions, there was a loss of pace when pupils in whole class groups took turns to carry out an activity, such as looking at themselves in a mirror. Whilst this took place, some pupils lost interest.

25. On most occasions, teachers and support staff are skilled at maintaining pupils' interest. For example, the skilful use of the song, '*What's in the box?*' is a guaranteed success. Teachers often plan lessons to include frequent changes of activity, in music, for example. They also use resources that appeal to pupils and make activities practical so that pupils are involved well. For example, in a literacy session, pupils were involved making animal noises and moving model animals into the pond at the appropriate moment in telling of the story of *Nelligan's Farm*. This helped them to anticipate events and recall the story line. In a science lesson, a puppet show was used very effectively to involve pupils in making silhouettes for others in the class to identify. Across the school, songs and rhymes are used well. They make repetition enjoyable, and help pupils to learn, as they anticipate and become involved in the accompanying actions.

26. Support staff make a very significant contribution to direct teaching, as well as supporting teachers and individual pupils well. They intervene well to encourage, clarify or check understanding, often showing initiative by seizing opportunities to reinforce concepts that are not being specifically taught at the time. For example, in a science lesson, one took the opportunity to remind a pupil about left and right, then firmly reminded another that he was not to shine a torch in his eyes. Support staff also teach individual pupils, and groups of pupils.

27. All staff are ready with praise, feedback and encouragement, and behaviour is generally managed well. However, there were a few occasions when inappropriate behaviour was allowed to go unchecked, and pupils were not therefore aware of their own anti-social behaviour. On two occasions this led to some disruption of the lesson and pupils did not make sufficient progress.

28. Most lessons end well, with an opportunity to review what pupils have achieved, and this helps them to develop an awareness of their own learning. However, the good practice seen in sensory sessions, where support staff are active in recording outcomes, could usefully be transferred to some of the whole class sessions, so that no detail is forgotten.

29. Although parents agree that teaching in the school is good, a significant minority are not satisfied with the amount of homework that pupils are given. The school does give homework, such as reading, and mathematics worksheets, and pupils with profound difficulties can borrow sensory books from the school library. Good information is recorded in home-school books. This enables parents to contribute to, or reinforce, what has happened at school. However, there is no formal homework policy, and the school should set out its intentions in this way.

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

30. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in developing its curriculum, which is now good at each stage. A very comprehensive curriculum for personal, social and health education has been developed, and this now includes suitable sex and drugs education. Parents were included in working parties that considered how best to approach these topics. A very well planned sensory curriculum has also been further developed, and this has been well resourced. Development in information and communication technology also has been significant. There is now a broad curriculum, which is well planned and assessed. As a result, pupils now make good progress in this subject while, at the last inspection, it was unsatisfactory.

31. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, as well as religious education, and personal social and health education. Religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced and are having a positive effect on pupils' achievements. In general, timetables include subjects in suitable proportions. In common with similar schools nationally, there is a suitable emphasis on communication, literacy, numeracy, personal, social and health education and physical education. However, there are occasions when the timetable is not adhered to and this makes it difficult to ensure that all pupils receive the intended balance.

32. A significant development since the last inspection is the introduction of skills targets. These identify small sequential steps in pupils' learning, and they are useful in planning for pupils of all levels of ability. As a result, the curriculum is well matched to pupils' individual needs.

33. Schemes of work have been developed for most subjects and these are of good quality. A scheme of work for design and technology has yet to be developed. Nonetheless, individual teachers plan and assess the subject in a satisfactory manner, which enables pupils to make sufficient progress.

34. Pupils have a wide range of learning opportunities. The work on the Healthy Schools Project contributes to the very good provision in personal, social and health education. The art curriculum is very broad; not only do pupils tackle a wide variety of different tasks that enable them to develop their skills in art, but they are also exposed to the work of a good range of artists. Work around the school shows pupils' work inspired by artists such as Monet, Rothko and Hockney. There are good links with industry and commerce, and one such contact enabled pupils to have a day on a plane when they flew over the Isle of Wight. In spite of its efforts, the school is unable to make horse riding available to all pupils, as the stables used do not have suitable equipment and facilities for pupils with more pronounced physical difficulties. Staff continue to pursue the matter, and have met with representatives of Riding for the Disabled (RDA) to discuss ways of jointly resolving the difficulty.

35. The school is keen to develop inclusion further; it prides itself on having had some pupils leave to take places in mainstream schools. There are many links with mainstream schools and these are used well to promote social development and to widen the curriculum. For example, a link with a primary school enables Lindon Bennett pupils to join their mainstream peers for physical education. A link with a mainstream secondary school helps to provide learning opportunities in design and technology. In return, the students from the secondary school are designing a sensory trail to enrich the experience of pupils from Lindon Bennett.

36. Visitors to the school include operatic performers, musicians and artists. The local agencies, such as the police and the fire service, provide very worthwhile sessions for all pupils. History and geography days involve the whole school and the community. They provide very interesting and stimulating activities for every pupil. Visits to museums and art galleries enrich pupils' experiences. The school staff are aware of their place in the community and are involved in a project designed to educate pupils in primary schools about the dangers of drugs.

37. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities. At present there is a weekly club, which provides sports one week and dance the next. Eight members of staff have committed several Saturday mornings to train in preparation for the dance club. An accredited course for the pupils is the ultimate goal. Understandably, residential experiences have not been a priority whilst the staff have been implementing the action plan which was drawn up after the last inspection. However, one member of the senior management team arranged residential experiences on the Isle of Wight, and a further residential visit is planned for the Spring term. It is to their credit that staff give so freely of their time to enrich the pupils' curriculum.

38. Fostering a sense of competence and self worth in its pupils is one of its main aims, and the school's provision for encouraging personal development is a particular strength. Social development is underpinned by the very good arrangements to promote communication skills. Targets are set for lunchtime social skills, and are systematically reviewed and progress assessed. Visits and visitors add to pupils' social experiences, as do residential opportunities, and the school's administrative officer, who holds office in the Scout movement, has arranged for several pupils to join local cub packs.

39. Arrangements to encourage pupils' spiritual development are very good. Grace is said with sincerity before lunch begins. An enthusiastic act of collective worship is an integral part of the day, and features a signed song, prayers led by pupils, and the awarding of certificates for reaching milestones of various kinds. Every child is valued and has a chance to be congratulated by his or her peers, for achievements of many kinds. All music lessons end with a calming song, *Go well and go safely*. On several occasions, inspectors witnessed pupils' genuine awe and wonder. This was particularly evident when pupils watched silhouettes, formed by their peers during a science lesson, and when pupils with profound learning difficulties responded to the ever changing stimuli in the sensory rooms.

40. All the pupils are given good opportunities to experience other cultures and to develop moral awareness. Much of the artwork on display around the school is based on the stimulus of work by great painters from around the world. Musical instruments from many cultures, together with visiting musicians, have also enriched the experience of the pupils. Work on the Olympics, and food and stories associated with various festivals, have added to pupils' appreciation of distant places and cultures. Through school and class rules, pupils learn a set of values. There are opportunities to become more mature and responsible, particularly when older pupils go to a mainstream secondary school for a lesson. Pupils are also encouraged to perform tasks, such as deciding who is absent or delivering a register to the office, without obvious adult supervision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. This was identified as a strength at the last inspection, and the school has made further improvements. It now makes very good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of all pupils. There is a caring and supportive environment, which has a beneficial effect on their learning. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils feel confident, secure and valued. The school attaches great importance to the personal dignity of each pupil. For example, older boys and girls change separately for physical education and changing beds for more disabled pupils are screened from view. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school and see it as a caring community where their children are happy and safe. One parent commented, 'You think that no one can look after your child as well as you can, and then you discover that this school can.'

42. The school has made good improvements in monitoring pupils' progress, particularly those pupils following a sensory curriculum. This has been achieved through improved target setting, assessment and recording. Parents appreciate annual reviews, and professionals contribute well to these. The school ensures that support staff attend relevant reviews, and

they contribute to these well. Good reviewing of targets, and the setting of suitable new challenges, contributes positively to the progress that pupils make. There are well-constructed care plans in place. The school nurse and physiotherapist contribute to these and they are reviewed regularly.

43. There has been significant improvement in assessment since the school was last inspected. It is now good overall, and very good in English, mathematics, PSHE and ICT. In these subjects, skills targets have been developed, assisting teachers in both planning and assessment. They also make the task of monitoring progress much easier. Skills targets are set for lunchtime too, and detailed recording and evaluation promotes progress well. Assessment of the sensory curriculum is very good, with support staff playing an important role in recording progress, and planning, with teachers, what the next steps should be. Assessment is good at the Foundation Stage, and in all other subjects, it is satisfactory.

44. All pupils are assessed when they enter the school, whether this is in the early years, or later. The early years staff have developed their own baseline assessment and an accredited scheme supplements this. Suitable targets are then set in pupils' IEPs. Targets are almost always specific, measurable, attainable and time related. Staff record outcomes well, and use the information to plan the next steps.

45. All pupils accumulate evidence of their achievements as they progress through the school. Good use is made of annotated and dated photographs to make evidence meaningful to pupils. When they leave the school, pupils take with them a very well presented record showing their achievements at Lindon Bennett.

46. The school has good relationships with a wide range of advisory staff, who support and advise on pupils with additional special needs, such as visual impairment. The school nurse, physiotherapists and speech therapist make a substantial contribution to the care and development of the pupils. Four members of staff are trained in first aid and all accidents to children are recorded in an incident book. The nurse's room acts also as a medical room, and the school has ordered a folding bed so that pupils who are unwell will have somewhere to lie down.

47. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection issues and the policy reflects local and national guidelines. This policy works effectively for the protection of children. However, some staff do not have up to date training in child protection. Although training is not planned as part of the school's development plan, details of a suitable course were recently received in school, and a rolling programme has been devised to enable staff to attend. There is a secure policy for the administration of prescription drugs. The school nurse stores these safely. Infection control measures are in place and monitored by the school nurse.

48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Parents are reminded of the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence, and that the Educational Welfare Officer will be involved if absence is not authorised. However, problems are usually resolved before this becomes necessary. Although an administrative assistant monitors attendance and staff are quick to respond to unexplained absences, the incorrect marking of some registers makes monitoring less reliable.

49. The zoning of the outside play areas ensures that children are able to use wheeled toy vehicles without endangering less mobile pupils. The shaded pagoda area enables pupils with profound and multiple difficulties to be out in the fresh air without risking over exposure to the sun in the summer.

50. The drivers and escorts who transport the children to and from school ensure all pupils are correctly seated in the buses, and secured with seatbelts and wheelchair clamps. There is no lifting of pupils. They also know the children well, greet them warmly and add to the confidence and security felt by the pupils. They are willing to take messages from home to school. On one occasion, a driver and escort were seen to be signing and singing action rhymes with the pupils to keep them entertained and happy until it was time to go into school.

51. Whilst great care is taken when walking the pupils from the buses to the school door, there is potential danger, as buses have to manoeuvre to leave the car park while other children are disembarking. The entrance to the school is on a bend in the road and this makes it potentially hazardous for vehicles turning right into the school, across the path of oncoming traffic. The school has taken the matter up with the LEA and the highways department, but no action has resulted.

52. Careful consideration has been given to encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. The school's involvement in the Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Eating Programme, guides pupils towards eating sensibly. Those who select a healthy option at lunchtime are rewarded with a sticker.

53. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and, as a result, most lessons proceed smoothly. Staff have received training in managing difficult behaviour and most are skilled in this. Staff have developed strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour, and this is well managed by most of them. Plans include close supervision, distracting pupils, or removing them from the situation if they cannot be distracted. There are few withdrawal rooms in the school, which makes the task difficult at times.

54. The school is a clean and generally safe environment. The caretaker has been trained in lifting and in the maintenance of the pool. He uses the correct protective clothing for the latter task. Risk assessments have not all been completed yet. For example, the use of ladders and visual display units has not been assessed. Consideration will need to be given to risks created by mobility and physiotherapy equipment stored in corridors, as the school is rapidly running out of storage space.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents, at their meeting, were very appreciative and supportive of what the school is doing for their children. The questionnaires confirmed that they had no doubt about the effectiveness of the school and the pleasure that the pupils get from being there. Parents feel privileged to have a child at the school and have on occasion resorted to the appeal process to gain a place.

56. The parents feel well informed about the school and its high expectations for their children. They find the prospectus, newsletters and other information that they get from the school, very useful and informative. Preliminary visits of the parents to the school and staff visits to the pupils' homes both take place and are found useful. Parents are kept closely involved with the education of their children, using the home-school books to keep in touch regularly. Where necessary, there is close communication and co-operation in drawing up behaviour modification programmes, to ensure that the same approaches are used at home and at school. The school sends home photographs as evidence of pupils' achievements, to share and celebrate with parents. There is an informal policy on homework. If parents want more homework for their child, they only have to ask and it is provided. Most parents are content with the amount their children get, but a significant minority expressed dissatisfaction.

57. Parents feel that they are given all the information they need about progress that their children are making. However, pupils' annual progress reports do not meet requirements. Subject reports rarely identify gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, and not all National Curriculum subjects are reported on for all pupils. The governors' most recent annual report to parents does not include a section on the progress and effectiveness of the policy for special educational needs, and shows attendance figures as raw scores, rather than percentages, as required.

58. Arrangements for regular parents' meetings and annual reviews are flexible, to allow for parental difficulties with timing. They are re-organised if necessary so that most parents can attend. Interpreter facilities are arranged when necessary. A local project, which provides support for Asian families who have children with special needs, is particularly helpful.

59. Because the relationship between parents and the school is effective, parents feel that they can turn to the school with confidence when they need help or even if they have a complaint. They are confident that the school takes good care of their children. The school arranges training for parents on such topics as Makaton signing, as well as organising a parent support group, coffee mornings and social events through the parent teacher association (PTA). The parents help the school by contributing to the drafting of policies, helping in the classroom and with trips out, as well as fund raising and acting as parent governors. Contact with governors would be easier if phone numbers were made accessible to parents on their notice board or in the prospectus.

60. Links between the school and parents are certainly still as strong as they were at the last inspection, and levels of parental satisfaction with the school have risen.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The school is very well led by a headteacher and deputy head who share high expectations of what pupils might achieve. Their shared vision is well reflected in the school's aims and clearly reflected in the school's work. For example, staff *are* professional, they *do* value one another's skills and expertise, work well together as a team and in partnership with parents and the community. All staff know the school's strengths and areas for further development, which are set out in the development plan.

62. An ambitious programme of school improvement has been undertaken since the school was last inspected, national initiatives have been implemented enthusiastically, and all staff have worked extremely hard to raise standards. Parents and staff speak highly of both the head and deputy, who inspire and support staff in implementing change. All staff are keen to act on suggestions for further improvement, and the school's capacity for further improvement is very good.

63. At the time of the last inspection, a lack of rigour in monitoring teaching was noted. Since then, increased monitoring and support have taken place, and several teachers can identify ways in which their own practice has moved on. Monitoring, advice and support from LEA advisers have been helpful in effecting improvement. Significant improvement in the quality of teaching testifies to the success of monitoring and support.

64. Each member of the senior management team has a departmental responsibility as well as responsibility for co-ordination of a core subject across the school. This works well. It has helped with the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies, for example. Communication across the school is very good, and teamwork is a strong feature that supports improvement well. Most subject co-ordinators successfully fulfil their roles; they monitor planning and teaching across the school, using the time allocated for this purpose. However, the recently appointed design and technology co-ordinator has not yet established what is taught across the school, even though there is no scheme of work for the subject.

65. Governors have played their part in school improvement too. Since the last inspection, they have established a suitable committee structure, including a standards committee, which has monitored the progress of the post-inspection action plan. They are well informed through detailed reports from headteacher, presentations from subject co-ordinators, and by coming into school. They are also becoming more involved in preparation of the development plan, and in financial and curriculum matters. However, they have yet to establish a more critical role. For example, last year the school had a financial audit, and the outcomes were inadvertently omitted from the headteacher's report to governors. There is no evidence from governors' minutes that they ever considered the recommendations made by the auditors, or checked that these were implemented.

66. Staffing is good. The combination of an adequate number of well qualified teachers, and a very good number of high quality support staff contributes to the good standards in the school. The good relationships between teachers and support staff contribute to the achievement of these standards. Support staff feel their efforts are valued. This is reflected in their long service in the school. They are involved in all aspects of school life. They take part in staff meetings, planning and monitoring individual programmes for pupils, and make a strong contribution to pupil learning. Ancillary staff are valued for their contribution to the well being of pupils and enjoy working in the school.

67. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the number of teachers with a qualification in special education and in the induction of all new staff. This has been achieved through appointments and investment in staff training. New staff are mentored by a member of staff with experience in a similar post. New teachers have non-contact time to discuss issues with a senior member of staff. In this way they quickly become conversant with school procedures and their role in them.

68. Professional development is very good. All staff are encouraged to take part in further training. Each member of staff has a professional development file which notes both external and internal courses attended, certificates gained, mentoring undertaken and the outcomes of observations of their work. Staff are encouraged to feedback on training undertaken and often lead in training their colleagues and parents. This training includes music therapy; behaviour management, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and medication. Governors take part in appropriate training. The school also contributes to the education and training of members of the community by welcoming pupils on work experience and those training in the caring professions.

69. The school has good administrative, catering, lunchtime and caretaking staff who contribute much to the school's positive ethos and the creation of a warm and welcoming environment. The overall appearance of the school is enhanced by the very good displays of pupils' art and other work. It is a very pleasant environment in which to work and learn.

70. The school has made a number of improvements to the accommodation. These include the provision of specialist rooms, a new corridor which has improved access to the dark, white and sensory rooms, and improvements to pupils' toilets. The grounds include sensory gardens, good play areas, and a very good balance trail. Staff use all the available space well.

71. However, there are some weaknesses in the accommodation. There is now a growing lack of storage space. The library is small and some books are stored too high for pupils to reach. The parents' room does not function exclusively as such: it is a multi-purpose room, in poor decorative order. It is not well lit for its designated purpose. The hall and physiotherapy area are thoroughfares. Hence sessions can be disrupted, pupils can be distracted and suffer a loss of privacy. To overcome this, staff and pupils have to make a detour round the outside of the school in fine weather. The school has plans to address this. Access and egress to the car park present a hazard because of the poor line of sight of oncoming vehicles. The staff toilets do not meet the requirements of workplace regulations 20 and 22. There are two toilets in unisex accommodation.

72. There has been good improvement in learning resources since the last inspection. All subjects now have good resources with the exception of design and technology, and ICT, where they are satisfactory. There has been good improvement in ICT resources since the school was last inspected, and this has been achieved through a productive link with a local technology college. Resources are well cared for and staff ensure that pupils feel valued through access to good quality materials.

73. The school's financial systems are sound and run efficiently. They are managed competently by the administration officer. The school buys in the services of a bursar from the LEA. She helps the administration officer to produce budget figures and financial information. They work well together as a team.

74. Financial planning has improved since the last inspection. Broad financial planning now covers a three-year period. Budget management is competent. The school uses grants very effectively and for the purpose intended, such as funds being used for the after-school club. Funding for staff development has been used very effectively, and has helped to raise standards since the last inspection. The bursar gives information and advice, but the school makes the decisions on appropriate expenditure and best value. More work is needed to fulfil all the auditors' recommendations.

75. Information technology is used for school administration and for sharing information with the LEA. The leased system is used efficiently, and is supported by the LEA. However, the school is not yet getting best value for money from the service it purchases from the LEA, which promised an electronic inventory, but has not yet provided one. A higher priority needs to be put on ensuring that the administration officer has access to relevant training as it becomes available so that she keeps her expertise up-to-date.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Ensure that requirements are met in relation to:
 - * pupils' annual progress reports to parents;
(*Paragraph: 57*)
 - * the governors' annual report to parents;
(*Paragraph: 57*)
 - * the marking of registers.
(*Paragraph: 48*)

- Improve the support and welfare of pupils by:
 - * ensuring that all staff have up to date training in child protection procedures;
(*Paragraph: 47*)
 - * completing risk assessments;
(*Paragraph: 54*)
 - * continuing to liaise with the Local Education Authority (LEA) about the car park, the entrance to the school, and withdrawal rooms.
(*Paragraphs: 51, 53, 71*)

- Ensure that governors continue to extend their role as critical friends.
(*Paragraph: 65*)

- The following minor points should be included in the action plan:
 - * improving leadership in design and technology;
(*Paragraph: 118*)
 - * developing a homework policy;
(*Paragraph: 29*)
 - * ensuring that teachers follow their timetables;
(*Paragraph: 31*)
 - * ensuring that inappropriate behaviour is always discouraged;
(*Paragraph: 27*)
 - * continuing to pursue the provision of horse riding for all pupils.
(*Paragraph: 34*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	59	16	3	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	70
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	88.95

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.75

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

End of key stage assessment

All pupils are disapplied from National Tests. As the numbers of pupils assessed by teachers at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is below 10, the results of teachers' assessments are not published.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	0
Indian	11
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	38
Any other minority ethnic group	7

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.14
Average class size	8.75

Education support staff:

YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	710

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	939,978.00
Total expenditure	956,555.00
Expenditure per pupil	13,665.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,473.00
Balance carried forward to next year	28,896.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	70
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	32	0	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	39	3	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	40	17	3	13
The teaching is good.	60	34	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	30	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	29	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	67	28	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	72	25	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	21	15	0	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

77. From an analysis of children's work and teachers' planning, and from observation of at least one lesson for each Area of Learning, children of all abilities make good progress in all Areas. There is a good programme for settling the children into school, which includes visits to the children's homes and a gradual build-up to full-time attendance. As a result, the children learn the class routines quickly, and the majority of children settle into class well and are happy to come to school. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, with pupils' achievements moving from satisfactory to good.

78. Children make good progress in **communication, language and literacy**. Higher attaining children use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to put three words together to make a sentence; they also verbalise requests. Some hold a pencil with a pincer grasp and colour within a boundary. They use symbols to indicate and understand the order of lessons on their timetable. Lower attaining pupils choose to repeat the action song of 'Row, row the boat...'. by indicating *more* when they purposefully put their hands onto the support assistant's outstretched hands.

79. Children make good progress in **numeracy**. By the age of five, higher attaining children count aloud or recognise the numbers one to five and sequence them in the correct order. Lower attaining children place bean-bag frogs into a container and tip them out.

80. Children make good progress in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Higher attaining children investigate and explore areas of the school with confidence and use photographs to develop understanding of school routines. Through play, they learn about aspects of their immediate environment, by playing with autumn leaves in the sand tray, for example. Children usually show respect for the computer and use a roller ball to move the arrow on the screen with adult help. Lower attaining pupils begin to respond to a change on the screen when they are helped to press a switch.

81. Children make good progress in **creative development**. For example, they paint using brushes or their hands. In music they beat the drum with alternate hands and develop an understanding of rhythm and dynamics. They *play* and *stop* on request and play hand bells alongside singing.

82. Children make good progress in **physical development**. For example higher attaining children crawl through a plastic caterpillar tunnel and play hide-and-seek. They move around small apparatus in a section of the hall and hold onto a very large ball when it is rolled towards them. Lower attaining children take part in action rhymes, and move their bodies in time to the singing or nursery rhymes. They become confident in the water. For example, they lift and kick their legs while holding on to a float.

83. Overall, children's attitudes towards school and their lessons are good. They recognise routines, songs and games and join in as well as they can. Most of them concentrate well and show excitement and enjoyment. For example, younger children show anticipation in response to the teacher's routine of *What's in the Box?* - they know that it will contain a

surprise for them. A very few children behave in an unacceptable way for part of the time in some lessons, without being stopped. For example, they hit other children, stand on a table and play with the CD player, and throw the teachers' resources on the floor. This is distracting and, on occasions, upsets other children.

84. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons there is a dramatic, fun approach with a good balance between routine and surprises. This maintains the children's interest and ensures that they attend. For example, the use of *What's in the Box?* means that pupils learn routines; they anticipate and enjoy the element of surprise. Interesting and relevant activities are well presented, and resources are well organised in advance. This means that lessons have a good pace and pupils enjoy them. They learn new ideas whilst consolidating familiar concepts. The support assistants contribute very well to lessons and show good management of the pupils' behaviour. However, in the less successful lessons, and the two unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection, pupils did not respond to being distracted and deflected. There was no clear message given that certain behaviour is not allowed and staff had too few strategies to help children to control themselves. As a result, the learning of other pupils was affected. Teachers gave too much attention to individual children and did not monitor the rest of the class to ensure that all pupils were behaving appropriately, or learning as well as they could.

85. The curriculum provided for children of all abilities at the Foundation Stage is good. The activities which the children undertake are well organised around the new Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines and they learn through play as they work towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Lower attaining children, as well as taking part in class activities, have opportunities to work individually or in small groups with well-trained support assistants in the white and dark rooms. In a specialist facility in the local community, they are also able to attend *Reflections* sessions for sensory work. Assessment procedures are also good. When the children arrive in school, the first few weeks are used to carefully record what they know, understand and can do within the Areas of Learning. This is carried out with a baseline assessment system developed by the school and includes recording against target skills based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is good recording, and this forms the basis of the planning for what the children will learn next. However reports for parents do not fully reflect this level of detail and only include what the children experience rather than what they know, understand and can do within the different areas.

86. The accommodation is good overall. The two class areas are spacious and well organised and can be opened up to make one larger space when needed. The outside area, which is separate for the Foundation Stage children, is very good. For example, the children have a slide and bikes and large toys and they can play within an enclosed area. There are plans to provide more carpeted area within the older children's class base. The resources are good. There are sufficient good quality toys, books and educational apparatus.

87. The leadership and management of the provision for children under five are good. The two teachers of the Foundation Stage, the Class 1 teacher and the support assistants work closely as a team and this ensures that all staff have the same aims and individual objectives for lessons and children. The staff are well trained and several of the support assistants have undertaken training in working with pupils with visual impairment. They use their skills well with lower attaining children in small group sessions in the white and dark rooms.

ENGLISH

88. Standards of achievement are good across both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening are very good across the whole school, reading standards are good, and standards in writing are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards in speaking and listening were judged to be satisfactory, and standards in writing were unsatisfactory. Standards have been raised through improved planning, the implementation of the Literacy strategy, and through target setting. The development of skills targets in English, has helped teachers to plan for individual pupils, and track their progress.

89. Throughout the school day, communication skills are very effectively encouraged, and no opportunity is missed to develop these. Pupils are offered opportunities to make choices and express preferences, all staff sign extensively, and pupils are introduced individually to visitors by the headteacher and other staff. From an early age, pupils learn how to respond in a socially acceptable manner. For those who need additional assistance, communications books are provided, and other pupils are given switches that activate recorded messages. Staff are skilled at encouraging pupils to respond to questions and instructions. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils can respond to questions and choices with whole sentences. An example of this was a child who, when asked if he wanted his biscuit or should it be thrown away, responded 'No, you can throw it in the bin'. Pupils ask for and use their communication book symbols to create three word phrases to express their needs. They are able to greet their peers and know adults by name. Lower attaining pupils respond to speech with eye contact. By the time they are seven, most pupils have a method of answering 'Yes' or 'No'.

90. During Key Stage 2, pupils' confidence increases and they build on the skills already achieved. The skilful use of structured language targets ensures that pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils are able to express their needs and feelings fluently and to question adults. They are able to greet new adults appropriately and ask what their name is. They can give a short description of recent events and say what happens in familiar stories. Lower attaining pupils are able to make their immediate needs known, by signing, symbols, single words or the use of switches. They understand and respond to simple requests from adults. Many pupils are able to join signs, to make simple phrases and sentences.

91. Standards of achievement in reading have improved, and are now good. The use of objects to represent characters or events in stories (objects of reference) enables all children to understand and participate in reading activities. The sensory story boxes are a very useful teaching aid for the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and enable them to link words and feelings. These high quality resources have a positive impact on the learning of pupils. All children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils are able to answer simple question about the story, pointing to the pictures in the book, or using words to provide answers. They are able to match pictures of the characters in the reading scheme with card cut-outs, and recognise their own name from a choice of four. They have a sight vocabulary of the key words in the first level of the reading scheme, and are able to join in known songs and rhymes with action and most of the words. Lower attaining pupils can recognise their own name or photograph. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond by manipulation of the objects of reference. The high quality of these resources enables such pupils to make very good progress. By the time they are 11, a few high attaining pupils are able to read simple

storybooks from the reading scheme, without assistance. One pupil did not need to finger point and was able to self-correct a mistake. Other higher attaining pupils have a sight vocabulary of approximately 20 words. They are able to recognise the characters in the reading scheme and are aware that some characters may appear in different clothes and situations. For example, during a matching exercise a pupil was able to collect several different version of the 'Dad' character. Pupils, including some with complex difficulties, show enjoyment and anticipation of events in stories. Throughout the key stage, teachers use successful strategies to develop the pupils' awareness of letter sounds. Objects are used to emphasise the letter sounds being taught. However, on occasions, too few opportunities were given for the higher attaining pupils to articulate these sounds. The awareness of words is reinforced in other curriculum areas. For example, pupils beat out the syllables of their name in music.

92. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. The greatest strength is the successful teaching of communication skills. Of the eighteen English lessons seen, five were very good, ten were good and three satisfactory. Communication skills are practised, and extended, in areas such as physical education, music and design and technology. The sensory curriculum offers very good opportunities for the lower attaining pupils to develop communication and literacy skills. The speech therapy service makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills. Therapists help teachers with the careful and detailed planning of communication skills and have run sessions for parents on the use of signing and using the picture exchange system of communication. At present, they are looking to change motivational factors from food to other rewards. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to give access to reading and writing for pupils with profound physical difficulties. Pupils use switches to respond to requests, and to operate computer programs.

93. Standards of achievement in handwriting are satisfactory. Although planning has been developed since the school was last inspected, and pupils have targets for handwriting, teachers do not always seize opportunities to teach handwriting skills. For example, they provide opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects, but do not ensure that letters are correctly formed. By the time pupils are seven, higher attainers, use a pincer grip to hold a thick crayon and copy over the letters of their name in a dotted form. Lower attaining pupils grasp and release objects at will and most can hold a thick crayon with a palmate grip and make circular and horizontal marks on paper. A few pupils are beginning to colour within outlines. At Key Stage 2, further development is needed in the targets for the skills of handwriting, particularly in the choice of suitable tools, the seating position of the pupils and the formation of letters. By the time they are 11, the highest attaining pupils dictate short pieces of news to an adult, and copy this from an original. Others copy their names and addresses from an original copy on the same page. Most of the lower attaining pupils are able to grasp a thick crayon and make circular and horizontal mark on a piece of paper.

94. Leadership of the subject is good. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a good impact on the learning of pupils in Key Stage 2. Teachers feel that they have been well supported in the development of this strategy. The monitoring procedures have made a good impact on the quality of teaching. For example, teachers have developed skills in using objects of reference effectively to promote access to stories for all pupils. All staff sign effectively and this has a positive impact on pupils' communication skills. Resources are good and books are very well maintained. Any damaged book are removed and replaced. The reading scheme has some books that show characters of ethnic

origins, but numbers of these books do not reflect the large numbers of pupils from ethnic minorities within the school community. The packs of objects of reference and the sensory story boxes are a very good resource. The library is satisfactorily stocked and books are well displayed. The ticket system works well. However, the area is small and some shelves are too high for pupils to reach. The display of tactile books encourages lower attaining pupils to participate in the use of the library. All pupils have the opportunity to borrow books, take them home and share them with parents or siblings.

MATHEMATICS

95. Standards of achievement are good across the school. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and numeracy is well integrated into other subjects.

96. By the time they are seven, pupils sort by colour, complete a six piece jigsaw and recognise and count numbers up to five. Higher attainers *add on one more* within this range, and use practical activities in the class shop to illustrate their understanding. Lower attainers, following a sensory curriculum, select from between two objects using a computer.

97. By the time they are 11, higher attainers are confident in the use of number. They can add two numbers up to 20 both horizontally and vertically. They understand *more* and *less*, *smaller* and *greater*, and know the names of regular two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils can tell the time to the hour and half-hour. They put their knowledge of money to practical use when they run a tuck shop for the rest of the school on Fridays. Lower attainers following a sensory curriculum can group by colour, and choose from between two objects. Pupils learn to maintain an activity for a given time. For example, one pupil is encouraged to keep her head raised for a count of ten.

98. Overall the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. It is now good across the school. It is often very good. Out of six lessons, three were good and three were very good. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. The greatest strengths arise from the successful introduction to the National Numeracy Strategy and the introduction of mathematics skills targets. These targets are linked to pupils' IEPs and are used effectively in teachers' planning. The team work demonstrated between teachers and support staff is very good. They make very good use of signing to aid pupil learning. These aspects are having a very positive effect.

99. Where teaching is very good, teachers carefully repeat target skills and knowledge to ensure pupil learning. They encourage pupils to work independently on materials and tasks that are well adapted to the different levels of pupils' abilities. All teachers reinforce learning in mathematics across the whole curriculum. Opportunities are consistently taken to practice counting; develop mathematical vocabulary, and develop concepts in all subjects. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson the teacher discussed with pupils the time taken on a boat journey, featured in the book they were reading. In other subjects, pupils count, and score. Older pupils have drawn bar graphs in personal, social and health education and in science.

100. Pupils are very well managed. They behave well and often very well. They are keen to succeed; respond well to praise; and work for sustained periods. As a result they meet the targets set for them. Reports in annual reviews focus clearly on what pupils know, can do and understand in mathematics with the exceptions of those for lower attainers. Mathematics is not consistently reported for these pupils.

101. The co-ordinator has completed training for the National Numeracy strategy, and training has been cascaded to all staff. A termly curriculum map is in place, which ensures coverage of all aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator has had time to monitor teaching, and good support has been provided through in-service training. Resources are good. They are well maintained and replaced regularly. This is helping raise standards in the school.

SCIENCE

102. Standards of achievement in science are good at both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory. Since then, teaching and curriculum planning have both improved.

103. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are curious; they enjoy experimenting and using scientific apparatus. Their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts grows steadily. For example, by the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils recognise and name magnets, and all pupils develop an understanding of how magnets can be used when they make a simple fridge magnet of their own. Lower attaining pupils co-operate well with adults who support them in playing games, such as fishing for metal fish, using a magnet at the end of a fishing line. Higher attaining pupils record their findings in a simple way. For example, they colour in diagrams of objects that are made of metal, and are attracted to magnets and write key words by joining dots together to form letters.

104. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils have extended their investigative skills. For example, they predict the outcomes of investigations, saying which objects will float and which will sink. Some use scientific equipment independently, when testing foods to find out which are alkaline and which are acidic, for instance. Pupils take turns with equipment well, even when they are itching to have a go. They also persevere with tasks. One pupil, for example, was seen battling to connect wires to a buzzer, and he was ultimately rewarded with success. Many pupils record using worksheets. Higher attainers do so independently while lower attaining pupils need some support. Pupils extend their knowledge of living things; they know how exercise affects the human body, for example. Their understanding of materials is greater, and most can sort materials into categories such as paper, wood, cloth, metal and plastic. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were developing a good understanding of light. Higher attaining pupils were beginning to understand how shadows are cast, and that placing an object between a screen and light projected from a bulb can form silhouettes. Lower attaining pupils experience scientific investigations through sensory stimuli. For example, they experience movement through air propulsion when air is released from a balloon; they are encouraged to touch, feel and smell different plants; they feel different materials, and experience changes to materials when they make bread. They have a wide range of experiences, and detailed information is recorded about their responses to these.

105. Teaching is good overall; it is consistently good at Key Stage 2, and good overall at Key Stage 1. Altogether, four lessons were seen, three of these were good, and one was satisfactory. Particular strengths of teaching include planning of lessons; subject specific objectives are identified for pupils of different levels of ability, and objectives from individual education plans are often identified as well. For example, in a science lesson in Year 3, one pupil with complex needs was set the objective of keeping his head in a particular position during an activity, and this is also an objective he works on when having his lunch. Teachers reinforce literacy and numeracy well during science lessons. For example, pupils count parts of the body, they score points during a science quiz, and add these up to see which team has won. They are encouraged to read key scientific words, and to write these too. Teachers select activities that appeal to pupils. Practical activities are popular, and these are well resourced. Pupils tackle these with enthusiasm; changes of activity hold their attention and motivation. An activity where pupils were able to make silhouettes for their classmates to identify was a particular hit. Pupils with more complex needs were very well included in this activity, and their expressions were full of wonder. There is very effective teamwork between support staff and teachers. Support staff take initiative, reinforcing particular points when they are working with individual pupils, and making expectations of good behaviour clear. Although assessment at the ends of lessons is good, teachers need to use their records better when writing annual reports. At present, these do not describe what pupils know, understand and do in science, or what progress they have made. Too often, they simply describe what topics have been covered, and what pupils' responses were. This does not meet requirements. Some pupils with complex needs do not have a science report at all.

106. The science co-ordinator provides good leadership. In the relatively short time that she has held this responsibility she has worked hard to improve curriculum planning, and has developed skills targets which teachers are about to start using. An audit of resources is to take place next, to check that these are sufficient for the curriculum, which is broader than it was previously. The long term plan for science needs some adjustment, as it does not reflect the organisation of classes in Year 5, where science is not taught every week because of the design and technology link with a secondary school.

ART

107. Art is a strength of the school. There has been a significant improvement in pupil progress and the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Standards of achievement are very good. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. Where progress in lessons is very good, it is as a result of well planned, stimulating teaching which encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their learning. For example, in Year 4, higher attainers were able to use string and paint, unaided, to produce very good artwork following one demonstration by the teacher.

108. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use a wide range of materials to create art work. They use and combine media and apply it in a variety of ways to make pictures. For example, they apply paint to a golf ball and, as a group, roll it across paper. To this they add glitter and produce some attractive lined patterns. They use hand and brush painting, sponge and roller printing to create paintings in the style of famous artists.

109. By the time they are 11, pupils have considerably developed their skills. They extend their knowledge of famous artists. Higher attainers can sketch and use a brush accurately to complete a portrait. They use these skills across the curriculum. For example, in history where they study Henry VIII they sketch and paint pictures of Jane Seymour. They use information technology and dough in their study of faces. Lower attaining pupils can make marks on paper, and use their hands to produce pieces of artwork.

110. The observation of lessons and an examination of the displays of pupil work throughout the school demonstrate that teaching in art is very good overall. Of the five lessons seen three were good and two very good. The very good teaching is evident when lessons are stimulating and exciting, questioning and feedback consolidates learning and pupils' contributions are valued. In these lessons all pupils make very good gains. For example, in Year 4, higher attainers were encouraged to work independently whilst the support given to a lower attainer ensured he was able to work with dough to produce an object on which he concentrated for an extended period. Pupils respond well to tasks, are productive, can work at a very good pace and sustain concentration.

111. Overall the behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils are keen to take part in lessons. They are supportive of each other, with higher attainers helping lower attainers. They applaud each other's efforts. Pupils are making significant steps in becoming independent and show a willingness to take responsibility.

112. The co-ordinators are well qualified in art and special education. They provide good leadership. A curriculum map, supported by a file of advice on methods, with examples of good quality products ensures coverage of all aspects of art. Guidance also helps teachers with their preparation and promotes high standards. The art days, which they have organised for the whole school, are a strength. These give pupils and staff access to artists in residence. Such days not only produce very good art, but lead to improvements in staff expertise and progress in pupil learning. Video evidence shows that these days add to the spiritual growth of pupils and offer further opportunities for social development.

113. The co-ordinators are planning to introduce skills targets for art. Previous assessment procedures have been suspended. Teachers continue to assess pupil performance in lessons. However, reports on art for the annual review tend to be descriptive and do not always include what pupils know, can do and understand. Lower attainers' progress is not always reported in annual review reports.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Overall, standards of achievement and pupils' progress for design and technology (including food technology) are satisfactory and this shows an improvement since the last inspection. There are now sufficient resources for the curriculum that is taught, and the school has held a very good design and technology day with a visiting subject specialist. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to attend a very productive link with a local secondary school, to use their workshop facilities and work with specialist teachers. However, the subject leader does not have a clear picture of what is being taught in classes or what pupils know, understand and can do in design and food technology.

115. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils make *Tornado Tubes* by being helped to connect two large plastic bottles together with a special valve. They decide how they will fill these by choosing from different coloured shiny liquids and sparkling shapes. When completed, the bottles are turned the other way up and twisted, and the liquid pours from one bottle to the other in a fascinating way. Lower attaining pupils make sensory books on the design and technology day. With help, they stick materials of different colours and textures, such as felt, fun-fur, foil and lace, to create a page of each material. By 11, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall as they do not have many design and technology (including food technology) lessons each week. However on the design and technology day, and in some lessons, and when they use the local school's specialist workshop they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils show a very good awareness of safety in a workshop and use their own initiative to choose appropriate tools when working independently. For example, one pupil chooses to use a vice to sand his jigsaw pieces. Pupils use machinery, such as an electric saw and moulding machine; with careful supervision and a minimum of physical support, they make their own jigsaw with a picture of themselves on one side and a chosen picture on the other. Middle attaining pupils and pupils with challenging behaviour also make their own puzzles with support. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in lessons. For example they are supported to grate cheese into a bowl when they are making a pizza with a bread base.

116. Overall, teaching and learning in design and technology are satisfactory. From teachers' planning and looking at pupils' completed work, teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In the two lessons observed they were very good. In these lessons teachers had good knowledge of their subject. Specialist knowledge of machinery, and ways of enabling pupils to use this safely and with a minimum of help were very good at the link secondary school. Although there is a high level of staff, pupils are able to learn by making mistakes. For example, they stuck their pictures on by themselves and found out, when they cut their puzzle with the electric saw, that they had to add more glue. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good, including those with challenging behaviour who are calmly and efficiently managed when they display any difficulty within the lesson. In food technology, a good use of questioning ensures that the pupils are fully involved, using vocabulary such as *heavier*, *knife* and *half*. Pupils were given good direct teaching and demonstrations in both lessons and this helped them to be clear what they are going to be doing at each stage of the lesson. Support staff work very well as a team and carry out the objectives of the lesson, ensuring that pupils can learn for themselves rather than having everything done for them.

117. The curriculum and procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. There are plans for the design and technology day, the secondary school link and for individual class lessons. However there is no whole school scheme of work for design and technology. Assessment and evaluation of individual lessons is carried out well, and the school has photographic evidence, as well as examples of what the pupils have made. There are no skills targets yet, to assist teachers in recording what pupils know, understand and can do in the subject. The information given to parents is unsatisfactory, as it does not clearly state what their child can do in the subject, or the progress that has been made. The school now has a satisfactory level of resources, taking account of the access to the specialist workshop at the secondary school. The work carried out in design and technology does not include a wide

range of materials. The school is aware that as teachers become more confident, they will be able to widen the curriculum being taught. There will then be a need for additional resources. The use specialist resources at the link school and the good organisation that enables lessons to be taught in classrooms means that the accommodation is satisfactory.

118. The management and leadership of design and technology are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has been in post for a short time but has not yet ascertained the range or frequency of teaching taking place in separate lessons or as a support to other curriculum areas. As a result she is not clear whether the subject is being sufficiently covered across the school or whether the curriculum and assessment procedures are appropriate. However she has enabled teachers to gain understanding of the range of work that the pupils can achieve within design and technology. This has been achieved by organising the design and technology day with a specialist teacher which meant all teachers gained experience of the kind of design and making activity their pupils could successfully engage in.

GEOGRAPHY

119. The school teaches geography mainly through days or weeks when the subject is a particular focus. It was not possible, therefore, to see geography being taught during the inspection week. A detailed examination of work was carried out and much evidence was gained from this. The co-ordinator is able to produce plans and notes to support the evidence. Recording by photographs and video provide further information. This information suggests that pupils' achievements in geography are good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to visit towns and museums. They can take part in whole school days on geography. They know about many countries and customs. The most able help to make model volcanoes. In the course of the activities pupils take part in events about Australia, make masks, and understand that pupils in other lands dress differently. Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand that people in foreign countries live in climates that are hot or very cold. They are able to study life in Kenya. These pupils know that they will need passports to travel, and they practice making them. The pupils with more profound difficulties, at both key stages, take part in a sensory curriculum, including the activities that are offered on the geography days. They are able to join in the activities about tropical islands by using switches to illustrate life in these places.

120. Teaching is judged on the quality of planning, the examination of work, by watching videos and looking at photographs. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The improvement in teaching means that pupils' learning has improved. Teachers plan well. They develop work that is interesting and this encourages pupils to pay attention and learn. Teachers use symbols to assist communication and understanding. Activities enable pupils to appreciate the varied aspects of geography. Colourful and exciting resources bring topics to life for pupils. The use of multi-sensory resources is also imaginative, and lessons are well planned. Pupils try their best to succeed. They listen carefully, and show interest and enthusiasm.

121. Provision for geography has improved since the last inspection. There is now a suitable policy and schemes of work are developing well. The content and activities planned for each key stage are appropriate. Assessment is satisfactory; teachers are beginning to identify what pupils know, understand and do.

HISTORY

122. The achievements of pupils in history are good. It was possible to see only one lesson in history during the course of the inspection. Work was analysed, and displays and photographs provided sufficient evidence to make a judgement. Discussions with staff, and scrutiny of planning documents provide further evidence on standards in history. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a sense of times past when they visit Hampton Court. They draw to record what they have found out, and understand some of the more interesting aspects of life in Tudor times. Pupils in Key Stage 2 can identify items of Tudor clothing. They draw pictures of famous people. The pupils in this key stage visit a mock-up of a Victorian classroom, and are able to tell stories about the lives of children. In the course of the history days, all pupils experience many aspects of Victorian life. They dress up in school, watch Punch and Judy shows, and are involved in the making of shadow puppets. Pupils invite friends to school to see the activities. Everyone is enthusiastic and enjoys the singing. The least able pupils are able to feel the artefacts and take part through the sensory lessons.

123. Teaching is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning is comprehensive and thorough. This ensures that every aspect of the subject is covered. Teaching strategies are illustrated in the documents. As a result teachers are able to meet the needs of every pupil. Resources are well used to illustrate lessons. In the one lesson observed, the pupils were entranced by the visit of a *Queen* from Hampton Court. They were inspired to paint her picture and ask many questions. The answers to these questions served to cement the knowledge about Henry VIII and his wives. The assessment of pupils' learning is developing. Teachers ask pupils probing questions to determine the quality of learning. They use this information well to inform the next stages. Lessons and activities are imaginative and interesting and this means that pupils enjoy them. Teachers understand the needs of the pupils and match activities to these needs. Targets are set which pupils can, and do, achieve. The sensory curriculum is used well to enable pupils with more profound difficulties to take part. Pupils behave well. They enjoy the subject and the interesting ways in which it is presented. They are always ready to learn. Teachers make good use of resources outside school to bring the subject to life, which helps pupils to understand times gone by.

124. Resources are sufficient and very well used. The policies are good. Planning documents and training plans are also good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision of the development of the subject. Her confidence has been an inspiration to staff and pupils. The subject has improved and many further developments are planned.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Overall, standards of achievement and pupils' progress are good. This shows a very good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' progress was found to be poor and a key issue was to ensure that information technology is planned and taught to all pupils. The very good skills targets have helped teachers to be clear about what pupils know, understand and can do and to decide what to teach them next. Teachers have gained confidence, and been given good guidance by the subject leader. The good link with a City Technology College (CTC) has enabled the school to obtain support for their developments and there is now one computer in every class and a good range of suitable software.

126. Two whole class lessons and many small group or individual lessons were observed during the inspection. Analysis of pupils' work and recording of their progress towards targets shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils can open and close a program and use the *mouse* independently. In one lesson, pupils sat around the computer and watched as the teacher used computer graphics to annotate a story. Their attention was directed to different parts of the screen by the teacher's use of the cursor. Lower attaining pupils show an awareness of cause and effect when they press switches to activate toys.

127. By the time they are 11, pupils move the cursor with the mouse and click on the correct graphic or icon when they are using literacy and numeracy software. Higher attaining pupils take out discs and put new ones in with great care and open programs from the CD-ROM. Lower attaining pupils show an awareness of switches and respond to the action on the screen after a switch is pressed. They are encouraged to learn how to activate the switch themselves. There are good opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to use computer software to support their learning in other areas. For example, they use reading and maths programs within many of these subject lessons. In art they use software to draw faces.

128. Pupils' attitudes towards using the computer, and their behaviour and relationships when they are working, are very good. They wait patiently for their turn and are very sensible in their use of the *mouse*, CD-ROMs and software. They concentrate very well and work independently when they are able. They respond by laughing and smiling when they make actions happen on the screen. For example, one pupil built a robot (in a maths lesson), by selecting the correct shape when instructed by the voice on the program and laughed with pleasure when he had built it correctly.

129. Teaching and learning are at least good and sometimes very good in class lessons and small groups. Appropriate activities and computer programs are chosen and pupils' abilities are well matched to the chosen software so that they are always motivated by the work without being frustrated by the level of difficulty. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed. Support assistants work with small groups very well. Teachers assist pupils to learn by themselves without over-directing them, and this means that pupils can learn by making mistakes and correcting them. Where pupils have the ability they are left to work independently. Work is very well matched to the wide range of abilities of the pupils. Not all teachers are confident to use ICT in other subjects. However there is evidence that they are developing this well. For example, the newly acquired digital camera and scanner are being used effectively in most classes.

130. The subject leader has developed a very good skills targets list, which covers pupils' general technological awareness, five stages of skills in using touch screens or switches, word processing skills, use of graphics programs, the use of CD-ROMs, information handling and e-mail. This has been based on examples taken from the Internet. A very good initiative is the facility for all teachers to call up photographs and current skills targets on all the pupils in their class on their class computers. The easy accessibility of this very good assessment system has been most useful in giving teachers and support assistants the knowledge and confidence to use ICT with the pupils. However, the recording against these skills targets is not completed as regularly as every half term, which is the aim of the subject leader. The reporting to parents is also unsatisfactory as detailed information from the skills targets is not provided to show their children's progress. These targets currently serve also as the

curriculum, which is good. With some additional detail, such as a link with resources and examples of activities, this will form a useful guide to teachers on what they should teach pupils next. Some very good explanations of how programs can be used, and what skills they cover, have been written by the subject leader for all the software available in the school. This has helped teachers and support assistants to gain competence and confidence.

131. These developments show that the leadership and management are good. There has been clear direction for the school to move from an unsatisfactory situation with regard to ICT to the progress being good for pupils of all abilities across the school. This has been assisted by whole school training, which was organised around the ability of the staff so they could learn at their own level. Ongoing training is provided on new equipment and software as it comes into the school. Support assistants take on additional responsibilities for new developments, such as the scanner, as they become proficient in its use. Teachers use computer software to generate writing with symbols, and a handwriting program to individualise worksheets. They use the Internet, for downloading songs and pictures for their lessons, for example. There are plans to link up with pupils in other schools in this country, and perhaps also abroad. There is also a good link with a City Technology College (CTC), which has assisted the school to acquire good computer resources. There is now one computer with appropriate software in every class and the staff area and one for use by lower attaining pupils with individual support. The resources are therefore good. The school is aware of the need to develop software resources for lower attaining pupils. There are good new initiatives such as the setting up of a school web site.

132. The staffing is good. Teachers have gained in knowledge, skills and confidence and are very well supported by the subject leader and the more confident members of staff including support assistants. Older pupils from the CTC provide technical support when there are difficulties. The subject leader is well qualified and is pursuing further qualifications in her own time.

MUSIC

133. Standards and provision have been maintained since the school was last inspected, despite a change of co-ordinator. The previous co-ordinator was qualified to teach music, whereas the present one is not a specialist. However, she has sought the support of the music adviser, and acted well on the advice that was given.

134. Standards of achievement are good. Younger pupils know the words and signs to some simple songs. They take turns in music activities, know the names of some instruments and can identify differences in sounds, such as *loud* and *quiet*, *fast* and *slow*. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils beat a drum with alternate hands, to a steady pulse, and stop at the end of the song. Older pupils make a variety of sounds in warm-up activities at the start of lessons; they choose a friend, and sing and sign hello to the one they have chosen. By the time they are eleven, higher attaining pupils can identify several untuned percussion instruments played out of sight, such as a clapper, shaker, tambourine and bells. Lower attaining pupils can only identify the tambourine. The highest attaining pupils can identify the sequence in which two or even three instruments are played. Pupils with profound and

multiple learning difficulties enjoy music sessions. They experience the vibrations from a large drum, and some vocalise to indicate that they would like *more* when an activity comes to an end. Others are able to interrupt music, using a switch, and a few make a choice between two instruments, by pointing with their eyes or a hand.

135. Teaching is good overall. Five lessons were seen. In one of these, teaching was very good and in the other four it was good. One very good lesson of intensive music was seen too. In this session, music was used very effectively to promote communication skills amongst pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Music lessons are very well planned, to give pupils opportunities to develop communication, socialisation, and musical skills. There are individual targets for each pupil, and the activities are well matched to the abilities of pupils. All have opportunities to experience success. Activities are short, and varied. This ensures that pupils' interest and motivation are maintained. Suitable warm-up activities are provided, and recording completed at the end of each lesson. This information is used well to compile reports on pupils' progress, which are satisfactory. Good feedback is given to pupils during lessons, and this helps them to become aware of their learning. Numeracy is reinforced well when pupils count, and practise number recognition. Behaviour is managed well.

136. Leadership is good. The curriculum is well planned and resourced. The school has been without a music technician for a while, and this has meant that some electronic equipment could not be used. However, interviews for a replacement technician are imminent. The intensive music therapist makes an important contribution to standards of higher attaining pupils, some of whom are learning an instrument.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Pupils' achievements in physical education (PE) are satisfactory at both key stages. Where clear whole school targets have been set and are in operation for gymnastics, pupils make good progress. For example, pupils learn to complete a forward roll by, initially, rolling over a large *physio ball*. They then move onto a smaller ball, learning the need to keep their head tucked in, and finally the floor mat. Pupils make good progress in swimming. Younger pupils benefit from using the school's hydrotherapy pool and the older pupils use the public swimming pool, where qualified swimming instructors teach them. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons.

138. By seven, the most able pupils are able to use low apparatus for climbing and balancing independently. Less able pupils co-operate with support staff to attempt such activities or to work on activities, set by the physiotherapist, to maintain and increase their range of physical movements. All pupils are able to propel a ball across the floor to a named person, with a satisfactory degree of accuracy although the less able need adult support. Pupils are developing confidence in the water and some are beginning to attempt to propel themselves whilst supported by swimming aids.

139. By the age of 11, pupils are able to use the large apparatus, at a neighbouring school, for balancing, climbing and jumping activities. Higher attaining pupils can jump from a vaulting horse and land correctly, maintaining balance on their feet. They are aware of the effect exercise has on their bodies and can complete warming up and cooling down exercises effectively. They can complete simple floor exercises such as log roll and forward rolls.

They can run safely round the hall, with changes of direction, and stop when commanded. Pupils who attend swimming lessons follow instructions correctly, and some are able to swim a short distance without aids. Lower attaining pupils work on similar targets supported by learning support assistants or on physiotherapy exercises to promote mobility and control of their limbs. They have gained confidence in the water and take part in swimming sessions happily. Some children attend horse riding sessions at a nearby stables. Higher attaining pupils have developed a good sitting stance and can control the horse with stirrups and reins. A few are able to trot, and are beginning to rise in the saddle as the horse trots. Horse riding cannot be offered to pupils with complex difficulties, as there are no suitable facilities, such as a hoist, at the centre.

140. Pupils work hard at their lessons in PE. They are very enthusiastic and usually well behaved. A few pupils become quite excited, but this is quickly controlled by the staff. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the effect that their physical movements can have on others and are required to apologise if they accidentally push or knock another child. Pupils with autism are able to be independent within carefully structured sessions in the school hall and pool. Staff make their expectations clear, and pupils respond well by meeting these.

141. Six physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, and teaching was good in all six. Whole school targets for gymnastics have been developed, and they are making a good contribution to teaching and learning. Targets for games, swimming and dance have yet to be established. A good range of teacher support materials is available which enable staff to plan effective lessons. Older pupils complete evaluation sheets on their PE sessions, which enhances their understanding of their own achievements. Good staff teamwork promotes effective learning. The high levels of support staff promote the inclusion of pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and those with autism. Staff use signing well, which helps pupils to understand what they are to do; they also use praise effectively, to encourage pupils and celebrate success.

142. The management and co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enriched by the adoption of swimming for all pupils and by the activities outside the school such as horse riding and the integrated gymnastics lesson at a neighbouring school. Four members of staff are undertaking training in the teaching of dance on a Saturday course. The co-ordinator has qualifications in various aspects of the subject, including swimming, but no other member of staff holds an Amateur Swimming Association Award and none have a disabled swimming award.

143. The equipment is well maintained and there is a good variety of equipment, well matched in size and range for the pupils' needs. The physical resources are satisfactory. There is space for outdoor games, both hard-surfaced and grass, and there are plans to improve the hard surface area. The pool is a pleasant environment and is clean and well maintained. The hall is a satisfactory size, but is used for many other purposes. The decorative banners, hung from the ceiling, limit the use of balls during PE, and the need to wash the floor after lunch was seen on one occasion to delay a PE lesson by 15 minutes, as the floor needed to dry before the lesson could start.

144. The school grounds provide hard surface areas and grass areas for games and there are plans to develop this further. The *Balance Trail* is a very good facility, which contributes to the pupils' development of physical control, agility and confidence. The after school club for sports and dance makes a substantial contribution to the pupils physical, social and moral

development and enables some parents to become involved in PE. Pupils achievements are significantly enhanced by the way in which staff give freely of their own time to support activities by raising money for equipment, participating in the after school club and attending training sessions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Standards in religious education are good in each key stage. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing an awareness of stories from the Bible. They learn about the nativity and know that Christmas is a special time. The most able pupils know the names of the main characters in the nativity story and they ask questions to find out more. Lower attaining pupils develop watching and looking skills. They experience artefacts to be used in assembly. These pupils receive a sensory experience of the subject. They have experienced a range of activities related to world religions, which include Islam and Christianity. All pupils have experienced many religious festivals, the most recent being Diwali. Pupils in Key Stage 2 widen their religious experiences. The least able continue to follow a sensory curriculum. These experiences are based on a range of cultural stories. Most of these pupils consolidate their learning by listening to adults who tell the stories to the pupils. In one lesson they were told the story of the loaves and fishes and had the message illustrated with bread and fish. The most able pupils are developing the concepts of right and wrong. They know about symbols and identify the cross as Christian. These pupils remember the names of James and John and Peter. All pupils in this key stage took part in the celebration of festivals of other cultures.

146. Teaching is good overall. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Of the four lessons seen, two were good and two were satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, teachers encouraged the use of communication skills and socialisation as they asked questions and encouraged co-operation. In these lessons, planning clearly reflected the scheme of work for the age group. The use of multi-sensory resources is imaginative and lessons are well organised. In one lesson about the nativity, the teacher enriched learning by illustrating the story with model figures, which promoted pupils' understanding. A very positive feature of good teaching is the strong team approach. All staff are aware of the learning outcomes of the lessons and work together to enable success. This good teaching has a very positive impact on the quality of learning and ensures that pupils are always stimulated and involved. Some less successful teaching occurs when teachers are unclear about the management of pupils' behaviour. This means that work is interrupted when staff need to address the behaviour of the disruptive pupils. As a consequence, learning is reduced. Pupil's attitudes and behaviour in lessons is usually good. They are generally interested and respond well. The most able work together when sharing the tambourine to accompany songs. The lower attaining pupils respond well to sensory experiences, watching candles closely, for example.

147. Provision for religious education has been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed and the policy is in place. The curriculum is satisfactory. It could be further improved if a wider range of festivals was covered. There are many cross-curricular links and a curricular map. The subject is being developed satisfactorily and follows the locally Agreed Syllabus. Assessment of higher attaining pupils is under developed as it does not identify what they know understand and can do. Resources are good. Artefacts enable pupils to gain first hand experience and this helps them to learn. The sensory curriculum provides detailed assessment of pupils' responses to experiences provided.