

INSPECTION REPORT

**ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL CHILDREN'S
SCHOOL**

London

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100094

Headteacher: Manuela Beste

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 15 -17 January 2001

Inspection number: 230091

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Hospital
Age range of pupils:	5 –16 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Royal Free Hospital Pond Street 6 th Floor Riddell Ward London
Postcode:	NW3 2QG
Telephone number:	0207 472 6298
Fax number:	0207 830 2302
Appropriate authority:	Camden Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Professor Brent Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Alastair Younger (Ofsted No. 23587)	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, Music, Physical education, Religious education, Personal, Social and Health education.	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Ron Elam (Ofsted No. 9092)	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lesley Taylor (Ofsted No. 22088)	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special Educational Needs English as an additional language English Information technology Art, Design technology Geography, History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to school?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school occupies a suite of rooms within the main building of the hospital of the same name in the London Borough of Camden. It serves a large area of London but also admits pupils from further afield. A small number of pupils come from families who are temporary residents in the country and who are learning English as a foreign language. There are many different groups of pupils including long, medium and short stay patients in the hospital, pupils referred by the child adolescent psychiatric department of the hospital and pupils with life threatening illnesses who are regularly readmitted to the hospital. In an average year about 500 pupils pass through the school and at any one time about 16 pupils per day and 30 per week will be on the school roll. Most pupils are aged 5 – 16. The number of ethnic minority pupils is about average for a large city but is bolstered by pupils arriving from abroad for treatment in the hospital. A small number have additional special educational needs including severe learning difficulties and emotional problems. There is a huge range of attainment on entry with many pupils not fulfilling their full potential because of previously interrupted patterns of education or long periods of non-attendance.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, and it keeps getting better. It is very effective in providing a very rapid response to minimise any further interruption to pupils' education. All pupils achieve well in relation to the individual personal and academic targets they are set. They do so because they are very well taught by a staff who show exceptional dedication to every aspect of their work. Underpinning the success of the school is the excellent leadership and management by the headteacher. Such a good school is providing very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher is providing exceptional leadership and is backed by a very strong staff who execute their many responsibilities with great professionalism.
- Teachers balance the pursuit of high academic standards with a very high degree of care for the personal development of pupils and this results in very good teaching.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent, they show a strong desire to learn and do not dwell on their problems.
- A very good range of subjects is taught and pupils have many opportunities to take part in a large range of activities and visits which broaden and enliven their studies.
- Pupils are very well cared for, this is a very safe school. Parents like it and are closely involved in their children's education.

What could be improved

- The ways in which the school can contribute to the careers education of pupils remains underdeveloped.

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

Three years ago the school was put in special measures because it was judged to be in danger of failing to give its pupils a satisfactory standard of education. It very quickly addressed its weaknesses and a year and a half ago it was removed from special measures, having been found to be providing an acceptable standard of education. This rapid improvement has continued to the point where it is now a very good school and this represents exceptional improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16
speaking and listening	A	A
reading	B	B
writing	B	B
mathematics	B	B
personal, social and health education	A	A
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

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

Pupils make good progress overall in English and very good progress as regards developing their speaking and listening because they are given so many opportunities to practise these skills. Progress in mathematics is good, the result of the rapidly developing skills of teachers and meticulous planning. Pupils make good progress overall in science and very good progress in the primary group. There is good progress in all other subjects taught, except art, where progress is very good because of strong teaching and an exciting curriculum. Pupils make very good progress in developing the basic skills of numeracy and literacy because every lesson is planned to include opportunities to improve these skills. Progress is very similar for all pupils irrespective of age, ethnicity or ability because teachers take great care to adapt work to suit each individual and to include them in all aspects of each lesson. Individual targets for personal development are clearly stated and regularly reviewed. Pupils are consistently achieving very well in meeting their targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Weakened only by a few pupils who play on their illness to avoid work. Nearly all pupils like coming to the school and in lessons they work very hard, even when medical conditions are causing them anxiety or discomfort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. There is virtually no misbehaviour and only a little mischief. Pupils treat each other and all adults with consideration and respect, they are a delight to talk to and can be trusted. There is not a trace of bullying, sexism or racism and property is well respected.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils care for one another and show a great ability to cope with the complex organisation of the school and the different settings in which they are taught. Many older pupils respond well to opportunities to study on their own and to complete homework and work set by their other schools. This enables them, for example, to continue their GCSE studies with minimal interruption
Attendance	Overall attendance is not judged in most hospital schools. Most pupils have little opportunity to absent themselves from the hospital school. Those who do often have a past history of non, or poor, attendance at their other schools and nearly all of these make very good progress in establishing more regular patterns of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.

There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Over 85% is good or better and over 45% very good or better with 15% which is excellent. There is a great consistency of strong teaching, extending to all subjects and all age groups. What makes the teaching so good is the attention given to caring for the personal development of pupils as well as the successful pursuit of academic learning. Teachers perform well in a very broad range of circumstances including class teaching and individual teaching on the wards. They do so because they are well trained and have a particularly good understanding of the problems faced by pupils and the best ways of addressing these problems to ensure that each pupil's need is met. A minority of lessons are weakened when teachers do not sufficiently pursue the objectives they have set and allow themselves to become side-tracked. Very good attention is paid to identifying opportunities to include the teaching of basic skills in every lesson. This high quality teaching ensures that pupils' attention is maintained and they are encouraged to work hard, resulting in a good degree of learning in nearly all lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Schools such as this are not obliged to deliver the whole of the National Curriculum but this one goes a long way to ensure that its curriculum closely resembles it, giving pupils access to a broad range of subjects and putting an appropriate emphasis on the very important areas of English, mathematics and science. Information technology is incorporated well into most lessons as are opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills of numeracy and literacy. A very good range of activities is planned to extend the curriculum and to make it interesting and relevant. These include creative arts programmes during school holidays. There is a weakness as regards the provision of careers guidance and preparation for life after school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good use is made of interpreters and all teachers show a good awareness of the specific difficulties that pupils may experience in understanding a language that is new to them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particularly strong as regards the provision of opportunities to develop their social skills and their understanding of moral values. Teachers respect pupils and value their work and personal contributions to lessons, thus enhancing their feelings of self-worth. Pupils are encouraged to put their problems into perspective and consider the difficulties faced by others. There is good provision for religious education. There are many opportunities for pupils to visit galleries and museums and art is a very strong area of the curriculum. Well organised lunchtime activities provide additional opportunities for pupils to socialise.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is a happy and safe place where children are well looked after. Academic and personal progress is very closely monitored and recorded and there are many excellent policies and procedures to ensure that nearly all aspects of the working of the school are protected

	and promoted.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. This is what underpins the success of the school and its rapid improvement. The headteacher demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how to address them. She has pulled together a staff team who are diligently fulfilling their many and varied responsibilities to a very high standard and with great dedication.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body goes well beyond meeting its statutory duties and is extremely supportive. Governors understand their school well and bring a very good range of expertise and influence to help the headteacher manage it. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and through their own regular visits are well placed to help move the school forward and further raise standards and quality of provision. Their contribution could be strengthened as regards their monitoring of standards and provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Teaching is well monitored by the headteacher and also by teachers' critical, self-appraisal. The exceptional school development plan is a very strong document against which progress can be evaluated in detail. There are very good procedures for evaluating the performance of staff in all of their areas of responsibility.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Provision such as this needs high staffing levels to give it the flexibility to respond to regular and rapidly changing need. These staff are deployed particularly effectively to ensure that this valuable and expensive resource is not wasted. Clearly targeted expenditure is very well monitored ensuring that all funds, including grants, are appropriately accounted for. The school successfully seeks best value.

There is a very strong staff team. Extensive and appropriate training has ensured that staff have the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their duties to a high standard. The accommodation is adequate for the average number of pupils on roll but several rooms have to serve a number of purposes. There is no specialist accommodation for science and design technology, nor an office for the headteacher, from which she can conduct sensitive and confidential business. Staff use their skills well to minimise the impact of these weaknesses. The school is very well resourced, helping it to deliver the very good curriculum to a high standard.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy • The quality of leadership, particularly by the headteacher • The standard of behaviour that is maintained • The quality of teaching • The amount and quality of information and help they receive from staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority are dissatisfied with the work their children are expected to do at home

Parents are hugely supportive of the school. The inspection team feels that their trust in this very effective school is well placed. It also feels that homework is generally well used to support pupils'

learning but that it would do no harm to negotiate closely with those parents who express dissatisfaction, either to explain the policy or to set more work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. The timing of the inspection, early in January, coincided with a period where there are traditionally fewer pupils than normal on roll. This resulted, for instance, in some primary classes having only one pupil. There were also less pupils on the wards than is often the case. Also, many short stay pupils take much of their work with them when they leave. This makes it more difficult to analyse longer-term progress. Wherever possible, judgements make use of teachers' records, lesson observations, and discussion with the pupils and teachers and any work in books and files and on display.

The school's results and achievements

2. Achievement and individual progress is good overall for all pupils irrespective of ethnicity, gender or ability. It is inappropriate to refer to differences in progress between pupils of different age because numbers are small and it is the impact of pupils' illnesses that affects progress rather than the provision. Nevertheless, wherever possible, examples of what pupils of different ages are achieving are given. There is no difference in the academic achievements of pupils, irrespective of whether they are taught in the classroom, on the wards or are being taught individually. Short stay pupils make good progress because the rapid response of the school ensures that their education is only minimally interrupted. Longer stay pupils make good progress because they are following carefully planned programmes with good reference to the National Curriculum. Frequently readmitted pupils make good progress because the school is working closely with their mainstream schools. This uniformly high standard is achieved because teaching is very good and great care is taken to adapt work to suit each individual pupil.
3. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. In speaking and listening they are very good. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and are given good opportunities to practise their skills. Primary pupils listen attentively while teachers read stories or explain tasks. Secondary age pupils quickly learn the appropriate vocabulary for new concepts they are being taught. Secondary pupils use language well to describe feelings and emotions, and show both confidence and insight in discussing sensitive issues. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading. Younger pupils and those with learning difficulties develop early reading skills well. Many secondary age pupils are confident readers. Progress in writing is good. Younger pupils develop pre-writing skills such as following patterns and letter shapes. Secondary pupils write with varying degrees of fluency, but all draft and refine their written work to a good standard. Pupils make very good progress in developing basic literacy skills because every lesson, irrespective of the main subject being taught, includes opportunities for pupils to develop or practise skills.
4. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Younger pupils improve their counting and number skills and sort different objects into categories. They are developing their mathematical vocabulary to include words such as Venn diagrams, and they are regularly practising mental arithmetic skills. Older pupils are making particularly good progress in learning how to process data and present it in easily accessible form such as in tables and graphs. Many also show a good understanding of shape and angles and a good ability to solve problems. Pupils make very good progress in developing basic number skills because teachers are including opportunities to improve these skills in many lessons other than mathematics.
5. Pupils make good progress overall in science. Younger pupils are making the best progress because they are learning about a greater range of scientific topics and the nature of primary science makes less demands on accommodation, resources and specific subject knowledge. Primary aged pupils learn about their own bodies and can name major organs and external

features, they understand that electricity flows through a circuit and that some materials conduct electricity better than others. They have also identified pushing and pulling as forces and are making simple predictions as to the outcomes of experiments. Secondary aged pupils are often making good progress in individual lessons. However, the range of topics they are studying is narrower than that for primary pupils and the lack of a specialist laboratory, and restrictions over the use of equipment such as Bunsen burners, is slowing progress because pupils are not sufficiently involved in developing their experimental techniques.

6. Pupils make very good progress in art and achieve high standards of work. They draw from observation and from imagination. At all stages they learn about the work of other artists and craftsmen and discuss critically their likes and dislikes in art. In music, pupils learn to develop their appreciation of a good range of musical styles from different periods and cultures. They learn songs and perform them as class groups and also develop a good understanding of the elements involved in composing their own music.
7. Pupils are making good progress in using information and communication technology. Most pupils are confident in using basic computer skills and older pupils use keyboards well and with confidence when word-processing. Pupils demonstrate good skills when using computers, for instance, when they process statistics they have gathered in a mathematics project.
8. In history, pupils make good progress as they deduce considerable information from original sources such as those relating to the founding of the Royal Free Hospital. In geography, pupils learn about common processes such as erosion and the development of river valleys. They recall information already learned, and relate this well to their learning about rocks in science.
9. There is satisfactory overall progress in modern foreign languages, but slower than in other subjects because opportunities for learning are fewer. Nevertheless, in individual and isolated lessons, pupils who are studying a modern foreign language, or Latin, are supported well by teachers with a good command of the language and this enables them to maintain their progress.
10. Physical education is not taught but many pupils receive physiotherapy and others hydrotherapy and this is helping to ensure that there is no regression in their physical ability.
11. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well in religious education. Through a good range of activities pupils show a good understanding of the special places, ceremonies, texts and artefacts of major world religions. Older pupils combine this with a developing understanding of morality and mortality.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, an improvement since the previous inspection. They like coming to school, and show enjoyment in lessons and social times. A very small minority do not attend regularly or play on their condition to avoid work. Pupils work hard, even when they are distressed or medical conditions are causing them discomfort. They concentrate well and persevere, listening carefully to teachers and speaking freely to express their views. Pupils receiving education on the hospital ward often become engrossed in a lesson, even when they are worried or uncomfortable.
13. Behaviour is excellent, an improvement since the previous inspection. When pupils are a little mischievous it is often a sign of relaxation and several like to share jokes with staff. Pupils treat each other and all adults with respect, speaking politely to visitors and helping willingly with tasks. There is no bullying, sexism or racism in evidence and property is well respected.
14. Personal development and relationships are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are exceptionally accepting of others new to the group. Groups of pupils with very little in common work very well together. Pupils offer encouragement to each other, for example in circle time when they comment on each other's successes. Some older pupils

respond particularly well when given opportunities to study on their own, for example to continue work set by their schools for their GCSE studies. Most complete homework conscientiously.

15. It is inappropriate to make an overall judgement on attendance in a hospital school. Pupils taught on the wards are in the care of the medical staff and have little opportunity to absent themselves from lessons. Of those in the schoolroom, several have a history of spasmodic attendance or non-attendance at their mainstream school. Such pupils join the hospital school's integration programme. Many establish more regular patterns of attendance, and some are able to re-integrate to mainstream school with support.
16. The school works very closely and effectively with medical staff to maximise opportunities for pupils to receive an education. Every morning the headteacher discusses with the ward sisters which children can come to the classroom and which ones need the teacher to work at the bedside. Children newly arriving into hospital normally start lessons on that same day where appropriate. Lessons start on time and pupils are punctual when medical treatments permit. The closeness of the school to the children's wards results in little time being lost in movement of pupils or staff between the two. The school also teaches some day pupils who have difficulties attending mainstream schools. Their attendance and punctuality fluctuates but shows very good improvement during their time in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The previous inspection reported that teaching was a major strength of the school. It still is. There is a great consistency of strong teaching, extending to all subjects and all age groups. The most important factor contributing to this is the fine balance teachers achieve between caring for the personal development of pupils as well as their academic learning. It is this value added factor that results in teaching being graded higher than pupils' achievement and progress in academic subjects. Teachers are assessing the specific needs of individuals quickly, regularly and very well and using this information to adapt the programmes they have carefully planned and to meet the academic and personal needs of each pupil. There has been a good focus on ensuring that all teachers have a good understanding of national strategies for improving numeracy and literacy skills and the results of this are evident in the very high standard of teaching in these areas. Nearly all teachers teach pupils of all ages and they bring respective skills to their lessons.
18. All teachers perform well in a very broad range of circumstances including class teaching and individual teaching on the wards. There has been a considerable amount of staff training in recent years. This is evident in the very good subject knowledge of teachers and also in their understanding of the problems being faced by individuals and the best ways of addressing these problems to ensure that each pupil's needs are met. Teachers are regularly setting homework which takes into account different pupils' ability and circumstance. They are marking it well and using what pupils have learned to maximise learning during class time. For instance, secondary pupils had conducted a survey to gather data as their homework, allowing the following lesson to focus on how to process this information using computers.
19. Teachers are adept at devising methods of taking lessons to the bedside. They are making good use of computers to help pupils access information and have well equipped trolleys to take resources for practical activities on to the wards. Teachers are particularly adept at managing the intensity of one-to-one teaching well, avoiding the tendency to become overbearing whilst still teaching rather than supervising. A measure of teaching skills is the way in which two teachers can share a single classroom, each teaching a different subject to a different group, without interfering with one another's lesson or distracting pupils, a good example being the use of headphones when watching an extract of a play on television.
20. Pupils' behaviour is well managed. Teachers are quick to recognise when a child is losing concentration and when this happens a timely and fair reminder is given to the pupil, with the result that lessons are not interrupted and excellent behaviour standards are maintained. A good

example of awareness occurred when a primary aged pupil started to dominate classmates. The teacher immediately recognised that the child had previously been receiving a lot of individual tuition and was able to explain to her the need to let other pupils contribute. The result of this was that all pupils then went on to share a very good mathematics lesson in which they learned about sorting objects.

21. Teaching is strongest in lessons where teachers demonstrate the greatest enthusiasm and interest in their subject. In a particularly strong primary English lesson, for instance, the teacher had prepared a wide range of interesting activities through which ran a common link, the tale of Red Riding Hood. The lesson was an hour long and there was only one pupil but it never appeared drawn out. The pupil was carried along by the fast pace of the lesson and the fact that she was involved all the time served as motivation and promoted a high standard of learning. Other excellent teaching was observed in a history lesson and in a secondary mathematics lesson.
22. What weakens a small minority of lessons is when teachers do not sufficiently pursue the objectives they have set and observe time limitations. A secondary science lesson, for instance, was weakened because the teacher talked too much and time ran out before the pupils could conduct their practical activity. Very good attention is paid to identifying opportunities to include the teaching of basic skills in every lesson. This high quality teaching ensures that pupils' attention is maintained and they are encouraged to work hard, resulting in a good degree of learning in nearly all lessons.

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

23. Pupils are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities, clearly reflecting the aims of the school. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection. There is no legal requirement to deliver the whole of the National Curriculum but the school's curriculum contains all of its subjects and religious education. There is a strong emphasis on the important areas of English, mathematics and science.
24. Information technology is incorporated very well into many lessons across the curriculum, as are opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills of numeracy and literacy. The school has made good progress in the implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, which have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils and different teaching situations. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on these within the overall curriculum, in order to give pupils access to other curriculum areas.
25. There is a well-developed programme of personal, social and health education, which gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, the development of a 'circle time' allows pupils to consider and discuss issues which may be troubling them, and to enhance their self-esteem. At present sex education is not taught. This detracts from the personal, social and health education programme but is presently being reviewed by the governing body.
26. Teaching groups often have to contain a wide range of age and ability, but this is well managed. Programmes of self-supported study allow pupils to focus on work directly related to specific examination syllabuses, such as those for English literature. Very good policies have been written for all subjects and they are accompanied by very good schemes of work. Teachers base their termly planning closely on the programmes of study in the National Curriculum.
27. The few pupils who are able to sustain full examination courses in some subjects are entered by their own schools. Programmes for older pupils are based on the requirements for GCSE courses, and this rightly keeps the possibility of examination entry alive for those longer stay pupils, who are well enough, to pursue their exam studies.

28. The school provides many very good opportunities to extend the curriculum, and to make it interesting and relevant. A wide range of visits has given support to the curriculum, particularly in art. For example, pupils have visited the National Gallery and the British Museum. Involvement in local initiatives has brought artists in residence into the school, also enriching the curriculum and widening pupils' experience.
29. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language, or as a foreign language, is very good. Teachers are aware of the difficulties which pupils may experience in a language that is new to them. Very good use is made of interpreters and also of appropriate learning materials, often made for a particular pupil using photographs and information technology. Such attention to detail makes a real difference to pupils' feelings of being welcome in a foreign country. All pupils, whether taught on the hospital wards or in the schoolroom, benefit from the education the school provides.
30. There is a weakness regarding the work-related element of the curriculum, which includes little careers guidance and preparation for life after school. The school is not sufficiently using its wealth of expertise and access to specialists to educate pupils into understanding the limitations or impact that their illnesses may make in their future lives.
31. Teachers are effective in adapting learning programmes, and resources, to the range of special educational and medical needs found in the schoolroom and on the wards. For example, an English lesson with a pupil with Down's Syndrome on the hospital ward made good use of a tactile book to work towards literacy targets.
32. Planning individual programmes is a particular strength. All long stay pupils have an education plan which includes learning and pastoral targets. For example, the education plan for a year eight boy referred as a school refuser included targets relating to literacy, numeracy, and phased integration to his mainstream school. Education plans are regularly reviewed and pupils and their carers involved in future planning. Pupils' long-term goals are clear and short term targets are realistic in relation to their abilities and state of health. Communication between staff, regarding pupils' targets, is very effective. As well as daily briefings and staff meetings, there are bulletins and extensive written records documenting integration programmes. The integration programme is extremely thorough and well documented. The integration teacher maintains a strong relationship with pupils and their families.
33. The school closely observes the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, and contributes well to any formal assessment which may be requested. The special needs co-ordinator keeps a detailed curriculum support register, which lists all pupils who are receiving additional pastoral support. Their progress against targets is very carefully monitored. The school currently has five pupils with a completed statement of special educational need. Annual reviews and transition planning is the responsibility of the pupil's home school but the hospital school contributes well when required.
34. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Teachers are constantly identifying and creating opportunities to encourage pupils to extend their social skills. For example, there are opportunities to mix socially at lunchtime and pupils are encouraged to speak to the wide range of visitors to the school. A code of conduct based on mutual respect is widely promoted and pupils are encouraged to consider issues of right and wrong. Teachers respect pupils and all adults present very good role models. Pupils' work, and their contributions to lessons, are valued, so enhancing feelings of self-worth. Teachers make many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own situations, to put their problems in perspective and consider the difficulties faced by others. For example, part of the personal, social and health education programme offers well-balanced information about mental ill-health and sources of help and support. There is good provision for religious education, which is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Very good opportunities are created for pupils to explore the work of European artists and craftsmen, and frequent reference is made to other cultural traditions, such as Islamic and Aboriginal art. The 'Making the Invisible Visible' project brought pupils into contact with practising artists. There is also a very strong focus on the multicultural nature of music.

35. The school has very positive links with the pupils' mainstream schools. It ensures that its curriculum matches theirs as closely as possible so that pupils returning to school, or those who have to be regularly readmitted, find less difficulty in coping with the split nature of their education. There is a very detailed integration policy detailing the intensive support available to pupils ready to return to their own school. Support extends to parents, ensuring that integration is more likely to succeed. There are no links with colleges for pupils who are ready to move to further education. Excellent relationships with hospital staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, enhancing for instance, the development of information technology links and the provision of support, such as speech therapy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Staff show great awareness of pupils. Parents are very pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are always approachable.
37. The school has very good procedures for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. There is a designated officer for child protection and the school meticulously follows the procedures of both the hospital and the local child protection committee. All staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to if necessary. The school is currently making arrangements to ensure that any temporary staff working with the pupils receive full guidance. The provision for first aid is comprehensive. There is an appropriate health and safety policy in place and staff from either the hospital or the local authority check all equipment. Teachers take great care to ensure that pupils understand health and safety issues before participating in lessons such as science and design and technology. The school recently participated very successfully in a pilot project for healthy living.
38. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very strong and show improvement since the previous inspection. Information provided by other agencies and mainstream schools is quickly and effectively used to help set initial targets. This information is supplemented by continuous assessment throughout pupils' stay. Teachers acquire a good understanding of pupils' learning and pastoral needs and both are addressed in the setting of further targets for education plans. Recording of pupils' progress is thorough. A comprehensive daily curriculum log is kept, detailing individual pupil's progress and informing the planning of lessons. Assessments usually relate to National Curriculum targets, particularly where pupils' stay is likely to be long, but occasionally teachers use different pointers to achievement and this makes comparisons more difficult to monitor.
39. The close monitoring of pupils greatly assists transition between schools for pupils who are regularly readmitted. Teachers are skilled in observing any changes in pupils which are then communicated to medical colleagues to inform decisions about treatment. Reports to parents and to other agencies involved with pupils are informative but occasionally lack detail in stating exactly what pupils know, understand and can do.
40. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are excellent. The ethos of the school and the good relationships established by the staff with the pupils make a significant contribution to the positive attitudes of the pupils. Rules are on display together with reasons for behaving well. The school's approach to personal and social education and the use of circle time cover various aspects of behaviour and relationships with other people. These also include sessions against teasing and bullying. Lunchtimes provide excellent opportunities for pupils to interact with each other and adults and to learn and practise social skills. The location of the school next to the wards means that children confined to their beds can sometimes be wheeled in to the classroom to mix with others. When possible other children who spend most of their time in the wards join pupils who have their lessons in the classroom.

41. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are excellent and contribute well to the attainment and progress of all pupils. The headteacher and her staff have developed good relationships with the ward staff working closely with them to determine when, during the day, teaching can take place. Senior hospital managers value the education provided by the school. The very good relationships with the pupils ensure they are keen to take every opportunity to come to the classroom or to receive education at the bedside. Good records are kept of the attendance. Details are passed to the home schools, as appropriate, to enable them to update their own registers of pupils being educated elsewhere. For day pupils with attendance problems, the school sets appropriate targets and works closely with parents to improve their children's pattern of attendance. The school maintains very close contact by telephone with the parents of these pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors parents showed that they are very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching staff with any questions. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection.
43. An exceptionally informative brochure is given to parents when their children are admitted and staff meet the parents of new pupils to discuss with them what the school will be able to do. These contacts continue on a day-to-day basis as parents are often in the hospital to be with their children. For parents of pupils who are attending regularly as outpatients, the school sends home letters about activities and trips. A newsletter at the end of term provides general administrative information. There is also regular telephone contact. The amount of written information on pupil progress is related to the length of time the pupil is in the school. For short stay patients it is usually a copy of the school's record of lessons. For longer stay patients good formal reports are produced each term, but these are not always comprehensive in their reporting of exactly what pupils know and can do in every subject. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.
44. There is very good support for parents of children from abroad. As well as being prepared to spend time with the parents who are able to visit the hospital, the school communicates with parents remaining in their home country. Excellent use is made of technology by, for example, using a digital camera to send images via the internet of the child and his work back home to the father in India. For Arabic speaking pupils in particular, the school makes very good use of the hospital's interpreting facilities. These are essential to understand how much the pupils know already and to provide them with appropriate work.
45. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress. For new patients, parents provide information about the pupil and their particular needs. They help to settle their children into classes and, where necessary, support the teacher in lessons held at the bedside. Where there are links with a home school, the parents and friends bring in work from the mainstream school. Several parents help out on trips and occasionally volunteer to help in the education of pupils. An example of this is the parent who taught a group how to fish on the local ponds as part of a Healthy Living Week. A very good initiative is the questionnaire circulated to the parents of children who have left. This helps the school to plan improvements in the service it offers.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has very clear and forceful views as to how she wants the school to develop. What was described in the previous inspection as strong is now judged excellent. There are clear strategies to implement change and improvement at a rapid pace. A strong staff team is fulfilling

its many and varied responsibilities to a very high standard and with great dedication. This is helping to ensure that each of the stated aims of the school is being met to a very high standard. The exceptional school development plan is a very strong document against which progress is being evaluated in detail. It has a very good focus on the development of the curriculum.

47. The governing body goes well beyond meeting its statutory duties and is extremely supportive. Governors understand their school well and bring a very good range of expertise and influence to help the headteacher manage it. Several governors are also on the hospital staff and this creates a particularly strong link with the hospital. One such link facilitated the display of pupils' artwork in the hospital concourse. Governors are kept well informed by regular reports and communication from the headteacher and through their own regular visits. They are well placed to help move the school forward and further raise standards and quality of provision. Their contribution to the monitoring of standards and provision is an area that should be strengthened. The local education authority has also been hugely supportive, for instance through giving very strong subject advice to teachers, and also sound financial advice.
48. The headteacher closely monitors teaching; formally, through a cycle of observations but, equally importantly, through informal observation and feedback. A strong contribution is also made by teachers' own, critical, appraisal and regular and constructive discussion. There has been a strong focus on in-service training and teachers report back to the whole staff on whether the training has been useful, and how. There are very good procedures for evaluating the performance of staff in all of their areas of responsibility, for instance, the half-termly meetings with each subject co-ordinator to discuss and review action plans.
49. There is a very strong staff team. Extensive and appropriate training has ensured that staff have the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their duties to a high standard. The accommodation is adequate for the average number of pupils on roll but several rooms have to serve a number of purposes. Although cramped, the school is very well positioned at the heart of the hospital with easy access to each of the wards used by pupils. However, the main classroom is nearly always shared by two classes and there is no specialist accommodation for subjects such as science and design technology. The lack of a separate office for the headteacher results in confidential and sensitive issues having to be dealt with in the staff room, often out of school time. Staff use their skills well to minimise the impact of these weaknesses but in science, in particular, accommodation and hospital regulations restrict what can be taught and this restricts the progress of secondary aged pupils. The school is very well resourced, helping it to deliver the very good curriculum to a high standard.
50. Financial planning is very good and follows the school's educational aims and priorities. The governing body, guided by the headteacher, is fully involved in the decision making process. The school development plan sets clear targets for improvement and includes costs and timescales. The headteacher monitors expenditure regularly and reports to the governors through the finance committee. The school makes effective use of grants for specific purposes such as for information and communication technology and for pupils with special educational needs.
51. The administrative officer provides high quality support to senior management and governors and monitors expenditure carefully. She is assisted well by staff in the local education authority. The systems in place enable the headteacher and governors to monitor spending closely. Recommendations in the last audit report have been implemented. The principles of best value are applied in finding the cheapest supplier for goods and in taking full advantage of the services of the hospital and the local authority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to further improve the school the headteacher staff and governors should;

- Consider the ways they can bring their specific expertise to bear on helping pupils to make reasoned career choices, bearing in mind their medical conditions. Use this information to complement the careers' education being offered in mainstream schools. (paragraph 30)

53. In addition to the key issue identified, the school should consider the following issues for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensuring that the formal reports to parents include more comprehensive information about what pupils know and can do. (*paragraph 43*)
- Clarifying the sex education policy, paying particular attention as to how the hospital can contribute expertise and advice to the sex education being offered in schools (this is presently being addressed by the school).
- Involving governors more in the monitoring of standards in subjects.
- Using National Curriculum levels more consistently in the assessment of pupils' achievements.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15	30	40	15	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	about 500 per year pass through the school *
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Last year 33 pupils with English as a foreign, or additional language, used the school *

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data		School data	

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

Data for the 55 most regular attenders in academic year 1999-2000

Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	29
Any other minority ethnic group	18

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: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	varies
Average class size	varies

Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	233,903
Total expenditure	240,650
Expenditure per pupil	
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,800
Balance carried forward to next year	16,053

* These statistics refer to 55 regular and reoccurring pupils.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	40	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	22	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	13	13	0	26
The teaching is good.	83	13	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	13	9	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	9	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	14	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	82	9	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	14	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	22	9	0	8

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

54. It was not possible to observe teaching in every situation for every subject. It is not always appropriate to report on achievement, teaching and progress in relation to pupils' ages because there are so many other factors, such as the nature of a pupil's illness, that have greater influence on standards than their age. The previous inspection, being Section 3, deemed Section 10, did not report in detail on the subjects being taught.
55. The important subjects of English, mathematics and science are reported on as fully as possible. In most other subjects there is less evidence on which to base judgements. However, there is a very good standard of management of all subjects. They are all guided by a uniformly high standard of policy, schemes of work, assessment and development planning.

ENGLISH

56. Pupils' achievements in English are good. In the speaking and listening element they are very good. Many pupils enter the school with below average literacy skills because of interrupted schooling or particular special educational needs.
57. Pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to one another and are given good opportunities to practise their skills. For example, pupils are encouraged to recount what they have learned at the end of a lesson, and in less formal lessons, such as the fabric workshop, they may talk informally about themselves and about what they are doing. Primary pupils listen attentively while teachers read stories or explain tasks. They are able to join in with enthusiasm in stories they know. They answer questions about the stories and about the work they are involved in. They know they have been listened to and understood.
58. Primary pupils make use of a good range of vocabulary in talking about the books they read, and about the activities and games used on computer, which help to maintain interest and provide variety. Secondary age pupils quickly learn the appropriate vocabulary for new concepts they are being taught because teachers make a point of using the correct terminology. For example, in a lesson introducing the topic of data handling pupils quickly become used to the words continuous and discrete. They enjoy extending their vocabulary in this way. Secondary pupils use language well to describe feelings and emotions, and show both confidence and insight in discussing sensitive issues. For example, a group of pupils were able to hold a discussion about Macbeth's madness and its effect on others. This results not only from well structured learning opportunities, but also from pupils' confidence in their teachers and their own growing security.
59. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading. Younger pupils and those with learning difficulties develop early reading skills well. They show interest in books and stories and enjoy the repetition which sometimes occurs when these are being read. Pupils learning English as a foreign language learn initial letter sounds and match words by these sounds. Pupils working at higher levels learn new word attack skills. For example, they learn to read on to guess unknown words from the storyline. Many secondary age pupils are confident readers. They can read challenging texts well. A ward-based pupil was able to read *The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde*, but the teacher was able to explain the meaning of the words 'weathercock' and 'migration', so that this brief period of teaching was clearly productive. Older pupils tackle demanding texts, such as those by Shakespeare and Dickens, and with support are able to respond with enjoyment to them. Pupils read for information about other subjects and research topics by seeking and utilising information from the Internet.

60. Progress in writing is good. Younger pupils, those with learning difficulties, or young pupils learning English as a foreign language, develop pre-writing skills such as following patterns and letter shapes. Primary pupils are encouraged to explore word types like adjectives by, for example, underlining the adjectives in a piece of text and using some in their own sentences. They begin to develop use of correct punctuation. For example, a Year 3 pupil was able to understand the use of the apostrophe to indicate possession and omission, and began to place them correctly in text. Secondary pupils write with varying degrees of fluency, but all are able to draft and refine their written work using information technology to ensure the finished piece is of a good standard. They can plan an extended piece of written work, using various frameworks, and develop the ideas into a coherent piece of writing. They can write for different purposes and different audiences.
61. The adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy to the school's different teaching situations has been very successful. The elements of the Literacy Strategy are clearly evident in the teaching within the schoolroom and on the wards. Lessons contain the elements of text, sentence and word level work, so that pupils work in the way they have become used to in their own schools. Small white boards are used to good effect, and they help in the adaptation of classroom teaching techniques to small group and individual teaching situations.
62. The quality of teaching ranges from good to excellent and is very good overall. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives, and pupils' attainment is recorded to direct future planning. Key vocabulary is identified and explained. Computer programmes and video presentations are used effectively to bring lessons alive. This variety of approaches means that pupils can learn in different ways and this helps to reinforce their learning. It is also very effective in ward-based teaching where pupils who are ill may not feel able to write, but can access learning from, for example, a video presentation of a story. A very sick child, learning English as a foreign language, was able to enjoy the video of a story after the teacher had read it with her, even though she was too tired to work in a formal way. The sensitive and skilled handling of pupils who are ill or troubled ensures that they have the confidence to make a positive contribution to lessons. These good relationships are reflected in the standards pupils are able to achieve.
63. The co-ordination of English at primary level is very good. The primary co-ordinator is using the Literacy Strategy very effectively and advises other teachers on the ways it can be adapted in the school. She has extended and refined planning and recording processes. The co-ordination of English at secondary level is also very good. The co-ordinator has led literacy training sessions for the rest of the staff in relation to literacy in the secondary school years. Planning, assessment and recording processes are thorough. The range of books and resources is good. It includes a large collection of Literacy Activity Packs which have been developed in recent years. These packs include a main text and associated learning tasks and other materials. They have been developed to cover a range of attainment, interest levels and learning objectives. They form a very useful resource for teaching, particularly for pupils taught on the hospital wards, as they are readily portable.
64. The teaching of English makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the study of literature and drama. Group discussions make a good contribution to the pupils' social and moral development

MATHEMATICS

65. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Younger pupils improve their counting and number skills through a good range of interesting practical activities learning, for instance, how to sort objects of differing colour and shape into categories and giving them a good introduction to the development of skills in handling data. Teachers always keep a good eye open to extend pupils' vocabulary resulting in pupils building up a very good vocabulary specific to mathematics. This aids progress because it means that teacher and pupils are able to understand one another much better, knowing that they

are using the same language. Teachers regularly check pupils' mental arithmetic skills, sometimes as a formally planned part of the lesson, but often at opportune moments throughout lessons. This is helping pupils to grow in confidence and they show great delight in their growing ability to do simple sums in their heads.

66. Secondary aged pupils are making particularly good progress in learning how to process data and present it in easily accessible form such as in tables and graphs. This is largely due to some very strong teaching with these older pupils, where the teacher shows excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm for finding ways to motivate and help individual pupils. Work in pupils' books shows the great range in ability of pupils, often not related to their age. The work of many pupils shows a good understanding of shape and angles and a good ability to solve problems. Pupils make very good progress in developing basic number skills because teachers are including opportunities to improve these skills in many lessons other than mathematics. There is extensive, very good use of computers in lessons.
67. Lessons observed were very well taught and one, at secondary level, was excellent. This was a sparkling lesson with a group of pupils of widely differing ability, degree of medical complication and familiarity with the school. Planning was the key to the success of this lesson. Pupils were using data collected as homework and using computers to process this to produce visually interesting displays. The teacher was well prepared for pupils arriving without their homework or new to the group and had prepared dummy statistics for them, enabling them to join in straight away, making best possible use of time and equipment. There was excellent reinforcement of vocabulary throughout the lesson, including words such as axis, frequency, tally, increment. The teacher's extensive subject knowledge was evident in the ability to quickly and clearly answer pupils' questions or present work in an alternative way for pupils of different ability who were struggling to understand.
68. The subject is very well managed. It is well guided by policy and there are extensive and detailed schemes of work relating very well to National Curriculum guidelines, thus helping pupils to link their studies in the hospital to those at school. The co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject and has great expertise, especially as regards the secondary curriculum. The speed of development of the subject is evident in the work in pupils' books and files. More recent work and that seen being done in the inspection is of a higher standard than older work. This is also evident in the fact that progress in lessons observed was very good overall but progress over the past year is judged good.

SCIENCE

69. Pupils make good progress overall in science. Primary aged pupils are making the best progress because they are learning about a greater range of scientific topics and the nature of primary science makes less demands on accommodation, resources and specific subject knowledge.
70. Enthusiastic teaching helps primary aged pupils learn about their own bodies and name major organs and external features, they understand that electricity flows through a circuit and that some materials conduct electricity better than others. They have also identified pushing and pulling as forces and are making simple predictions as to the outcomes of experiments. In a very successful lesson pupils learned about sound and how it is made by vibrating objects. The teacher had prepared a very interesting lesson, incorporating a video and a good range of simple practical activities. Pupils used trays and elastic bands to create simple plucked instruments. This grabbed the attention of pupils and encouraged concentration and learning. The lesson could have been presented in a purely theoretical manner and it would have been boring, but by involving all the pupils, irrespective of their age or ability, the teacher succeeded in presenting a lesson that pupils would not forget. One very newly arrived pupil rather surprised the teacher by having done the same lesson last week in her other school. This pupil did not make the same very good progress as other pupils but the lesson formed a good revision exercise for her.

71. Secondary aged pupils are often achieving well and making good progress in individual lessons. Over longer periods of time planning shows a good balance between physical, chemical and biological processes but each topic tends to be long and this means that medium stay pupils tend to receive a less balanced mix of lessons. The lack of a specialist laboratory, and restrictions over the use of equipment such as Bunsen burners, is also slowing progress because pupils are not sufficiently involved in developing their experimental techniques. Nevertheless, teachers are using visually stimulating resources to help motivate pupils and inject a little practical work involving simple apparatus. Pupils are, for instance, building up a good understanding of rocks, how they are formed and how various forces act on them to break them down. Pupils have used simple methods for identifying different rocks and regularly use apparatus, such as magnifying glasses, with confidence.

ART

72. Pupils make very good progress in art and achieve high standards of work. All pupils are able to investigate and use a variety of media to produce varied and individual work. Displays around the school and stored examples of work show that pupils use paints, pastels, acrylic, collage techniques, clay work, paper sculpture and photography. When pupils work intensively with visiting artists they use sophisticated techniques, as in the 'Making the invisible visible' project. Pupils draw from direct observation and from imagination, for example in a range of work showing the pupils as babies and toddlers. A lively group of paintings records the impressions of the Clown School, which took place recently. Pupils at all levels learn about the work of other artists and craftsmen, both those in the European tradition, such as Picasso, and those from other cultures, for example the ceramics of the Islamic tradition, or art from Africa or India. Pupils are often taken to visit exhibitions at the National Gallery, and at other galleries, to see other artists' work at first hand. Pupils are able to discuss critically their likes and dislikes in art, and to recall the characteristics of artists' work.
73. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The co-ordinator for art has excellent subject knowledge and communicates his enjoyment of the subject to the pupils. Programmes of work are designed to be exciting, varied and challenging, and take art beyond the classroom to utilise the range of resources available in London. In practical work pupils are given clear instructions and taught the skills which they need to achieve the results they have in mind, so that they can be proud of the end result. The excellent displays of pupils' work shows that their efforts are valued. Programmes of work are adapted to be used in the hospital wards, and art provides an additional means of expression for troubled pupils, perhaps particularly for terminally ill pupils. Art makes a very good contribution to spiritual education, as a means of expressing difficult ideas and emotions, and to cultural education by providing plentiful opportunities for pupils to experience their own and other cultures. Information technology is not widely used in art other than for recording and displaying pupils' work through the use of a digital camera.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. Pupils make good progress in design and technology. They can respond to design briefs, and plan the making of small items. For example, a primary aged pupil designed and made a wooden photograph frame. Pupils evaluate the different materials available and make informed choices about the most appropriate ones to use. They develop the skills to use a range of small hand tools and simple processes. In a project on designing for a purpose pupils design their own tiles. They research the history of tiles, and understand the purpose of tiles in, for example, kitchen and bathroom areas of the home. Pupils are able to use clay and a frame to make their own tiles. They enjoy exploring different ways of producing texture. In a ward-based teaching situation a pupil is able to design and make an electrical quiz card to use as a menu.

75. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, and clearly identify the knowledge and skills the pupils will acquire. Teaching is successfully adapted so that pupils who are in hospital beds can access this subject. Where possible, numeracy work is incorporated into lessons. Speaking and listening skills are developed when pupils receive clear instructions and follow them. Pupils have a positive attitude to the work. They persevere with tasks and demonstrate pride in the completed work. The co-ordination of design and technology is good. Schemes of work have been developed which can be implemented in the accommodation available. Examples of the work of previous pupils are available as evidence of good progress.
76. A 'Using Fabrics' workshop, planned and promoted primarily as a part of pupils personal and social development, makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' practical skills. Year 7 and 8 pupils design and make items of clothing. For example, a Year 8 boy is making a dressing gown, and a Year 7 girl makes a top to complement the skirt and waistcoat she has already made, which she is proudly wearing. Pupils are involved in all aspects of design and construction, and are clearly motivated by their success as well as enjoying the relaxed and positive atmosphere.

GEOGRAPHY

77. Pupils were observed studying erosion and the development of river valleys. They recalled information already learned, and related it well to their learning about rocks in science. They used their speaking skills well to respond to questions, and began to use new vocabulary introduced by the teacher. For example, pupils used the words deposited, spur and silt. The quality of teaching was satisfactory. The learning objectives for the lesson were reached but without the pupils showing any real enthusiasm.

HISTORY

78. History alternates with geography in half-termly modules, which are designed to extend the breadth of curriculum. The lesson observed was used as an initial assessment in a first contact with a pupil. The pupil was able to build on previous knowledge to put the lesson in context. The lesson provided an opportunity to develop the pupil's reading and comprehension skills. She was able to deduce considerable information from the picture which was a focus of the lesson. The materials used told the story of how the Royal Free Hospital was founded, so as well as extending historical understanding the lesson provided a good opportunity to consider some moral issues. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was excellent. Clear learning objectives were set, and skilled management of the pupil ensured that she enjoyed the lesson and achieved a good deal despite her initial plea that she was too tired to work. Documentation and pupil work available suggests that curriculum co-ordinators take every opportunity to bring cohesion to the curriculum by choosing modules which work well together. For example, the study of war poetry is studied in English at the same time as World War II in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

79. Pupils are making good progress in learning about and using information and communication technology. Most pupils are confident in the skills of using a mouse and older pupils use the keyboard with confidence when word-processing. CD-ROMS are widely used to vary activities and present information in a different way, and the Internet is used as a research tool. Older pupils use the technology well to improve the presentation of work, and to assist in drafting and refining sustained pieces of writing, for example in writing essays on Macbeth. They are learning how to save images, texts and sounds in a variety of formats using a scanner and digital camera as well as photography, animation and music technology software. There is a very good range of software, which is effectively used to support and extend more traditional teaching strategies. Older pupils are entered for the NICAS accreditation through which they can log their developing

skills in this area of the curriculum. Pupils on the hospital ward have good access to computers, and find a way of using them even when they may be partly immobilised. For example, a pupil with little use of one arm was able to use the 'Hyper-studio' software to design a small storyboard which utilised links with sound, and included text and graphics.

80. Information technology is not taught as a discrete subject. Subjects across the curriculum work together to reinforce pupils' skills. All teachers are including information technology in planning, making opportunities for pupils to learn and practise skills in handling and communicating information. Information technology acts as a positive motivator for pupils who may be in distress physically or emotionally, and teachers are skilled at using this potential. For example, a young school-refusing pupil with marked separation anxiety was willing to come to school initially to spend time working on a computer.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

81. Although there are few formal arrangements for the teaching of modern foreign languages, several of the staff have a good understanding of a range that includes French, Spanish, German and the less modern language of Latin. This means that pupils can be well supported in these subjects when they are bringing in work from their schools. This is helping many of the frequently readmitted pupils to continue successfully with their studies and is helping them to complete GCSE courses. This is good provision. There is insufficient evidence to judge achievement, progress or teaching.

MUSIC

82. Music is provided for all pupils through a weekly workshop. Pupils expand their musical vocabulary, learning words which describe different moods and music. Planning and teachers' records show that younger pupils learn songs, traditional and modern, and identify and use sounds made by different instruments to accompany these songs. They learn how to record music graphically so that it can be repeated. They perform to their classmates. Older pupils learn songs they have probably heard on the radio or television. They use computers to help compose music. Lessons are exceptionally well planned with each containing very good opportunities for all the elements contained in National Curriculum programmes of study. The range of music studied makes a very strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

83. Physical education is not taught but many children are involved in hydro and physiotherapy as a part of their hospital treatment and this is entirely appropriate in the situation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

84. Religious education is provided for all pupils in line with the Agreed Syllabus of the Local Education Authority. No teaching was observed but pupils' work and displays around the school show that pupils are learning at a good rate about many of the world's great religions. They learn about places, people, texts, beliefs and objects that make these religions special to different people. There is also a good focus on the development of strong moral and social values through the study of topics such as sharing, celebrations, friends and the community, poverty and prejudices.

PERSONAL, HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

85. Pupils make very good progress with regards their personal, social and health education. Their increasing understanding of the importance of maintaining high values of citizenship and of living healthily contributes to their very good personal development. Pupils develop skills relating to relaxation and discuss the high and low points they experience in life. The sensitivity of pupils to one another's problems is a strength, well promoted by teachers, who encourage pupils to look for positive things in themselves and others.