

KNIGHTSFIELD SCHOOL

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117666

Headteacher: Lucy Leith

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th June 2001

Inspection number: 230100

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Knightsfield Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL8 7LW
Telephone number:	01707 376874
Fax number:	01707 321738
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of the governing body:	Andrew Gibson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Derby 25349	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology; Modern foreign languages.	The school's characteristics; What the school should do to improve further; The pupils' results and achievements; The quality of the teaching and learning.
Helen Barter 9052	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; The school's care for its pupils. The school's partnership with its parents. Integration.
Glan Davies 27424	Team inspector	Geography; History; Physical education; Personal, social and health education.	
Alan Dobbins 32055	Team inspector	Science; Art; Design and technology.	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students.
Michael Kell 13101	Team inspector	Mathematics; Religious education; Equality of opportunity; Integration.	How the school is led and managed.
Sue Lewis 10099	Team inspector	English; Music; Special educational needs.	The residential provision.

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
Eastbourne
West Sussex
BN21 3YB

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Knightsfield School is a community day and residential school for pupils who are deaf; most pupils have severe or profound hearing losses. Its new admissions policy means that it is designated for pupils who have hearing impairment who will benefit from an auditory - oral approach; this utilises pupils' residual hearing as the primary way of supporting their communication and learning. Some pupils also have special educational needs in addition to their deafness. Knightsfield is a regionally based provision. It is situated on the edge of Welwyn Garden City, on the campus of a secondary school, Monk's Walk, where it has had strong integration links for many years. The school has a legal agreement with Monk's Walk to access their facilities and provide opportunities for integration. The school purchases the teaching of physical education from Monk's Walk. All Knightsfield pupils are taught this subject on that site while many also attend lessons for other subjects. There are 24 pupils on roll between the ages of 11 and 17. Three have English as an additional language. Two thirds of these are boys and one-third are girls. There are currently 12 pupils in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) and 10 pupils in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11). Two pupils, in Year 12 (aged 17), attend for Post 16 studies. Six pupils, at present, stay at the school four nights a week. Pupils come mainly from the Hertfordshire area, neighbouring counties and north London boroughs. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below that expected for their age and pupils enter with varying degrees of linguistic competence. The school was formerly known as Tewin Water and changed its name in 2000 following its section 3 inspection. Some Year 11 pupils and all Year 12 pupils, who had just taken their examinations, were on study leave at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Knightsfield is a very good, highly effective school that has some excellent features to its work. The school is very well managed and its ethos for learning is very strong. The very good delegation of staff responsibilities and clearly defined roles contributes to the very smooth day-to-day running of the school. Pupils achieve very well; their response to lessons, to school and work are excellent. The quality of teaching is very good overall and contributes positively to pupils' learning. The school has exceptionally strong links with Monk's Walk and the quality of Knightsfield pupils' experiences there is very good. In relation to the high standards achieved, the very good quality of teaching and provision, and the cost per pupil, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

The following are all excellent features of the school:

- Pupils' attitudes to, and enthusiasm for, school as well their relationships with one another and the staff.
- The effort that pupils put into their work and the quality of its presentation.
- The links with the local secondary school, Monks Walk's and other institutions provide very high quality integration opportunities for all pupils.
- The work of the very professional and highly committed governing body.
- The headteacher and staff's commitment to improvement and the effort they have put into this over recent years. The school is exceptionally well placed to improve even further.
- The opportunities pupils have at Post 16 to pursue award-bearing courses and the way these courses and pupils' individual needs are supported by Knightsfield staff.

The following are some of the very good features of the school:

- The quality of teaching and learning; as a result of this and the very good curriculum, pupils achieve very well.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.
- The quality of care and the contribution that the residential provision makes to pupils' personal and social development.

What could be improved

- There are no key issues, only relatively minor points for improvement. Most have been recognised by the school prior to the inspection. These mainly relate to the use of auditory trainers and other amplification.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1999 and remarkably rapid progress since it was inspected in March 1998. Standards have risen and the quality of education is very good. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its work, reflecting on what it does well and where it needs to improve are very strong. This has had a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, both of which are now very good. Individual education plans have developed further. Pupils' targets are consistently referred to in lesson plans and there is a considerable awareness of how these should be met in lessons. The integration of pupils from Knightsfield into Monk's Walk and the relationship between the two schools and the pupils, are very good. The range of opportunities for pupils to have inclusive experiences has broadened and the Post 16 provision means that students have access to courses beyond Monk's Walk, in other schools and colleges. Staff from Knightsfield also have access to training at the mainstream link school and are included in their staff meetings, briefings and communications. The school has successfully worked hard to develop itself as a centre of excellence, both for its pupils' achievements but also to attract prospective admissions. It has worked closely with the local education authority (LEA) to promote itself and it better informs other LEAs of its work.

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 16	Key
speaking and listening	A	very good A
Reading	A	good B
Writing	A	satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	

Pupils' achieve very well overall. Pupils' achievement in English is very good, especially in their speaking and listening and reading skills. It is good in mathematics and science. It is excellent in history and good in religious education and French. In art and design and technology pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The programme of work is currently being revised, following the appointment of a new co-ordinator and a review of the content of these subjects. In all other subjects pupils achieve very well. The increase in award bearing courses helps pupils' motivation and some take Certificate of Achievement examinations in Year 9 as a preparation for GCSE later on. Of the seven pupils who took GCSE examinations in 2000, all gained at least one A* to G grade and four gained five or more. The school analyses pupils' results in order to set whole school targets. It is aware of pupils' good and very good improvements since the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and makes very good use of this data to predict individual outcomes and set challenging targets for individuals and the school. Pupils' targets in their individual education plans (IEPs) are precisely set to identify the most important things they need to learn to help them improve. They make very good progress towards these. Targets in care plans and the programmes set in residence help pupils make very good progress in their personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

These make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

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

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching and learning for pupils aged 11 – 16 is very good overall with some excellent features. Nearly all the teaching was satisfactory or better and 87 per cent was at least good. Forty four per cent of teaching was very good or excellent. In the two lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory this was related to an inexperience of working with deaf pupils. Teachers know their subjects and how to provide meaningful learning experiences to deaf pupils very well. They are very strongly committed to pupils' high achievement and they are ambitious for them. Teachers' enthusiasm captures pupils' interest and motivates them highly. They make it very clear what pupils are to do and learn in lessons and these are planned thoroughly. The effort that pupils' put into their work is exceptional. They have considerable opportunities to review and evaluate their own performance and learning. Support staff make a very positive contribution to lessons, supporting individual pupils very well. Occasionally, they do not always have a clear role in whole class parts of lessons in Knightsfield. The teaching of English, information and communication technology (ICT), music, which is only taught in Key Stage 3, physical education, and PSHE is very good. Teaching in science and religious education, is good overall. In history the teaching is excellent. Over the inspection, the teaching in five lessons was of an exceptionally high quality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good overall. It meets the needs and interests of pupils very well and, through the consortium arrangements, Post 16 pupils have an extremely wide range of opportunities which, with school support, meets their needs very well. At Key Stage 4 there is a considerable number of award bearing courses at Knightsfield and Monk's Walk. The extra-curricular programme is very extensive.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is supported through planning in subjects and regular school audits; this means that pupils have a very good range of experiences. Spiritual development is promoted very well through daily assemblies, lessons and the general ethos of the school. Staff are very good role models; their excellent relationships with pupils enable them to talk about a range of matters sensitively, promoting moral and social development. Pupils' social opportunities permeate the whole of school life. Access to a wealth of cultural experiences helps pupils appreciate their own culture and that of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very safe, supportive environment in which pupils achieve very well. It has a very clear understanding of pupils' needs and how to help them. Staff know pupils, on a personal level, exceptionally well, both in Knightsfield and in Monk's Walk. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis, and over time, is highly effective. There are very strong procedures in place, which enable staff to plan for, and to meet, pupils' individual needs.

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

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and is very well supported by senior staff. As a result there is a high sense of purpose and commitment, and an excellent capacity to succeed. The headteacher has worked exceptionally hard to improve this school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Excellent. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They have an exceptionally clear view of how their responsibilities contribute to the leadership and management of the school. As a result, their monitoring of the effectiveness of the school's work is outstanding.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are good plans to evaluate teachers' performance, based on government recommendations and to continue to develop the school's existing system of review that includes all staff and not just teachers. There is a very positive climate, which is enhanced by the school's programme of self-review. There is very good quality monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and other staff.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There are very clear procedures and financial planning is very well tied to school improvement priorities.

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

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children like coming to school. ▪ The school expects their children to work hard and do their best. ▪ Teaching is good and their children make good progress. ▪ The school works closely with them and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. ▪ Behaviour in the school is good and their children are helped to be mature and responsible. ▪ The school is well led and managed and it is easy for parents to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents have differing views about homework with some wanting more and some wanting less; the provision of homework is sometimes inconsistent.

Inspectors' judgements support the very positive views of parents and confirm that pupils achieve and learn very well as a result of very good teaching and very good educational and personal support and guidance. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school life and their learning. Behaviour in the school is very good and pupils are developing maturity and responsibility very well. The relationships that pupils have with each other and with adults are excellent. The school has very effective links with parents and encourages them to support their child's learning at home and school. It recognises that some parents live at a distance from the school and keeps them well informed about their child's progress and the school's work. The school recognises that some parents have differing views about homework and is monitoring the amount and suitability of homework that is set to try and achieve a consistent approach. Teachers use the homework very well to extend pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Pupils' achievement across the school

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

2. All pupils achieve very well through the very good quality of teaching and the rich and very wide range of programmes they are offered at Knightsfield and elsewhere. Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make the same very good progress as the other pupils. The school has a very strong emphasis on pupils' self-expression and the improvement of their linguistic competency, as well as on self-evaluation. Consequently, pupils reflect critically on what they have done and where they can improve. This ensures that their progress is very good throughout the school. Although pupils have a broad range of attainment and ability on entry to the school, and some have considerable linguistic difficulties because of the hearing difficulties, they make very good progress and all gain educational awards. The range of accreditation is impressive for such a small school and has increased over recent years. Pupils now undertake GCSE, Certificate of Achievement, City and Guilds (motor vehicle studies) and the Hertfordshire Achievement Project. This year, students have also undertaken AS courses in ICT, German, art and design, and business studies. Certificate of Achievement is also used as a preparation for GCSE for some pupils, and can be taken earlier than usual, such as the seven pupils who obtained passes in ICT in Year 9 in 2000.

3. Although comparisons are difficult for such a small population of pupils with such specialised needs, the school's own analysis of data shows very good improvement in most subjects between the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 in 2000, using points score measures. The school uses this data effectively to compare and challenge itself. On average pupils progressed just over two National Curriculum level equivalents during Key Stage 4 with the highest attaining 4.5 (in a modern foreign language). Pupils achieved GCSE grades in the range of A to G with 57 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A* - G and all gaining at least one A* - G pass. Fifty four per cent of pupils attained A* - D passes in 2000. This compares very well with other schools for the deaf and represents very good progress for pupils from their starting points on entry to the school. The pupils entered for examinations ranged from two to seven, with the highest take-up in mathematics, design and technology, and ICT. In comparison with other similar schools over the past two years, school data shows that on average, Knightsfield compares less favourably at the end of Key Stage 3 but significantly more favourably by the end of Key Stage 4. However, this can vary from year-to-year according to the ability of the pupils.

4. In the 2000 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, pupils' levels ranged from no assessed level to Level 5. Most were not entered in English, although one achieved Level 4. In mathematics, nearly a third of pupils did not attain a level; one achieved Level 2 and three, Level 3. In science, the majority of pupils did not attain a level although one attained Level 3 and one a Level 4.

Pupils' achievement in subjects

5. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of skill in English, with most having achievements well below that expected for their age. Many lack confidence in reading and writing and some are reluctant to communicate with people other than those with whom they are familiar. The school's effective auditory - oral approach, together with very strong teaching and a well-planned programme, means that pupils achieve very well and make very good progress over the time they are in the school. All pupils, including students in Post 16, make very good progress in, and develop excellent attitudes to, self-expression, reading and writing. Pupils may still leave the school with language levels below those of their peers in mainstream school, nevertheless, their social use of language, their ability to present their points of view and their interaction with others has developed remarkably.

6. In mathematics pupils' achievements are good overall. This is based mainly on an analysis of their work. Although progress seen in lessons on the inspection varied, and was unsatisfactory in one lesson, it was satisfactory overall with some good progress seen when lessons were carefully planned to build on pupils' prior learning. When progress was judged unsatisfactory this was because of the teacher's inexperience in working with deaf pupils combined with inadequate planning for their needs.

7. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in science. This is because of good attention to practical work and ensuring that the key scientific vocabulary pupils are learning is reinforced through investigation and experimentation. Small steps in learning, and planning which takes account of pupils needs and abilities, also helps pupils to make good gains in their scientific knowledge.

8. In ICT pupils achieve very well. The school's very effective co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject significantly over the time she has been in the school and has always kept pace with national developments, including curriculum change. There is very thorough planning for pupils' learning opportunities and very careful teaching, which constantly checks pupils' understanding of the ideas presented through the use of questioning and the practical application of ICT. This results in pupils making very good progress.

9. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. The very well planned programmes, linked to pupils' individual targets, result in pupils achieving very well in PSHE. A particularly strong feature is the discussions that emanate from the relevant and interesting topics and themes studied, such as alcohol laws, discrimination, and pupils' personal issues, sometimes about their disability.

10. In history, pupils make excellent progress. The excellent quality of teaching ensures that pupils gain a high level of understanding of complex historical issues and source data. Pupils competently analyse historical facts and have a very good understanding of the impact of historical events. They also make very good progress in geography. Pupils achieve well in religious education and younger pupils, particularly, make very good progress in developing their knowledge of world religion and their understanding of rituals, symbols and beliefs. Older pupils make good progress and acquire good analytical skills when discussing social and moral issues related to religion.

11. Pupils achieve well in French, which is taught at Key Stage 3 in Knightsfield. This is due to the school's strong commitment to hearing impaired pupils' entitlement to learning a modern foreign language and the good teaching. Because pupils' progress is assessed well and the teacher knows the pupils' strengths and weaknesses thoroughly, what pupils learn is built upon systematically. Pupils are motivated by the programme and really work hard in French, trying their best and making good improvements in their use and understanding of the language. Some older pupils learn French and German in Monk's Walk School and pupils in the sixth form study German to A level. From the work seen, these pupils make very good progress.

12. In music at Key Stage 3, although only two lessons could be observed, pupils' work, videotaped evidence, and discussions with pupils indicate that they make very good progress. All aspects of the subject are planned and taught. There is a clear analysis of pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject and high value is placed upon the role of music in helping pupils' speaking and listening skills.

13. The very good provision for physical education, and the strong inclusive links with Monk's Walk School, where the subject is taught to all Knightsfield pupils by a number of specialist teachers, result in pupils' very good progress.

14. In art at Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 4, the good quality of the Monk's Walk facilities, the high quality specialist teaching and the very good support from Knightsfield support staff, ensure pupils make good progress. In design and technology pupils make satisfactory progress. A new coordinator has worked hard to improve the planning of the subject to ensure all aspects of the subject are now comprehensively planned for, including food studies.

Pupils' achievement in relation to their personal targets

15. The quality of pupils' targets in IEPs has improved since the last inspection. For most pupils targets mainly relate to their language, literacy and personal and social needs. These targets are now much more specific, although there are instances, still, where they are too general, and do not help the less experienced members of staff to take these into account in their planning. Pupils make very good progress towards their IEP targets, because teachers give very careful attention to these when planning their lessons, focusing very specifically on how the lesson can ensure that pupils' linguistic needs are met and how independence in learning can be promoted. Pupils also make very good progress towards targets set in care plans.

The school's targets for raising achievement

16. Target setting has been a feature of the school since 1999 and is very well established. As well as setting targets for GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4, and for National Curriculum test levels at the end of Key Stage 3, it also sets targets in other aspects of pupils' learning such as for reading and pupils' personal and social development. For instance, for 2001 it is expected that 60 per cent of pupils will make at least six months progress in reading from their starting points.

17. The school's approach to target setting is very good. The school works very hard to raise individual pupils' achievements, and to set whole school targets, by analysing pupils' performance in considerable detail, over current and previous years. A range of 'tools' is used for analysis such as National Curriculum data (including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's 'Autumn Package') and secondary school comparative data (MIDYIS). The school is cautious about using the MIDYIS data as a way of predicting results, as it has not been standardised on hearing impaired pupils and takes no account of pupils' resultant linguistic competencies. It also uses the results of pupils' National Curriculum Key Stage 2 data where this information is available.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. This aspect of the school has been strengthened further since the last inspection and makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning, their achievements and the quality of school life in general. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes are excellent and they behave very well. They make very good progress in their personal development, through planned opportunities and incidental features of school life. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff working in the school and the residence.

19. In the questionnaires and in discussion with parents, all parents said that behaviour in the school is very good. They say that their children are happy and comfortable about coming to school. They are very pleased with the way in which the school supports their children to become confident and independent and that it motivates them to improve and achieve.

20. Most pupils' attendance at school is good and, as a result of good monitoring procedures, the number of unauthorised absences has reduced. Although illness, or the need for frequent visits to medical specialists, sometimes disrupts pupils' attendance, most pupils come to school when they can. Pupils' punctuality is good except when taxis are sometimes late. The good levels of attendance and punctuality mean that there is as little disruption as possible to pupils' learning.

21. In lessons, pupils have excellent attitudes to their work, which is reflected in the very good progress that they make. They are fully committed and involved in their learning, listen well and work very hard. They have high levels of concentration and interest and are confident when tackling tasks. In an English language enrichment lesson, for example, pupils made good gains in their speaking and listening skills because the teacher created a friendly, supportive atmosphere in which pupils were respectful of each other and the teacher and were fully engaged in their learning. Pupils working on a desktop publishing program in an ICT lesson worked diligently and with concentration as they imported digital photographs and typed text into their document. Pupils maintain these very positive attitudes towards their learning when attending lessons at Monk's Walk School. They participate very well in the classroom and are keen to learn alongside their peers.

22. Pupils behave very well in lessons, in the residence and around the school. They are courteous, friendly and respectful to each other and to adults. They make visitors welcome and are pleased to talk about their work and school life. There is a happy and relaxed atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are cheerful and confident, because they understand the school's very good expectations for behaviour and know what will happen if they do not behave appropriately. Although there are some rare incidents of anti-social behaviour including bullying, these are minor in comparison to the majority of pupils' very good behaviour and the overall calm and positive atmosphere in the school. There is some minor restlessness when the teaching provided does not challenge pupils sufficiently and they become bored and distracted. However, pupils usually behave very well in lessons because they are interested in what they are doing. There have been eight fixed period exclusions for six boys in the past year relating to incidents of aggression towards others pupils and members of staff. Although this is a very high number, the school does not tolerate any incidents of bad behaviour and fixed term exclusion is used as a reasonably successful punishment so that pupils receive this message. This has helped in improving these pupils' behaviour.

23. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. The quality of their relationships with others is a particularly strong feature of the school. They have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and respect others' feelings and points of view. For example, in a lesson where pupils analysed the issues relating to South Africa, pupils gave thoughtful and perceptive comments as they considered peace and human rights and what these mean to different people. In discussions pupils are supportive of each other and talk to each other sensibly. They help each other to learn and spell new words and are understanding of those who find work difficult. Pupils collaborate very well because of their very good personal relationships and the very good way the school promotes this through teaching and learning activities.

24. When given the opportunity, pupils show good initiative and personal responsibility. In the residence, pupils plan, shop and cook for their weekly meals and share the associated tasks willingly. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to meet with their peers at Monk's Walk School. They are learning to mix positively with them and to make the most of social opportunities such as at lunchtime, in clubs and on some visits outside school. In discussion with some of the oldest pupils in the school, they said that they have very positive feelings about the school and the help that they have received which has enabled them to make progress. They are looking

forward to the next stage of their education and work as a result of their time at Knightsfield School.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching in key stages and across the school

25. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across the school overall, with some excellent features. It has improved since the school was last inspected by HMI in 1999. The very small number of pupils with EAL, and those pupils with additional special educational needs, also learn very well because of the school's considerable understanding of their needs.

26. Forty four per cent of the teaching was very good or excellent and 87 per cent was at least good. Nearly all the teaching was satisfactory or better. The teaching in seven per cent of lessons (five lessons) was judged to be excellent with just three per cent of lessons (two lessons) evaluated as being unsatisfactory. This was mainly because of a very new teacher's inexperience of working with deaf pupils, a situation that should be improved by the teacher's commencement of the specialist teaching of the deaf training course in July. The combination of work by Monk's Walk staff, Knightsfield's teachers and the very good support by Knightsfield's assistants results in pupils' receiving a very good quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching in subjects

27. The teaching and learning in English, including literacy, is very good and contributes significantly to pupils' progress in all aspects of English, and, especially, their linguistic competence. The effort the school puts into teaching reading is considerable and pupils make very good progress because of this, from a low, and often from a very low baseline. The teaching of pupils' communication skills, in line with the school's auditory – oral policy is also very good; their listening, in order to learn, however, could be strengthened even more by the more consistent use of high-powered amplification, and direct input devices. The teaching of mathematics (including numeracy), seen during the inspection, was satisfactory overall, although the evidence from pupils' work indicates that planning and attention to pupils differing needs is stronger over time. The quality of teaching in science is good and the planning and preparation of practical work and the teacher's attention to key scientific vocabulary helps pupils' understanding well.

28. Information and communication technology is taught very well by the co-ordinator, who has a high degree of expertise in the subject. She plans the pupils' work very well and gives careful attention to their individual needs and abilities. The teaching of PSHE is also very good. Lessons promote pupils' confidence in discussing often complex issues, and the team teaching situation results in teachers individual strengths being used in highly effective ways.

29. The teaching of history is excellent with significant strengths in the quality of planning and the attention to pupils' discussion and analysis of historical source material. Only one lesson was seen in geography during the inspection and, although the teaching in this was very good, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching in this subject. In religious education, the teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Pupils fully understand what they are to do and learn by the teacher's very clear explanations. A particular strength is the way in which a very high degree of challenge is presented to pupils and a very clear expectation that pupils will do and achieve their very best. Some rare instances of unacceptable behaviour result in some minor disruptions to pupils' learning.

30. The school's strong emphasis on educational inclusion means that every effort is made to ensure that pupils' exposure to potentially difficult subjects for them to learn, such as modern foreign languages, is carefully planned, with a high degree of thought going into to the best ways to help the pupils gain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in French and German. The co-ordinator's very practical approach to teaching French is effective and despite

their linguistic and hearing difficulties pupils try their hardest. Although no teaching of German was observed, pupils' records and progress indicate that they are taught very well, although it is not possible to make an overall judgement.

31. The teaching of music is very good and the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and understanding of the pupils' needs results in challenging work being set. There is also strong emphasis on self-evaluation and mutual-evaluation that helps pupils reflect on what they have produced and how it can be better. The planning and joint teaching of aspects of music and English with the speech and language therapist further enhances pupils' learning in these subjects and their progress in communication and listening.

32. Physical education is consistently taught very well by the small number of teachers from Monk's School, who are commissioned to teach Knightsfield pupils. Their high degree of expertise, and the appropriate challenges they set to increase pupils' skill, confidence and self-esteem help to very positively promote learning. Good relationships are built upon through humour, high expectations and positive encouragement.

33. The teaching of art and design and design and technology is satisfactory. The Knightsfield teacher for both of these subjects is very new to the school and is only just beginning to get to know the pupils, their needs and how teaching should be adapted to take these into account. He is starting a specialist training for teachers of the deaf in July.

Other features of teaching and learning

34. This is a school where the majority of the features to the teaching and learning are very good. These are:

- teacher's very good knowledge of their subjects and the auditory and linguistic needs of pupils;
- the very effective planning which takes into account pupils' differing needs and abilities and builds very well on what they learned previously;
- the teachers' very high expectations of what pupils learn in lessons and the quality of what they expect them to produce. This results, for instance, in pupils' high quality presentation of their work;
- the very good range of different ways teachers approach the teaching and learning of the subject and their knowledge of how their pupils best learn, for instance in using a very visual practical teaching approach in French and using ICT for voice recognition in English for those pupils with additional literacy needs. Teachers nearly always provide very interesting materials and challenges for pupils to help them learn;
- the very good management of pupils and the way the learning opportunities are highly organised and arranged.
- teachers always use time well and lesson pace is very swift keeping pupils very motivated and highly interested;
- the assessment of pupils' learning is very good. Teachers use a wide range of methods to gain a wealth of information that is used very well in their future planning. Support staff also contribute very well to making these assessments on pupils. The promotion of pupils' self-assessment and their critical evaluation of the work of others is helping pupils reflect well on how they can do better. It is a very strong feature of the school's teaching. Teachers' marking is of very good quality and is highly supportive in helping pupils improve;

- the very good use of homework, and the extended learning opportunities, during lunchtime, in residence and at home mean that pupils reinforce well what they have learned. They are developing independent ways of researching information and preparing for projects that are often submitted as coursework for examinations;

This all results in pupils' high pace of working and the quality of what they produce over time being excellent.

35. Where some features of teaching are good, such as in the teaching of basic skills and the teacher's use of support staff, some weaknesses contribute to these overall judgements because:

- individual staff are not as experienced - they are new to teaching deaf pupils and not sure how to plan for their individual needs;
- numeracy could be more consistently promoted across the school;
- Computers and group auditory training units could be used further to enhance pupils' access to the lesson;
- occasionally, support staff could be better used when the whole classes are being taught in Knightsfield.

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

The quality and range of opportunities for learning

36. The planned opportunities for pupils' and students' learning are very good overall and have improved well since the last inspection. They are very wide ranging and programmes are very well balanced. This, together with the very good teaching, ensures that pupils' achieve very well. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3 is good; what pupils are to learn is made very relevant for them and takes into account well their particular special educational needs. At Key Stage 4 it is very good because of the wide range of accredited courses pupils can follow. Curricular provision for the small number of Post 16 students is excellent. The curriculum broadens as pupils move through the school, because of the increasing opportunities they have to be taught alongside hearing pupils and the greater range of subjects and award bearing courses they can choose to study.

37. At Post 16, students choose from over 30 different courses available at AS, A level and GNVQ through Knightsfield and through the school's associate membership of the Welwyn Garden City 16-19 consortium of sixth forms and colleges. There are a small number of courses offered at the Knightsfield such as AS/A level information and communication technology. The consortium, however, offers a wide variety of courses at AS/A level and GNVQ. In these courses pupils attend various establishments and receive very good support from the staff of Knightsfield, when and if required. This gives the students a very good opportunity to prepare for their lives after school, in higher education, in offices or in industry. The additional years at the school give the students an opportunity to extend their studies in a mainstream setting and enhances their confidence to attend other college courses at a later stage. This significantly extends their opportunities for inclusion in a wider context.

38. The National Curriculum has been adapted very well to suit the needs of the school's hearing impaired pupils and there is very careful consideration of how the programmes can meet some of the wide ranging difficulties of pupils at Knightsfield. Equality of access and

opportunity for all is ensured and the school strongly includes all pupils in at least physical education and the everyday life of the mainstream link school, and most are included in many other subjects. Statutory requirements are fully met for the delivery of the National Curriculum and the provision of religious education. The result is a curriculum that is very relevant to pupils' abilities and interests and provides excellent opportunities for them to practice and develop their language skills in the company of hearing pupils.

39. The quality of curriculum planning is very good and builds well on pupils' prior experiences and opportunities, giving them every opportunity to make progress. For example, planning in ICT is highly detailed, thorough and regularly reviewed and adapted as new groups of pupils move through the school. Careful account is taken of the experiences pupils receive at Monk's Walk to ensure a breadth and balance of opportunity. New developments within the curriculum including modified award bearing courses and changes in National Curriculum 2000 such as increased emphasis on grammar in modern foreign languages, result in planning being adapted.

40. The curriculum is very well managed, and particularly strong in relation to the liaison and planning for the delivery of subjects, which take place on sites other than at Knightsfield. The cross-curricular audits of English, information and communication technology, personal and social education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education contribute to making the curriculum cohesive and maximise the opportunities for pupils to gain in these areas. In all the subjects teachers plan to improve pupils' language skills, for example by starting lessons with tests of spelling and through the use of key word personalised 'dictionaries' for every subject. Lesson plans identify where cross curricular links can be made and teachers regularly take opportunities to reinforce the skills and knowledge pupils have gained in information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education and to increase their awareness of spiritual, moral and cultural matters.

41. The partnership with the neighbouring secondary school, Monk's Walk, substantially extends the curricular experiences of pupils and enhances their quality. For those pupils at Key Stage 4, this includes opportunities to be examined in a larger number of subjects at the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Some pupils are taught almost all their lessons by Monk's Walk teachers in lessons with mainstream pupils. All benefit academically from the close relationships between the two schools and their staffs. For example, by having access to specialist teaching facilities such as science laboratories and workshops in design and technology and by being taught by teachers with specialist qualifications, especially in art and physical education. They also gain considerable benefit by taking lessons with hearing pupils. They gain socially and their linguistic development is enhanced through having to communicate with teachers and other pupils. When they take their lessons at the secondary school, their access to all aspects of the curriculum is made easier by the very good support they receive from the learning support assistants who accompany them from Knightsfield, the very strong commitment of the two staffs and the quality of work of the Knightsfield liaison teacher.

42. The principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been very effectively implemented into the curriculum in English and into the language sessions that begin each day. In their lessons in other subjects, teachers use the strategies well. For example, each lesson in science begins with a spelling test that includes the technical words that are to be introduced in the lesson. Lessons are planned so that pupils have frequent opportunities to practice and improve their self-expression. As a result, pupils speak confidently and purposefully even when their speech lacks clarity. The principles of the National Numeracy Strategy are less well developed across the curriculum, but are in place for mathematics lessons. Consequently, opportunities to reinforce numeracy skills in other subjects are missed.

43. The extra-curricular programme is extensive. It provides very good additional experiences for many pupils to further development their social and linguistic skills. In Knightsfield, pupils meet at lunchtimes to make models, work on a magazine for Christmas, make jewellery and play music. Moreover, they regularly take advantage of the considerable

extra-curricular provision that is available to them at the secondary school. Currently, pupils are taking part in lunchtime clubs in tennis, football and trampolining, swimming and weight training.

44. There is a satisfactory planned careers programme for all pupils from Year 9, which is taught through the personal, social, and health education curriculum. The school's careers resources and information on possible career paths are under-developed although the school makes good use of the careers department at Monk's Walk School and the special educational needs careers service to help individual pupils with their specific interests. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities for vocational education which are well planned, monitored and evaluated. Opportunities for work experience in, for example, gardening, catering and motor mechanics are carefully matched to pupils' interests and abilities. Work related learning opportunities are available to some pupils who are unable to sustain a full-time school curriculum. The school makes very good use of its business links, for example, with national chain stores and restaurants, to provide pupils with experiences of work shadowing and curriculum based projects and to gain sponsorship, for example, for pupils to visit France.

The curriculum in the residential setting

45. The curriculum in the residential setting links well with that of the school. The school is developing this further in the light of the new residential admissions criteria that emphasise educational reasons for placement, rather than the previous 'distance' criteria. The policy for homework is well supported by ensuring that pupils have the space and opportunity to complete their work between the end of the school day and the beginning of the evening meal. Pupils have access to computers in residence to complete work, although these are not part of the school's network system and Internet access is only by using the machines in the school. Pupils' IEP targets, and the procedures that are followed to help them reach their targets, are included in their care plans. Checklists are used to assess the independence skills of pupils such as when preparing a meal, in communicating, budgeting, shopping and in other areas of personal development. The results are reported to the headteacher and form part of the school's evidence at the annual review. Subject co-ordinators also provide advice to care staff on how to improve pupils' work in their subjects. For example, in English, care staff are encouraged to help pupils practice reading by making magazines of interest and travel brochures easily available. Each contributes to the very good contribution care staff make to continuing the work of the school.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The audit, gained from reviewing the schemes of work for subjects, provides very good support to teachers in planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences in their lessons in all subjects.

47. Spiritual development is very well promoted through daily assemblies, lessons in religious education and the tutorial programme. The assemblies are well planned, well presented and involve pupils so that they are challenged in their thinking about spiritual, moral and social issues. The very good relationship staff have with pupils is beneficial in allowing them to talk about sensitive matters and about the ways in which pupils can help themselves, and reflect personally on what they are doing and achieving. The school celebrates pupils' achievements very well and very high quality displays demonstrate how staff value pupils' work. In turn, pupils also value this well and try their hardest to produce work of the highest standard. There are good spiritual opportunities in lessons. For example, in science Year 9 pupils marvelled at the incandescence of the flame produced when magnesium was burned during an experiment on the reactivity of metals and, in ICT, pupils were amazed at their ability to generate a sequence of pictures to form an animated image.

48. The provision for personal and social education, which includes sex education and drugs awareness, also helps pupils consider the moral issues relating to these areas. Pupils know how they should behave in different situations and staff provide very good role models. They know right from wrong and, generally, adhere to the school and classroom rules. They have learned to respect themselves and the rights of others. Appropriate behaviour is routinely encouraged and praised.

49. The very good opportunities for the development of pupils' social skills permeates all the aspects of the school's work, and especially the inclusion links with Monk's Walk, local college and other consortium provision. The residential provision also strongly supports this. It is promoted by visits to the local community such as to Pizza Express, the Kimpton Dog Rescue, Jarvis Comet Hotel and the Stevenage Football Club. The very close link with the secondary school provides frequent opportunities for pupils to make friends and generally socialise with hearing pupils, when they eat lunch together, take part in lessons and the activities of the lunchtime clubs.

50. Access to a wide range of cultural experiences helps pupils appreciate their own culture, as well as that of others. Planned opportunities to learn about their own culture in lessons in art; geography, history, religious education and music are well used by teachers. This is also the case for learning about the values and beliefs of those of other cultures. For example, as part of their study of religious education pupils have visited synagogues, Buddhist and Sikh temples and churches. They have visited the Welwyn War Museum and the St Alban's Museum to support their history work and the National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Gallery as part of their work in art. Very good displays around the school help reinforce cultural development.

The school's links with the community and partner institutions

51. The school makes very good use of its links with the community in both the school and the residence, as a resource for learning and to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to mix with others in the wider community, for example, through their participation in Scouts, the local youth club, sports and social events with other schools. There are frequent visits locally, for example, to the shops, library and cinema, which promote pupils' independent skills and their social development. Pupils have the opportunity to work alongside others in community-based projects such as the arts project based at the Maternity Unit at the local hospital. This broadens their understanding of the wider environment very well and very positively contributes to their development of citizenship.

52. The school has excellent links with partner institutions. As an associate member of the Welwyn Garden City Post 16 Consortium, the school is able to offer pupils a wide range of courses, including AS and A level and GNVQ, which are tailored to their individual needs. The integration and inclusion of pupils in Monk's Walk School is well established and liaison between staff across curriculum areas is strong. There are very good relationships with the feeder primary schools and a well-planned programme of induction and visits by teachers before pupils start at the school.

Integration

53. Pupils are provided with very good quality integrated experiences, which are very strongly underpinned by the school's philosophy of inclusive education. The school has a long-established link with the secondary school with which it shares a campus. This enables pupils to attend lessons with their hearing peers as a result of a very good integration programme. The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issue identified during the last inspection to increase the opportunities for inclusive experiences for pupils and staff.

54. There are very good links between the two schools at all levels and the process is managed very well. Governors liaise closely, with a representative from Monk's Walk School on the school's governing body. Governors also receive an annual report from the school's senior

teacher with overall liaison responsibility and have examined the system operating at first-hand through focused visits to Monk's Walk. The two headteachers meet weekly and the liaison teacher attends daily briefings at Monk's Walk School and staff meetings as appropriate. Knightsfield staff also have the opportunity to attend in-service training day sessions at Monk's Walk. These links are effective in establishing good communication channels and in extending inclusive opportunities. The school's commitment to extending these opportunities is also evident in practices such as the liaison teacher's input into the induction package for mainstream staff and his contributions to the mainstream school's in-service training programme. The school has an informative site on the Monk's Walk Intranet and this enables mainstream staff to have direct access to pupils' individual education plans and reports as well as general information and advice in the form of checklists relating to lesson planning and evaluating pupil progress.

55. All pupils are integrated into Monk's Walk for part of their timetable and this provides very good learning, social and communication experiences. All Key Stage 3 pupils integrate for art and physical education. In addition, one Year 9 pupil integrates for all subjects except for mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education. All pupils integrate for physical education. Additional levels of integration are then determined by how well pupils meet the clearly identified integration criteria produced by the school, which include age-appropriate behaviour, social and communication skills, and emotional needs. These inclusion opportunities have extended to pupils attending residential field trips with their mainstream peers, supported by a learning support assistant, and they have also taken part in the school's foreign exchange programme.

56. Pupils are very well-supported in mainstream lessons by a very effective team of learning support assistants that is well managed by the liaison teacher. They complete good daily logbooks and pupil tracking sheets to record details of forthcoming work and evaluations of pupils' experiences in lessons, and are currently trialling a recording form to improve the focus of information that is collected. The liaison teacher disseminates this information well to both school staff and Monk's Walk staff and this provides an effective mechanism of ongoing assessment and providing information for planning future work and support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for child protection

57. The school continues to provide a very safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils achieve very well. The quality of educational and personal support and guidance offered to pupils is very good because the school has a clear understanding of pupils' needs, both in school and residence, and offers them high quality support to enable them to make progress in their learning and in their personal development. Parents are very pleased with the support that is given to their children and say that they have no problems approaching the school with any concerns that they may have. Parents say that their children are happy to talk to teachers if they need help because staff listen to them and take action. Parents feel that they are well informed about any incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour and that the school deals very well with them.

58. The school makes very good provision for pupils' welfare, including good procedures for child protection. Staff care very well for pupils in the school and residence and are sensitive to their differing needs. They have a good understanding of pupils' backgrounds and any difficulties that they may have. Staff have very good awareness of the requirement to record concerns and incidents and designated teachers have regular training opportunities in child protection which are shared with all staff. There are good procedures to ensure that pupils and staff work in a safe environment and members of staff and the governing body have a good understanding of health and safety requirements. The school's accommodation is clean and very well maintained. Residential accommodation is of a good standard and pupils have

pleasant bedroom and communal living areas, which they are able to personalise. Care staff provide very good levels of care and support for residential pupils. They set good role models for pupils to follow, while creating a positive and homely environment in which pupils feel secure. Care staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work together with teaching staff to ensure that there is a consistent approach to pupils' care and education. There has not been a Social Services Department inspection of the residential accommodation for some considerable time, however, and it would be in the school's interests, both for pupils and staff, to arrange this as soon as possible.

59. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and have resulted in a reduction of the number of unauthorised absences. Accurate registers and records are kept and patterns of absence are analysed well. The school makes good use of the educational and traveller welfare services when it is necessary to follow up any concerns.

60. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for dealing with any incidents of anti-social behaviour or bullying. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils has a very significant impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are treated with respect and care within clear boundaries and there are high expectations that pupils will behave well. Frequent monitoring and analysis of any incident forms take place, to assess where changes to the management of pupils' behaviour and the approach of staff may be necessary and to ensure that there is consistency of practice. The school works very well with parents where there are problems and involves them in behaviour management strategies such as 'report' cards. Support assistants give very effective support to the school's behaviour policy. They reinforce expectations and monitor pupils' behaviour, particularly when pupils are at Monk's Walk School. The school's systems for rewards and sanctions are clear. Pupils value the points systems and understand that internal suspensions are used as a very serious sanction. Exclusions from the school are used appropriately to address any serious incidents of bullying or aggression.

61. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Form tutors know their pupils well and reinforce positive behaviour and attitudes when they meet in form groups. Pupils are confident and relaxed in school and are able to discuss their concerns. They negotiate the school rules, which promote their social and moral development, and are able to have their say about the running of the school, through the School Council. The points and merits system is effectively used to raise expectations and to monitor and reward pupils' achievements and improvements. Pupils say that behaviour and personal targets set for them help them to focus on what they need to do to improve and that staff give them very good support to do so. The school uses the Hertfordshire Personal and Social Development framework to monitor all aspects of pupils' progress and this is linked to pupils' individual education plan targets. The school is currently looking at ways of rationalising this process so that the monitoring of academic progress and personal development are more closely linked.

Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance

62. The quality of assessment is a strength of the school. This was also judged to be the case at the time of the last inspection. A key issue, however, was to develop further pupils' individual education plans, so that these contribute even more effectively to pupils' progress. All pupils have individual education plans that are reviewed on a termly basis. These plans are of good quality with targets set clearly identifying pupils' immediate learning needs. Occasionally, they are still too general and do not, therefore, make clear to less experienced staff how a particular target could be supported. The recent introduction of language and literacy profiles is ensuring that staff are aware of pupils' most important language and literacy needs; most teachers take these into account well in their planning. Pupils and parents are involved well in the formulation and review of targets set at annual review and in IEPs. The quality of care plans, and pupils' involvement in target setting in these, are also good. The school has developed its system of analysing pupils' examination results, performance in other courses and test data further, to enable it to set individual targets for pupils and whole school

targets. It has made good progress in its assessment procedures and practices since the last inspection and the envisaged development of 'Pupil Progress' files should enhance provision even further.

63. The school has very good systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' learning and it uses these very effectively to monitor pupil progress, set whole school and individual targets and to influence how teachers deliver the curriculum. Staff keep very detailed records of pupils' achievements, experiences, progress, attitudes and behaviour (where appropriate) in school, in Monk's Walk and in residence. These exemplify the quality of care and concern that the school puts into meeting pupils' individual needs and supporting their achievement. Targets set for individuals are challenging, but realistic. A strength of the school's assessment system is the way in which it analyses pupils' data to set targets and to then review progress towards these. For example, it examines carefully the assessments made by teachers on pupils and/or their test scores at Key Stage 3 and uses them both to reflect on progress since Key Stage 2 and to set targets for Key Stage 4. It is also looking carefully at pupils' language and literacy scores, such as in the Edinburgh Reading Tests, to consider whether pupils need specific aspects of their language, reading or writing targeted. This means that the school is able to identify areas of underachievement for individual pupils, as well as specific skills that pupils now need to acquire and respond accordingly through pupils' individual education plans, annual review targets and lesson planning.

64. Procedures for Annual Reviews are good. Teachers write high quality reports for these and a range of tests and procedures are routinely carried out prior to these. Clear educational and personal development targets are set that are then well linked into individual education plans for pupils. Parents and pupils are appropriately involved and the school draws well on a range of other professionals to ensure that pupils' strengths and additional needs are well considered. The speech and language therapist and the visiting educational audiologist carry out assessments of pupils' listening and linguistic progress, which provide high quality support to the schools' work. Currently there is only limited support available from other professionals, such as from physiotherapy and occupational therapy to assess pupils' additional needs, contribute to reviews, and help the school devise programmes for pupils with additional special educational needs. The school tries its best to gain such support and follows up any advice offered, but not all pupils have access to such specialists as would benefit from them, even where this is part of pupils' statements of special educational needs.

65. The school makes very good use of information provided by previous schools and visiting professionals. On entry all pupils are assessed carefully. Wherever possible pupils are visited in their previous school placement; information, profiles and observations made there are combined with assessments on entry to make comprehensive analysis of pupils' strengths and needs. The school uses MIDYIS and annual vocabulary, reading and comprehension tests, as well as individual subject tests, to track pupil progress in key skills and in specific aspects of language and literacy. The English co-ordinator works well with the speech and language therapist to devise language and literacy profiles for all pupils. All teachers have copies of these and of pupils' individual education plan targets and most take them into account well when delivering their subjects. This means that the support for pupils' communication and language needs in the school is very strong.

66. The information gained from assessments is used very effectively by the school to cater for the pupils' personal social and academic needs and to plan for pupils' smooth inclusion both at Knightsfield and at Monk's Walk. There are very good systems in place for monitoring pupils' experiences and tracking progress during the sessions they take in Monk's Walk school for all included pupils and with other partner schools for sixth form pupils. The high quality liaison and support offered by both Monk's Walk and Knightsfield staff mean that pupils' achievements and levels are known by both and both contribute to assessments and take the results into account. This careful monitoring, and the quality of assessment used, mean that the school is quick to identify when a pupil might benefit from a short- or long-term change of programme, such as intensive support for English or mathematics at Knightsfield, additional tutorial support, or indeed the withdrawal of unnecessary support.

67. The assessment and monitoring of progress in individual subjects is very good overall. It is strongest in areas, such as English, music, ICT, history and modern foreign languages (MFL) where there is a good balance of more formal assessment, teacher/ support assistant observations, and annotated work samples. Reports give clear examples of what pupils know, understand and can do and records for individual pupils are consistently and regularly kept. Assessment is satisfactory, but weakest, in art and design and technology, where the co-ordinator is only recently appointed, is not yet a qualified teacher of the deaf, but is now trying to establish a consistent and meaningful system. In all other subjects, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is at least good and sometimes very good.

68. Pupils' personal development is also well assessed and monitored. Although the quality of marking varies at times in most subjects it is strong. In English it is very strong and gives clear guidance to pupils as to how they can achieve even more. The school uses the Hertfordshire Personal and Social Development framework to monitor pupils' personal and social development, but also uses 'Social Use of Language' measures to support this. Those pupils who are resident set personal targets and are fully involved in appraising progress towards them. This supports their personal growth, willingness to take responsibility for their own actions and their independent learning well.

Audiological provision and support

69. The school's audiological resources are very good. A purpose-built audiological suite contains a range of high quality test equipment and variety of spare hearing aids, and consumables such as batteries and leads that enable pupils' audiological needs to be well met. Weekly visits by the local education authority educational audiologist mean that regular specialist input is used well to maintain optimal listening conditions for all pupils through testing, checking and adjusting hearing aids, and taking impressions for new earmoulds. The audiologist has been involved in the school's staff training programme. This has enhanced further the confidence and ability of staff to carry out routine checks of hearing aids and to extend this knowledge into using more specialised equipment such as, the hearing aid test box.

70. The school has an effective daily routine for checking hearing aids and a teacher has responsibility for carrying out routine additional checks and supplying spares. Independence is encouraged well, as older pupils are expected to be responsible for cleaning and caring for their own hearing aids and earmoulds and all pupils are consistent in wearing and using their hearing aids.

71. The school has very good acoustic conditions and FM radio hearing aid systems are used consistently in all classrooms. Pupils who integrate into Monk's Walk School are also supplied with this system and teachers there use it well to include pupils into all lessons. Four of the eight classrooms are also equipped with auditory training units. However, the school is not making sufficient use of this provision for those pupils with severe and profound hearing impairment in order to provide them with the necessary high quality listening conditions. This reduces pupils' access to some learning opportunities. Similarly, the current limited use of direct audio input devices to television and video, in both the school and Monk's Walk School, means that pupils do not always have access to sufficiently high quality of sound when this equipment is being used.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. The school continues to maintain very effective links with parents and, as a result, parents are very pleased with the school, the education it provides and the progress their children make.

73. The questionnaires, completed by parents before the inspection, and the views of parents at the pre-inspection meeting, show very strong support for all areas of the school's work, including the opportunities for integration at Monk's Walk School. All parents say the

school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. They are very pleased with the quality of teaching that helps their child to make progress. Parents say that the school works closely with them and keeps them very well informed about how their child is getting on. In meetings with parents before and during the inspection, these views were confirmed. Some parents are prepared to travel considerable distances to bring their child to the school and some as far as south London. They say that the school is open and approachable and that staff are very caring for the individual needs and concerns of each child and their family. A few parents criticise the school's homework provision, but they have varying views about the quantity and frequency of homework that should be provided. They feel that homework is not appropriate for their child given their special educational needs and the long distance that they live from the school

74. Inspectors' judgements support the very positive views of parents and confirm that pupils achieve and learn very well as a result of very good teaching and very good educational and personal support and guidance. The school recognises that a minority of parents have differing views about homework and monitors the amount and suitability of homework that is set to try and achieve a consistent approach.

75. Parents are provided with very good quality information about the work of the school and their child's progress. All documentation is well written, detailed and attractively presented. The prospectus, governors' annual report and newsletters are excellent documents. They keep parents very well informed about the work and the development of the school and encourage parents to be as involved as possible in their child's education. Parents receive regular and clear information about their child's progress through reports, performance summaries, letters from staff and telephone communication. There is very good subject information for those pupils who are integrated into Monk's Walk School. The school makes every effort to keep in regular contact with parents through both verbal and written means. Parents say that the high quality *home-school organiser books* are a 'lifeline of communication'. All staff, including care staff in the residence, use these well to ensure that parents are up-to-date with their child's progress and so that they are always aware of any concerns.

76. The good quality home-school agreement confirms the school's commitment to the continued development of its partnership with parents and is relevant to all those people involved in the school's community. Parents are supportive of their children and make a good contribution to their learning at school and home. A small number of pupils live at a considerable distance from the school, which makes it difficult for some parents to visit the school frequently, but the school encourages their involvement where possible. An increasing number of parents attend meetings, plays and concerts, the governing body's annual meeting and reviews of pupils' work and progress. A few parents are able to offer help in school, for example with reading, visits and activity days, while others are involved in fundraising activities through the Knightsfield School Association. Although not all parents are actively involved in supporting their child's learning, many regularly hear their children read and support their homework activities. The school is keen to seek the views of parents and gives them many opportunities to air their views through questionnaires, on report reply slips, at annual review meetings and open evenings. Parents say that they welcome the opportunity to contribute comments and to discuss their child's progress and targets for improvement. They say that any concerns are dealt with sensibly and appropriately and that they are always consulted and given clear explanations about decisions that have been made about their child's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

77. The leadership and management of the school are very good and some elements of its work, such as the staff and governors' shared commitment to improvement, are excellent. The very high standards of leadership and management identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. The headteacher is providing a very clear educational direction for the school and is very well supported by senior staff with management

responsibilities. The governing body is excellent in fulfilling its responsibilities and statutory duties and helping to shape the direction of the school. It has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement; it knows it provides high quality provision but wants to improve and attract more pupils to its very good facility. All this results in a very well ordered school, which has a very clear commitment to providing a high quality of education where pupils achieve very well.

78. A striking feature of the school is the strong sense of purpose and direction that is shared by governors and staff. They are very focused and determined on ensuring that the day-to-day work of the school reflects its overall aims and values. This includes not only raising the quality of education it provides in terms of academic achievement, but also in very strongly reflecting its core values of integration, and an auditory-oral approach to communication. As a result, the school has an effective school improvement plan that is produced collaboratively and identifies very well its priorities for development. Equally effective monitoring sheets and progress reports, within a comprehensive overall calendar of target dates, ensure appropriate actions are taken to meet these targets within the required time scales.

79. The school has very effective and systematic processes and procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work and performance and uses the data it collects very well to evaluate the impact and to move the school on. Recent audits have included cross curriculum monitoring of how different subject areas contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the use of information and communication technology. The school used the results of these well to improve the quality of its provision. Highly effective formal mechanisms exist for senior staff to monitor classroom practice and the quality of planning, and work sampling is undertaken to evaluate the quality of marking and assessment. As a result, the headteacher and governors have a detailed understanding of the school's weaknesses and the areas for development that are needed, in order to raise further the standards of education and care.

80. Governors have an excellent perception of their overall responsibilities and how to carry them out. Consequently, the governing body has a very good understanding of what goes on in the school. This has recently included a detailed self-review questionnaire, facilitated by the local education authority officer responsible for governor training, about their understanding of many aspects of the school's work. An efficient and effective system of governor's committees with clear terms of reference and a regular programme of meetings enable them to report in detail to the full governing body. They are kept very well informed about the school's activities through a systematic programme of reporting that includes progress on action plans and the school improvement plan, staff training and course evaluation, data on attainment and pupil progress, and annual subject reports from co-ordinators. In addition, governors find out for themselves what is happening in the school through focused visits that are agreed in advance. Governors also maintain effective contact with Monk's Walk School to monitor the integration procedures. This includes visits to the school to speak with staff and pupils about their feelings, and the chair of Knightsfield's governors meets with the headteacher formally twice a year. The chair of governors at Monk' Walk is also a member of Knightsfield's governing body.

81. The school's internal management structure and the individual roles and responsibilities of senior staff are clear to all members of staff. The senior management team comprises the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher with responsibility for integration and this group meets regularly to discuss routine school business. The head of care only attends these meetings, as appropriate, but also has formal meetings with the headteacher and attends the daily morning briefings. All staff are kept informed about the outcomes of these meetings because of the highly efficient communication channels at all levels within the school.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

82. Overall, the school is very well staffed, with very well qualified and experienced teachers, residential, audiological and support staff. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievements. There is a long-established, very experienced, head of care and two recently appointed care staff for the very small number of pupils in the school's residence. Teachers and support staff are very well matched to the demands of the curriculum and the special educational needs of the pupils. They are also well deployed. Teaching staff are very well qualified. They are nearly all qualified teachers of the deaf with many years experience. One member of staff has recently qualified and another, appointed at Easter 2001, is about to start a training course in July. The school's support staff make a very strong contribution to the inclusion of pupils into Monk's Walk school and guide them very effectively in their studies. They provide well for the individual educational needs of pupils. They are also included in Monk's Walk staff activities such as training and social events.

Staff induction and training.

83. There are good procedures for staff induction training and the school provides effective training to its entire staff in order to offer the best possible provision. These are managed well by the deputy headteacher and inclusion liaison teacher. Training records and evaluations are up-to-date and informative. Standards fund grants are very well accounted for and training well directed. Detailed job descriptions are in place for all staff which make their roles clear and specific. These ensure that staff are well prepared for the posts they hold and that training can support, and build upon, the specific features of their posts. Training also meets whole school needs and over the past 12 months teaching staff have been involved in courses for ICT, school self-evaluation, PSHE initiatives, inclusion and accreditation. Grant aid has also been used well for the specialised teacher of the deaf training. There is a good induction programme with appropriate emphasis on audiological issues, communication, pupil management and child protection. The support staff training programme is managed by the Knightsfield liaison teacher who aims to ensure that training for support staff is relevant to the work they do both in Monk's Walk school as well as in Knightsfield. Interviews with support staff, however, indicate that they feel more could be done to address their particular training needs. Care staff, clerical assistants and the caretaker benefit well from relevant training. Support for the newest and inexperienced staff has been considerable, especially in the production of new schemes of work, and teaching is well monitored. However, weaknesses in teaching seen during the inspection indicate that more needs to be done by senior staff to ensure that consistency in planning is well established during the induction period.

Accommodation

84. The school's accommodation is very good and supplemented very well by the Monk's Walk facilities, college and Post 16 consortium buildings. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The school was purpose built in 1997, when the school re-located from a 'country mansion' style building nearby. The new building allows the curriculum to be taught appropriately and any lack of facilities, such as a hard materials workshop and specialist art room are more than well compensated for by the school's access to the local link secondary school. Classrooms are spacious for the numbers of pupils on roll and well set out for the teaching of deaf pupils, with overhead projection facilities and auditory training units in a half of classrooms. The ICT room and library (also with ICT facilities) are superbly organised and equipped. The school is extensively sound treated and provides a very good acoustic environment in which the residual hearing of pupils can be used to best advantage. Although there are acoustic limitations to the building in which pupils integrate at Monk's Walk, support staff ensure that pupils are well positioned in these classes for access to the teaching and to other pupils.

85. Residential experiences and accommodation contribute well to the wide range curriculum of opportunities provided. The head of care has achieved much in making the residential accommodation comfortable and 'homely' for the six pupils who are currently resident. Kitchen and dining arrangements are well thought out in developing specific skills area in the residential curriculum. These allow pupils to prepare their own meals and gain a wide range of skills in areas such as meal preparation and budgeting. There are good leisure facilities and sitting / games room, and off-site facilities, such as the campus youth club, are also used after school. The playing fields and school grounds (some separate and some shared with Monk's Walk) are extensive, well maintained and effectively used. There are very good procedures for maintaining and improving accommodation. The governors, together with the experienced and highly committed caretaker, keep a watchful eye on the fabric of the building and have been instrumental in getting a long awaited agreement over rectification of some defects, such as some cracks in brickwork and dampness in plaster.

Learning resources

86. The school's resources, to support pupils' learning are good. They are well supplemented by resources at Monk's Walk. They are very good in science, excellent in ICT, and good in all other subjects. Pupils have access to Monk's Walk library as well as to high quality library resources in Knightsfield, where a library area is well stocked with a good range of reading material suitable to age, interest and abilities of the pupils. Resources for ICT are not always used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects and the school acknowledges that this is now improving since New Opportunities Fund training for teachers has begun. Some good examples of use of ICT were seen in French and in science during the inspection; ICT also strongly supports pupils who have complex reading and writing difficulties, through the very good use of voice recognition software. Study skills are also supported through the use of ICT and homework in the residence. Specialist audiological resources are very good, although auditory training units and other direct input devices are not used as fully as they could be in lessons, where these would be appropriate. The school makes very good use of the local environment, of visits and of visiting companies, for example for their annual Shakespeare production to enhance pupils' academic and personal-social development.

The school's financial planning

87. The financial planning of the school is very good and there are clear procedures and appropriate controls in place. Financial planning is closely linked to school priorities and planned thoroughly in detail. The finance committee of the governing body meets twice a term, or more often if needed, to monitor budget spending. They closely monitor allocation of the budget and ensure that there is no over commitment of the resources available. The chairman is himself an accountant and with his background and experience advises the committee on long-term planning and the importance of establishing priorities. The school has a significant underspend, partly as a result of prudent accountancy and good housekeeping, as well as the fact that the expected number of pupils on the school's role has not been realised. The projected number of pupils and the consequent funding based upon these planned places has now been more realistically adjusted. The total of the reserves has fallen in the past year and will continue to do so in the coming financial year. The school finances are, therefore, very healthy and very well managed.

88. Curriculum allowances are the responsibility of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators make well-informed bids for resources for their subjects. The financial implications of these bids are carefully considered and, if approved by the senior management team, form the basis of the school development and improvement plan. The allocation of the allowances also takes account of the priorities identified in the school improvement plans.

89. Office administration is very well managed. The administration manager makes a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school's financial transactions and procedures. The headteacher and the administration manager are trained in using a commercial software package and the system has full back-up software in the case of damage.

The headteacher has also attended financial management training. The accounts are submitted annually for approval by the governing body and are audited by the LEA every two years. A best value statement is submitted to the LEA with the approved budget annually. The school purchases financial support from the LEA on a monthly basis for the reconciliation of the accounts.

90. Money raised through fund raising by the school, or given from a voluntary body for a specific purpose, is used appropriately. For example, the £400 from the John Lewis department store was used well for a landscaping project during 1999/2000. Similarly the standards funds are also appropriately used; for instance, to purchase learning resources in areas of the curriculum that were identified with a shortfall of apparatus and equipment.

91. The school applies the principles of best value very well and has a strong understanding of all the elements of this. It does this in a number of ways. The headteacher uses contact with other schools for the deaf as a way of comparing pupils' performance at the end of key stages, as well as external accredited courses. They also compare the cost of educating pupils at Knightsfield with similar specialist schools for the deaf, as well as with other special schools in their own authority. They have worked with the LEA to reduce the cost over the past 12 months and are vigilant about being cost effective and prudent. In this respect they compare favourably with these schools.

92. The principle of challenge is also applied. The senior management team and governors constantly and rigorously monitor and evaluate their performance across all areas of the school. This is reflected in the school improvement plan and strategic planning. They have developed good relationships with their LEA and 'buy in' their advisory service for most subjects.

93. As part of their consultation process they seek, record and evaluate the views of the pupils and parents. The school council is one avenue where they listen to the views of the pupils. This lapsed for a period of time, but is now seeking nominations from the various classes. On a personal level, the role of the form tutor is a strongly developed one. The very good relationships between pupils and the staff and the discussion that occurs during this time means that pupils' views are very well considered and taken account of by the management. Parents' meetings and the annual review meetings are another opportunity to listen to parents and pupils' views.

94. The school competes to maintain its place in the 'marketplace' of deaf education by promoting the work and the successes of the school. Staff and governors are working hard to promote the school's positive image to attract new admissions, especially from other LEAs in order to develop the concept of Knightsfield being a regional resource. They implement a consistent process of tendering for services, where appropriate, and support their finances through fund-raising and voluntary support.

95. These arrangements are having a very good impact on the education provided by the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

96. There are no key issues. The points for improvement are relatively minor and most have been recognised by the school prior to the inspection.

These minor issues are as follows:

Improving the use of auditory training units;
Using amplification devices when listening to television / radio / computers

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	37	43	10	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	24
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, 2, 3, 4

The number of pupils undergoing teacher assessment, the National Curriculum tests and other examinations was less than ten in each gender group. As a result, the outcomes of these are not published.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	21
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	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: Y7 – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3
Average class size	3.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y12

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	598212
Total expenditure	605771
Expenditure per pupil	25240
Balance brought forward from previous year	51259
Balance carried forward to next year	43700

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	24
Number of questionnaires returned	9

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	89	11	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	33	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	33	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	22	0	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.	100	0	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	89	11	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	33	0	0	22

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

ENGLISH

97. Progress in English since the last inspection is good. At the time of the last inspection report provision for English was considered to be very good; this included the quality of the teaching, pupils' achievements and progress, and the curriculum itself. The school's provision for English is now very good with a number of excellent features. The progress and achievements of pupils including those with special educational needs is very good for all aspects of English. This is because the school assesses pupil's individual needs in English very carefully; teachers then carefully plan lessons that both meet these needs and ensure the pupils' work covers all aspects of English National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The school is implementing a number of features of the National Literacy Strategy very successfully. Although there is room for more consistency in teachers' planning for, and use of time in, the daily language and literacy sessions, these make a significant contribution to improving pupils' confidence in their self-expression and reading.

98. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of English skills and fluency and at various stages in their secondary school career. On entry, most have achievements well below those expected for their age in English, although some individual pupils enter with achievements closer to these. In addition, many lack confidence in their reading and writing skills and some are reluctant communicators, except with people that they know. The school adopts an effective auditory - oral approach to supporting pupils' language and communication skills and the development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority by all staff. The school's work in this area is well supported by the speech and language therapist and the assessments made by the educational audiologist.

99. Pupils in Key Stage 4 take a range of qualifications and the levels achieved in these vary considerably from year-to-year because of the differences between pupils in year groups. All pupils, however, take at least a Certificate of Achievement in Education in English and many take GCSE. Some higher attaining pupils take both English Language and Literature and are predicted to get grades of D or above, both this year and next year. Some pupils who have gained a Certificate of Achievement go on to take a GCSE course at sixth form level.

100. All pupils, including those in the sixth form, make very good progress in relation to their starting points and their progress in terms of their attitudes and confidence in self-expression is excellent. Most younger pupils have delayed skills in self expression on entry and some lack confidence in their ability to understand and be understood. Although many pupils leave the school with language skills that are still not in line with those expected for their age, their social use of language, presentation of their points of view and their communication with others has developed considerably; a significant number do have fluent, intelligible spoken language that is comparable to others of their age.

101. By the end of Year 7, pupils are contributing readily to lessons, have extended their grammar and their vocabulary which now includes many relevant Key Stage 3 subject terms, as well the colloquialisms of everyday life. Other pupils who have more fluent language on entry make similar gains, but also use their language more confidently to present their views. Their teachers listen carefully to what they have to say and are good role models for listening. In a lesson relating to Ahlberg's poem *The Question* the teacher listened intently as pupils extended their own thinking about the boy's feelings, probing and extending their understanding, and vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate that they understand words such as *simile*, *alliteration*, *rhyme* and *repetition*. By the end of Year 9 pupils' speaking and listening skills have extended further. They respond readily to their teacher's questioning and use more complex language forms and vocabulary than those indicated in their records on entry to the school. They exchange good-humoured banter with their teacher and have very good relationships with each other. Higher attaining pupils talk confidently and present their points of view effectively when discussing conservation poems. Those who are included in English lessons in Monk's Walk are confident

in what they are doing, listen carefully and follow well what is asked of them, sometimes with the additional in-class support of highly skilled support assistants. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' speaking and listening skills are wide ranging, but all have made very good progress, including those with additional special educational needs. Lower attaining pupils are strongly motivated to please their teachers and try their best as they extend their understanding of pronouns. In language and literacy sessions, they listen carefully to each other as they discuss their news and their work, questioning each other with interest. Those pupils in the school who have additional specific language and literacy needs are given very good support for these; some, for example, are helped to listen and re-tell more effectively through the use of story re-tell programmes, within their work on Urban Myths and Legends. In doing so they extend the length and improve the grammar of what they are saying and incorporate new vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils present their views using complex language and appropriate terminology and vocabulary. They give coherent accounts of what they are doing and why.

102. During both key stages, pupils make very good progress in their reading and excellent progress in their attitudes to reading. Many pupils say that they were reluctant readers before they attended the school, but that they now enjoy reading because the school has helped them. They also say it is because they are given such interesting things to read. The range of texts studied at both key stages is wide ranging and has a well calculated amount of challenge for pupils, who are strongly motivated to read them, because of the teaching approaches used. Many, but not all, pupils in Year 7 are reading well below the levels expected for their age on entry. The school clearly targets reading skills for development, both within group lessons and for individuals and provides strong support for pupils. These are supported by a very clear assessment programme that then informs pupils' targets and the planning for these. Consequently, pupils quickly feel they are making progress in their reading and higher attaining pupils, too, are stretched to think about their reading in more complex ways. Higher attaining pupils read fluently, with expression, and have a wide ranging repertoire of word and meaning attack skills, they discuss the characters in stories freely and use their reading to research facts. Lower attaining pupils use clues to attempt new words and are beginning to use phonic skills effectively. They talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read in school including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. By the end of Year 9 pupils have read an appropriate range of contemporary and classic literature, including *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as legends and poetry from other cultures. They talk about these with understanding and also of a range of authors that they enjoy reading by themselves. They use their reading to find out information using both reference books and the Internet. The majority now have a very good basis in terms of attitudes and developing skills for their courses at Key Stage 4. During Key Stage 4 pupils' reading skills develop and extend further, both as a result of their reading for their course work in other subjects and through the continued attention in English and language and literacy lessons to individual need. Lower attaining pupils read simple autobiographies, textbooks and newspapers with interest and readily explore the Internet for information. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have a broad range of reading skills and read accurately and with interest, although some still need support for fully understanding more complex language. Higher attaining pupils have excellent reading skills and attitudes and read at levels close to and occasionally above the levels of their hearing peers.

103. Pupils' progress in writing is very good. Although some pupils still have considerable difficulty in writing freely by the end of Year 11, all have made significant gains since their starting points and are more confident and co-operative in their writing. Most pupils on entry have considerably delayed writing skills and often are very reluctant writers. Their writing reflects their spoken language and is immature in its style, content and grammar. As the pupils' self expression improves, then the grammar of their writing improves and there is good and steady progress towards this across the two key stages. Pupils' writing style and the content of their writing improves because of the quality and range of the writing experiences to which they are exposed and the strong emphasis on providing models for this within the English curriculum. In addition, there is very good support through teacher feedback and marking for pupils' understanding of what is good in their work and how they could improve it further. The youngest pupils, in Year 7, learn to look very carefully at the writing of a range of authors, including poetry and excerpts from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They identify

the devices that the writers use such as *personification* and *alliteration* and make up their own similes and alliterations. Higher attaining pupils write stories and descriptions that include these and other devices that are at an appropriate level for their age. During Key Stage 3, all pupils extend the length and accuracy of their writing and are helped to present their views and arguments in more logical sequences. Careful support for spelling means that they are increasingly independent in this area, but also that they use dictionaries and thesauruses well. They write good accounts of the literature they have read, which clearly identify key events and aspects of characters and understand how different writing styles have to be adopted according to the task. By Year 9, at the end of the key stage, they are increasingly self-evaluative of what they write and this is a particularly strong feature of the English provision. Pupils are encouraged to re-read their own work and re-draft this, thinking not only of the presentation but what they feel they can improve. Pupils in lessons checked their work and amended it, for example, when word processing, before asking the teacher for help. They also checked word lists around the room and in dictionaries.

104. Writing skills are very wide ranging by the end of Year 11. Lower attaining pupils, and some who have additional special educational needs, write more accurately and with more confidence, but their grammar and vocabulary choices are immature. They have, however, made significant gains in their attitudes and are strongly motivated particularly in word processing, presentation and writing that has a clear purpose. They are keen to finish their work in these instances and try very hard to improve it, asking to stay late to complete it. Other pupils, whilst needing some support to improve the detail and style of what they write, write with confidence for a range of purposes and this supports their coursework in other subjects.

105. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language (EAL) are very well provided for within English and make very good progress in relation to these. Individual pupils have access to appropriate support for writing, such as ICT and speech recognition software. The very good support for self-expression for all pupils in the school, as well as the respect for individuals, has enabled pupils with EAL to make very good progress in English.

106. Teaching and learning in English is very good overall. It is particularly strong when taught by the specialist teachers and for those language and literacy sessions that are taught by the specialist English teacher or qualified teachers of the deaf. Lessons are almost always very well planned, both in terms of English content, and in relation to pupils' specific needs. The teaching is enthusiastic and lively, gains the pupils' interest and in most lessons there is a very good balance of teacher talk and pupil participation. Pupils are told clearly what they are to learn and why; tasks are challenging, but the excellent relationships and ready use of humour keeps pupils readily on task. Time is used well in almost all sessions, including language and literacy sessions. Support assistants are used well, particularly for small group and individual support and the support provided for individual pupils in Monk's Walk, both in-class and at other times is particularly effective and insightful. Occasionally, in whole group sessions there is not a clear role for the classroom assistant. The teaching of English is supported well by the high quality assessments, observations and records that are kept and the school's reflective attitude to these. These mean that appropriate targets are drawn up for and with pupils for their communication, language and literacy and these inform lesson planning well. There is a very effective partnership between the English co-ordinator and the speech and language therapist, including joint assessment and teaching and this helps ensure that pupils' communication needs in lessons are well provided for in relevant meaningful ways. There are, however, occasions when pupils' listening needs could be met even more effectively by more regular use of the group auditory trainers and the radio hearing aid system. Not all pupils had access to subtitled videos in Monk's Walk or to television or tape recorder adaptors to support their listening in lessons, such as music and science at both schools.

107. The curriculum in English is very good. Pupils in both key stages and in the sixth form experience a broad and balanced curriculum in all areas of English. There are very good detailed schemes of work that support a well-planned progressive curriculum in all attainment targets and prepare pupils well for the courses they will study at Key Stage 4. There is very

good use of role-play and dramatic reading and storytelling to support curriculum delivery. The annual school production supports pupils' study of Shakespeare, while allowing them very good opportunities for dramatic presentation, dance and co-operative working. This, and the opportunities provided in subjects such as music, history and geography, supports their self-confidence and speaking and listening across the curriculum well. Pupils' reading and writing is also well supported in most subjects, although the school recognise that this could be more systematically planned for and delivered and is reviewing its policy and practice in these areas.

108. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in English is particularly strong. Pupils' reading is assessed using standardised reading tests, National Curriculum levels and other profiles. Secondary school data (MIDYIS) and other data is used to analyse individual attainment and predict progress and levels. Good examples of pupils' work are kept and there are individual videotapes of pupils that demonstrate their progress in speech, language and self-confidence in expression. Further assessments are made of pupils' emerging grammar and vocabulary and their use of subject specific vocabulary for the lessons that they do.

109. Very detailed records are kept of pupils' progress and their National Curriculum levels; their strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified and pupils are given excellent spoken and written feedback on the quality of their work and how they might now improve. The new language and literacy profiles mean that all teachers are now fully aware of pupils' levels and targets and most teachers support these well in other subjects as well as English, though there is some room for extending this further. The school is now exploring ways of incorporating the Framework for Teaching English at Key Stage 3 into the curriculum and has already audited its language and literacy practice with a consultant.

110. The co-ordination and management of the subject is very strong. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, committed and has high expectations for pupils. She has a very good grasp of the subject and a determination that pupils will have equal access to it. She works very well with other staff to co-ordinate the subject and now, having finished her training course as a teacher of the deaf, is to become more involved in the direct monitoring of the teaching in the language and literacy sessions. Prior to this there has been very good support from the senior management team for the development of the subject and for its monitoring, including the use of local education authority and other consultants. There are very good, and appropriate, development plans for the subject. Time and resources are well used and the excellent partnership with Monk's Walk means that pupils across the ability and needs range are well provided for and appropriately challenged.

MATHEMATICS

111. Overall, during the inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress in lessons observed in Key Stages 3 and 4, although the analysis of their work showed that the majority make good progress over time. The difference between their achievement in lessons and overall progress reflects the range in quality of teaching and learning that was observed. This was due in part to recent staff changes and, therefore, judgements on overall standards throughout the school are best judged on the scrutiny of pupils' work.

112. Pupils' work shows that pupils make good progress and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. The judgement of good progress over time is also supported by test and examination results. All pupils were successful in the GCSE and Certificate of Achievement examinations in 2000 and their grades showed that they had made good progress from their levels on entry to the school and from their end-of-key-stage tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The five pupils taking Certificate of Achievement all gained passes and pupils' GCSE results ranged from D to F grades. The highest attaining pupils attend lessons in Monk's Walk School and some of those achieve results in line with national standards at the end of Key Stage 4.

113. As pupils move through Key Stage 3 they follow a well-balanced subject curriculum that develops their mathematical knowledge and extends their understanding of ideas involving numbers, shapes and handling data. Therefore, by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to demonstrate a range of mathematical skills in all these areas. They know about the factors and multiples of numbers. They understand the concept of prime and square numbers, and they have a developing understanding of algebra as they write simple equations. Pupils know the names and properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes and are able to draw a two-dimensional shape like a semi-circle from a written description such as 'a shape with one straight line and one that is curved'. Pupils also demonstrate their increasing competence and confidence in handling mathematical data as they draw bar charts, line graphs and pie charts and read information from them. They draw information accurately from tables, such as the choice of sun factor cream given a range of information about the different creams, skin types and details about which one to use at different stages in the holiday.

114. Older pupils follow externally accredited courses that build on previous learning and allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in simple problem-solving activities, which require them to use different areas of mathematical understanding. For example, by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils know about different types of angles and they have investigated the number of degrees inside different two-dimensional shapes. They are able to incorporate this knowledge with their understanding of triangles and their skills in measuring, drawing and using a compass to construct an accurate triangle using only information on the length of the three sides. By the end of Year 11, pupils also demonstrate greater understanding of numbers, as they show that they can identify which is the highest / lowest of a list of positive and negative numbers and are able to add and multiply these numbers. Pupils know about less than one, as they round up decimal numbers to different decimal places, and have the skills to solve problems involving fractions in their improper form and as mixed numbers. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrate their developing mathematical vocabulary and more consistent use of units of measurement. They know the words *length*, *mass* and *capacity* and can take appropriate measurements independently, which they record using the correct units. Pupils who attend lessons in Monk's Walk School were not observed during the inspection, because of study leave and absences, but their work demonstrates them to be making at least good progress in mathematics.

115. Overall, the teaching of mathematics in Knightsfield is satisfactory, although good teaching was observed in both key stages. However, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Key Stage 4. When teaching is good, lessons are characterised by effective and quickfire introductory mental mathematics sessions, the level of individual support provided and the teachers' careful explanations that match pupils' needs. Consequently pupils are able to work with interest and understanding and they persevere, taking pride in getting the correct answer. These features were evident when a class of Year 10 pupils were able to achieve well in a lesson on percentages, converting them to fractions and decimals because of high quality teaching that had many good features. A lively introduction engaged all pupils immediately as the teacher maintained a good pace through an oral warm-up session to which pupils responded well. The teacher's oral communication skills were good and pupils were confident with their responses and this effective two-way communication contributed greatly to the maintenance of a good pace. A good degree of challenge was maintained and this included requiring pupils to explain their reasoning and the strategies they had used in arriving at their answer and to share this with their classmates. Good relationships and the mixture of activities maintained a busy and purposeful environment in which pupils were able to succeed. However, there was not an effective concluding session to the lesson and that was a missed opportunity to assess pupils' understanding.

116. Pupils did not make such good progress in all lessons as their learning was reduced significantly when a particular lesson had unsatisfactory features. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class did not learn enough because planning for the lesson was limited. The exercises presented were simply a series of mechanical and repetitive activities from a textbook. This, coupled with a lack of pace and the teacher's uncertain subject knowledge, meant that pupils

were not stimulated and became bored. However, to their credit, the pupils continued working and did not display any disruptive behaviour.

117. The management of mathematics is good and the co-ordinator is developing detailed schemes of work for each group of pupils in each key stage. Although the co-ordinator has been relatively recently appointed to the role, early contact has been made with the local authority advisory team for support and advice. The co-ordinator has worked hard to introduce an approach to teaching numeracy into Year 7 in 2000, based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been implemented satisfactorily. However, the overall effectiveness of the school's strategy for teaching numeracy skills is limited by the lack of opportunity for the mathematics co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and to develop consistent and rigorous methods of assessment and recording of pupil progress. As a result, not all teachers are maintaining informative and comprehensive assessment records showing what pupils can do, know and understand. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out classroom monitoring and the subject co-ordinator monitors the quality of planning and pupils' work. Curriculum planning is good and there are close links with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. A comprehensive overview of the subject is provided for each key stage that ensures a breadth of subject curriculum and a smooth transition from one key stage to another.

SCIENCE

118. Pupils' achievements, and the progress they make over their time in school, are good. Pupils' progress is similar to that judged in the last inspection. A specialist teacher from Knightsfield teaches the majority of pupils, and the good progress reported at the last inspection has been maintained. The generally good quality of teaching in the subject, and the planning for pupils' learning opportunities, which builds well on pupils' previous skills, knowledge and ideas, make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. The very small number of pupils who are taught science in the mainstream school, Monk's Walk, also make good progress. Pupils' abilities vary from year-to-year and in 2000, although one pupil achieved a Level 3 and another a Level 4, a high proportion of pupils did not achieve a level in their National Curriculum end-of-Key Stage 3 tests. The four pupils who took GCSE, at the end of Key Stage 4, however, achieved passes, with grades ranging between D and G. The three pupils entered for Certificate of Achievement also attained passes.

119. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of science over the full range of the Programme of Study. For example, in life processes and living things, they have learned the difference between variation due to environmental factors and that caused by inheritance from parents. They know that genes control human features and that these are located on chromosomes. They understand that genes can be dominant and recessive and, given basic information, can predict outcomes from classroom exercises. Moreover, they apply this information to the idea of selective breeding of animals. For example, they learn that for leaner meat, greater milk yield or increased resistance to disease is required. In materials and their properties, the highest attaining pupils understand the actions of atoms. They know they are made up of protons and electrons and how they join together to make compounds. They name and recognise symbols and identify these by their atomic number in the periodic table. They write simple formulae and represent chemical reactions as word equations. For example, in a lesson where the teaching was good, pupils formed copper sulphate and water from sulphuric acid acting on copper oxide. In their study of energy in physical processes, they have learned that energy is measured in Joules, that it exists in many forms, can be transferred and that the sun is the ultimate source of energy. Pupils' interest and attitude in science is good. They have made particularly good progress in recognising science as a subject in which they can find out for themselves by experimenting, recording their results and through explanation gain new knowledge. They can tell what is a fair test, form good hypotheses, collect accurate data and, when required, use computers to graph their results. For example, pupils used these skills well in a lesson to establish the focal point of a lens.

120. The good progress pupils make in these and the other attainment targets of the subject prepare them well for their work towards GCSE science. At Key Stage 4, they continue to make good progress over the full range of the syllabus as covered in the examination. Routinely, pupils achieve good grades in Year 11.

121. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons taught by the Knightsfield teacher take place in a very good, well equipped science laboratory located in Monk's Walk School, the facility paid for by Knightsfield School. Over many years, this has been well stocked with resources to help teach science to pupils with hearing impairment. For example, very good use is made of overhead transparencies to support verbal explanations and to spell technical words such as 'sulphate' and 'oxide'. The radio microphone is used effectively and the teacher ensures that pupils fully understand and know what they are to do in lessons. Lessons frequently involve investigation and experimentation; pupils particularly enjoy the practical work and respond very positively. They also enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning. They adhere very well to safety rules. They set up experiments carefully and record their results accurately. The key words, which are very often displayed on the walls of the laboratory or projected overhead, help them gain a good understanding of their results and explain their learning. The small number of pupils in each class ensures that each has the full attention of the teacher at all times; constant checking is made that they fully understand what they are learning and doing. The good relationship they have with the teacher helps them be confident as learners, able to make suggestions and to ask questions when they feel unsure. Good lesson planning, the well-resourced laboratory, the trust they have with their teacher and the frequent opportunities they have to be responsible for their learning all contribute to their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of lessons in science. They routinely work hard. Consequently in most lessons, time is used well. Occasionally the pace of lessons could be brisker and the teacher better organised at the beginning of lessons. In lessons with mainstream pupils, the very good work of the learning support assistants helps pupils take a full part in lessons and ensures good progress. Homework, as part of the school programme, is well used to support teaching and learning.

122. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. Over time he has developed considerable resources to support the teaching of the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study and the science syllabus for GCSE and Certificate of Achievement. He is in a good position to continue to lead the subject, and to develop the good assessment and pupil monitoring procedures needed to improve the already good standards pupils are achieving and the good progress they are making. ICT is beginning to be used well for recording the results of experiments and displaying information graphically. The teacher is benefiting well from the New Opportunities Training for ICT in this respect.

ART AND DESIGN

123. At Key Stage 3, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make are satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, Knightsfield pupils are taught with mainstream pupils in the secondary school. They are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject, supported by a highly competent support staff, in well-resourced art rooms. Both contribute to the good standards and the good progress pupils are making. Pupils' skills are wide ranging and their abilities vary from year-to-year. In the Key Stage 3 assessments made by teacher in 2000, nearly all pupils were working toward levels expected for their age while in GCSE, in Key Stage 4, the four pupils made good progress, gaining passes with grades ranging from B to E.

124. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have learned to use a wide range of medium, including pencils, charcoal and paint, for different purposes, for example landscape and still life. They have learned about the work of artists such as Picasso, Howard Hodgkin, Van Gogh and Mondrian and are developing an understanding of the techniques they used in their painting. This is demonstrated by the good attempts the pupils made at representing these artists in their own work. They model stone, clay and card for their three-dimensional work and produce work of satisfactory quality. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is heavily biased toward representational painting and drawing. As a consequence, pupils have too little knowledge, skills, and

experience in the full range of three-dimensional work, ceramics, comparative art and artwork from different countries and ethnic groups.

125. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the subject to GCSE level in lessons in the mainstream school. They cover the syllabus in full, are very well supported by assistants from Knightsfield, and are taught in very good specialist art rooms. They have progressed to learning about the higher skills of drawing and painting, for example the softening of tones with increasing distance from the artist and how tones change when seen through windows and doors, after the style of Edward Hopper. They understand why they have to conduct comprehensive research before they begin their task. In this they make good use of reference books and of the Internet to view the paintings and drawings of different artists. All pupils are making good progress, with the highest current predicted grade being 'B' for Year 11 pupils.

126. In Knightsfield, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teacher is a recent appointment, with no specialist training in the subject or in teaching pupils with hearing impairment. He is rapidly developing the curriculum and is increasing the range and quantity of resources to better reflect the full Programme of Study for Key Stage 3. In lessons in Knightsfield, pupils enjoy art. They behave well and take great care with their work, especially when they are painting for a purpose as they did when they painted in the style of Edward Munch's *Scream*. In art lessons taught in the mainstream school, the specialist knowledge of the teachers, the very good quality of support, the good teaching rooms and the good quality of work of the mainstream pupils all act to enthuse pupils. They work hard and take pride in producing their best work. They especially enjoy being part of a large class and benefit from interacting with other pupils. From this they gain academically, socially and linguistically.

127. Co-ordination at this time is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is working hard in developing the subject in Knightsfield, in devising strategies to make best use of the all the provision available at Key Stage 4 and in furthering his professional development in the subject. The very good quality of art display in Knightsfield helps to reinforce learning in art and contributes to the ethos of learning apparent throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. Pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory in design and technology and they make satisfactory progress in this area. Since the last inspection, the appointment of a new specialist teacher to co-ordinate design and technology has enabled the Programmes of Study to be covered in full, including all elements of food studies. Although not yet qualified as a teacher of the deaf, he has worked hard, using his specialist knowledge, to ensure that planning is fully up-to-date and is comprehensive. Resistant materials work is taught in the well-equipped workshops on the Monk's Walk site. Pupils' abilities vary from year-to-year and the 2000 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum assessments indicated that pupils' levels ranged between two and four. The seven pupils taking GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000 achieved grade C and D passes, and their average points score indicated good progress over that time.

129. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are adept at following a design brief to make a well-finished product from different materials, including wood, plastic and metal. They have learned to use a range of tools such as lathes, saws and drills accurately and safely when cutting, drilling and joining materials to make items, such as candlesticks, wall mounted and freestanding light fixtures and decorated copper boxes for small jewellery. They gain experience of batch production when they make a 'ziggy man toy' from wood using dowels to control the descent of the cut out shape of a man. Over a six-week period, they design and make a mechanical toy with one up-down movement and one that transfers motion through 90 degrees. For this they use softwood strips for the box, make cams, wheels, a crank with dowel rods to provide axles and finish in acrylic paint. It provides a good opportunity to practice techniques already learned and to gain new skills, in designing and making for movement. In textiles, they have learned to use with good accuracy machines for sewing and cutting. They know how to colour cloth with dye and paint, and make patterns through the process of batik. This term's project, a waistcoat, provides a very good opportunity for pupils to practice their

skills in designing, cutting, sewing and decorating on a project which they see as relevant. In graphics they have learned about different drawing techniques such as isometric and two-point principles and have produced good quality work using airbrushes and different photographic techniques.

130. Since the recent arrival of the new specialist teacher, pupils' knowledge of food skills has improved considerably. They link their work well with their study of science, when they learn about the different food types, including proteins, carbohydrates and fat and what constitutes a healthy diet. In practical work, they use microwaves, ovens, grills and toasted sandwich makers to help them prepare a healthy meal. In one lesson they made a variety of short crust pastry products that were suitable for sale at a supermarket. Pupils have learned to work quickly and confidently in preparing short crust pastry for jam tarts and for lining flans that were filled with mixtures of different fruits. A small number of pupils take their lessons in design and technology with mainstream pupils in the secondary school. They make equivalent progress to those who are taught by the Knightsfield teacher.

131. Pupils at Key Stage 4 study resistant materials and food skills for the GCSE. The Knightsfield teacher, teaches resistant materials with practical work taking place in a workshop in the mainstream school. For food skills, Knightsfield pupils join with secondary school pupils in lessons taught by Monk's Walk teachers. Pupils can also choose to study textiles, electronics and graphics to GCSE level, although no pupil has chosen these options this year. All who are studying the subject at Key Stage 4 are achieving standards sufficiently high enough for them to gain pass grades in their examination.

132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The very recently appointed teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject, but is new to teaching pupils with hearing impairment. He has good expectations for pupils' learning and has already established a good relationship with pupils. Consequently, pupils respond well and make a substantial effort to learn and to complete their best work. Most class based lessons, involve pupils learning as a result of clear and direct teaching. This is good, as pupils know exactly the tasks they need to complete to further their learning. However, they are allowed too few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, for example, to find out for themselves by researching from reference books, CD ROMS or the Internet. This limits their learning in the design element of the subject especially, by not allowing them to fully explore their own ideas. This is not the case when pupils are in the workshop. Here they are expected to take responsibility for their learning, select appropriate tools and use them safely according to the design brief, for example when they make a Jack in the box toy. Pupils particularly enjoy being in the workshop and being active in their learning. They work hard to interpret their design, and physically hard to complete their end work quickly and to the best of their ability. The small number of pupils who take design and technology lessons with mainstream pupils, benefit from the good support provided by the learning support assistants and linguistically and socially by being in the company of hearing pupils.

133. The co-ordinator is newly appointed. He is working hard to develop the subject. This includes ensuring that the planning documents cover all the elements of the Programme of Study at Key Stage 3. The workshops, specialist rooms for food skills and the good level of resources, including power tools, hand tools and disposable resources such as wood, metal and plastic provide good support for teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

134. The pupils' progress in the subject is very good at both key stages. However, during the inspection period it was only possible to observe one lesson. Therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the teaching, although evidence was taken from teacher's planning and an analysis of pupils' work to make judgements about the pupils' progress. From their folders there is evidence of very good progress over time. Similarly by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils work towards accreditation by studying for the Certificate of Achievement. This

is a clear pathway of learning to complement progression from the Key Stage 3 programme of studies.

135. The school has a geography policy that seeks to develop pupils' interest in the environment and the world around them and it is successful in doing this. In Key Stage 3 they study two foreign countries and ten themes, for example, the weather, the environment, population as well as various local studies. For their Certificate of Achievement coursework in Key Stage 4, pupils study people and their environments, where they live and work and tourism and the environment. Pupils of all abilities achieve a very good understanding of the ideas introduced, for example, the reasons for changeable weather in this country and other parts of the world. In their workbooks they show an increasing skill in map drawing and interpreting the maps. Their writing shows an understanding of the relationship between different areas of the town, the facilities that are needed for the community, for example, recreational centres, playing fields and swimming baths. In their work, pupils show that they are able to analyse the needs of the community in order to provide an environment where people can mix and live together. An example of this is clear in the scrutiny of their books, where they had drawn diagrams of the ideal town.

136. Although it is not possible to make an overall judgement of teaching in the one example seen, the very good teaching observed in the Year 8 lesson meant that pupils learned very well. The lesson was concerned with the relationship between poverty and the amount of crime in the area. Following very good opportunities to research using police records of petty crime in an area, pupils identified the physical and human features of areas where crime was most prevalent. There was good discussion, developing hypotheses about the connection between street layout and design of building, open spaces, vegetation and crime. The discussion generated considerable ideas that embraced many other areas of the curriculum, for example, moral and social education as well as considering ethical issues and supported pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. The routine of introducing specialist vocabulary is very good practice with clear coverage of new words on the screen using the overhead projector. Two teachers, who work as a team, using their highly planned programme of study teach the subject.

137. Resources and accommodation are very good with sufficient display space, which is shared with history and religious education. There is evidence of very good liaison with other departments on cross-curricular work, not only in developing literacy skills, but also in history, as well as personal, social and health education.

HISTORY

138. Pupils of all abilities make excellent progress in lessons and over time. The scrutiny of pupils' work in the subject gives a clear indication that by the end of Key Stage 3 they are gaining an excellent understanding of complex historical issues and data. By the end of Key Stage 4 the presentation of work is of a very high standard and shows how well their historical skills are being developed. Pupils' ability and levels vary considerably from year-to-year; this is partly because of their particular special educational needs and because some have had only limited exposure to the subject before attending Knightsfield. Nonetheless they make excellent progress from these starting points in terms of their interest and their historical understanding.

139. Achievement is excellent throughout the school. Pupils discuss, and very competently analyse, basic historical facts and have a very good understanding of the impact of history on society, over time. For example, early in Key Stage 3, in Year 7, pupils gain a very good understanding of the differences between the kind of life that people lived in medieval times and our life style of today. This includes the lack of hygiene facilities in the past contrasting with obtaining water from a tap of today, for instance. They develop ideas about how poor sanitary conditions and hygiene contributed to the Black Death and how villages would not allow strangers to join them in case they suffered from the disease. They understand the changes that have occurred in their own lives and homes and relate historical events to their own experience. They remember what they have learnt before and show knowledge of a range of

topics, for example, they can relate this to members of their family being very ill. In Key Stage 4, in Year 10, pupils develop a mature way of expressing the complex problems of South Africa and the policy of apartheid. This work was excellently developed to support pupils' mature and extensive understanding of complex issues and principles like human rights, the freedom of speech and leading to the emergence of the South African Nation under Nelson Mandela and why he called it the 'rainbow country'.

140. Scrutiny of work shows that the pupils are able to trace historical events from the Roman invasion through medieval times to the present time. At Key Stage 3, they are able to relate from their drawings the difficulty of the Romans invading Britain and at Key Stage 4 to the problems that Germany experienced in invading Britain. Progress is also measured in their greater understanding of the historical development of nations. For example, in the discussion and the task that followed the story of Nelson Mandela pupils grasped the reasons for the emergence of apartheid as well as the consequences

141. The quality of teaching is excellent overall. The planning is excellent. Lessons have very clear aims and objectives and a high level consideration is given to different pupils' needs, with questioning and discussion carefully worded so that pupils' linguistic competencies are very well considered. At the beginning of each lesson there is a very good recap on previous learning using the very good displays in the classroom. A lesson in Year 9 on the story of Anne Frank, captivated the pupils' interest as the teacher leading the discussion was able to get pupils to identify a number of reasons for the Second World War and the suffering that it caused.

142. The scheme of work has been carefully planned and follows the National Curriculum Programme of Study. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils work towards accreditation, mostly through the humanities Certificate of Achievement. All pupils who took the latter achieved a pass in 2000 and the two pupils who took the GCSE examination gained passes with E and G grades. The teacher assessed National Curriculum levels, at the end of Key Stage 3, were mainly Level 1 and 2, with one pupil assessed at Level 3 and another at Level 4.

143. The history teacher is an effective manager of the subject. She provides very good leadership which establishes both its place in school life and supports pupils motivation and interest in the subject. There is a clear focus on improving the range of opportunities in the subject by developing the use of information and communication technology. Cross-curricular work is very prominent in the promotion of language development with the introduction of key words at the beginning of every lesson, as well as planning for how the subject contributes to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. This has a really positive effect on the quality and range of experiences, which can be offered in history lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

144. The school's ICT provision is of high quality and, as a result, pupils' achievements are very good. These have improved since the last inspection through the very strong commitment of the co-ordinator, the very well constructed and detailed scheme of work, and very good quality teaching of the subject. Since 1996 pupils' levels in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 tests have risen significantly. By the time they leave the school pupils are very competent users of ICT. Critical appraisal of their own work, identifying what is good and what could be improved, is a very strong feature of the school's programme. This enables very good self-improvement to be made.

145. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of competency in ICT but are generally below the expected level for their age, and usually between National Curriculum Levels 1 and 3. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments show that pupils' levels can range from two to six. Some pupils take Certificate of Achievement in Year 9 in preparation for their GCSE short course at Key Stage 4; last year five pupils attained awards at this stage. Others have taken it in Year 11 and in 2000 seven pupils attained certificates. The grades of the five pupils who

took GCSE examinations in 2000 ranged from B to E, and the points score gained show, on average, a significant improvement since their Key Stage 3 assessments.

146. The school often receives little information about pupils' National Curriculum levels and its good baseline assessment reveals that pupils may have not have covered all aspects of the subject previously. The school's planning supports all pupils' progress very well and takes account of the pupils' wide range of ability in the subject. It encompasses work from the Key Stage 2 programme of study where necessary, but also extends to GCSE and AS level (and A level from next year) for those older pupils who are able to benefit from such courses. Pupils' progress is tracked very well, through end of module tests and end of year examinations.

147. The youngest pupils in the school, who enter in Year 7, are introduced to the school's reliable, very well organised and managed network facility. They quickly become very capable in using the logging on / off process and know where their work is to be stored. The programme of study they undertake is very interesting and imaginative, engages their interest and promotes great enthusiasm for the subject. A wide variety of game and investigative scenarios are used. Pupils use their developing skills very well in control technology and programming to produce simple sequences, such as in a fire-fighting scenario, and to use a paint program to produce high quality images for Andrew Lloyd Webber's CATS display. Pupils gain a very good understanding that 'information' is all around us, how the Internet developed and why, and how they can search the Internet, accessing topical information such as the play at Wimbledon. They begin to appreciate the positive and negative features of different information systems, such as the limitations in using the telephone to contact someone in Australia.

148. By the end of Key Stage 3, search engines are used confidently and a wide range of topics researched for their work in ICT and other subjects. Some pupils also use 'teletext simulations' to search for information, locating pages to find answers to problems. Pupils study the use of ICT applications and identify the advantages and limitations of the use of word processing and the affect that new technology has had on the workplace. Pupils' skills develop well and some produce interesting animations using graphics software. They also identify what is needed for good photographic composition when taking digital photographs, such as positioning for good lighting and that images need to be central.

149. Pupils in Year 11 mostly work independently, for instance carrying out a GCSE project designing a web page for the school website. They look at other pages, critically analysing the features of these and writing a project design brief. In Year 12, pupils studying for AS level identify the different features of the local area network (LAN), wide area networks (WAN) and network security. They consider the design requirements for a client's web page needs and produce extremely high quality web designs using web-programming language. Their planning is of very high quality, as are their evaluations.

150. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. The teacher's knowledge of ICT how to devise meaningful and relevant programmes to help pupils learn effectively, and the choice of high quality software to aid this, is excellent. The steps to help pupils learn are small and precisely taught, with great emphasis on ensuring pupils have comprehended what the teacher has said. Their linguistic needs are very well catered for through the use of overhead transparencies, radio aid usage, speech-to-text voice recognition systems and word grids which emphasise key words in the subject. The teacher ensures that at every stage, through high quality, probing questioning, pupils have fully understood and learned effectively. Lesson planning is very thorough, with what pupils are to learn, well matched to their needs and abilities, and this made very clear to them at the beginning of the lesson. As a consequence, pupils are very aware of what they are to learn and to do. Pupils' learning is also reviewed at the end of the lesson so that the teacher is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of what they have done. She then adjusts what is taught on the basis of this in subsequent lessons. The brisk pace of the lessons, the high quality teacher-produced support materials and very well organised activities keeps pupils highly interested so that they learn very well. In a Year 9 lesson on problem solving using ICT, pupils explored a simulation which used, and re-inforced,

their knowledge from a wide range of other subjects. They answered questions about the times of flights in 24-hour format and recorded the information on personalised worksheets, and withdrew money from the automatic telling machine (ATM) simulation. They were totally engaged, concentrating exceptionally on the information required and searching the pages very well. Support staff are used to help pupils who are lower attaining linguistically and carry out their role very effectively.

151. The subject is managed very well and development planning, to improve the provision, is thorough and well considered. To improve curriculum planning further, clearer targets could be developed at the medium-term stage to ensure greater precision in what is to be assessed. Development planning could identify clearer criteria for success in terms of the impact of what is planned. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used more effectively across the curriculum and its use is satisfactory overall. However, this is only just developing in some areas and has been well supported by New Opportunities Funding and training. Resources are very good and very well used to support learning in school and in the residence. Pupils' high quality and very well presented work is excellently displayed and shows the high regard the school has for their successes.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)

French and German

152. Pupils achieve well in French which is only taught at Key Stage 3 at Knightsfield. However, some older higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 also study French and German at Monk's Walk School. It is not possible to comment on improvement since the last inspection, but the school has a strong commitment to the subject and to the entitlement of hearing impaired pupils to learning a modern foreign language. Sometimes pupils are disapplied from learning this on linguistic grounds, but this is only in exceptional circumstances. The previous inspection report did, however, note improvements in the provision for modern foreign languages since the inspection in 1998. Two pupils who took examinations at GCSE in 2000 attained passes between A and G grades. Their points score shows very good improvement since their end of Key Stage 3 assessments. Over the last four years pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved, although there is considerable variation due to pupils' linguistic competencies. Over this period their attainment has ranged from National Curriculum Levels 1 to 5.

153. Pupils who are included in Monk's Walk school also have the opportunity to study German at Key Stage 4 and sixth form level and a small group of pupils do so. Currently, one pupil is studying German at Post 16 and has recently completed an AS level course. Although no teaching of these pupils was observed during the inspection, pupil records, support files and work reveal these pupils make very good progress in their German skills and their achievements are very good. This is because of the careful support provided for their inclusion in mainstream lessons and the quality of the support offered through individual and small group teaching. A native German speaking support assistant provides highly effective support for these pupils in their German studies, including work at lunchtimes and breaks.

154. Pupils really enjoy learning French and try very hard during lessons. Due to the co-ordinator's very practical and visual approach to the learning of the language and the strong emphasis on conversation, pupils gain a good grounding in language patterns and learn social phrases well. In Year 7 pupils can verbally state their likes and dislikes using phrases such as *j'adore...*, *je déteste...*, *c'est difficile*, *c'est facile*. They display a growing vocabulary recognising and naming animals such as *le serpent*, *une souris* and *un poisson rouge*. Pupils' use of their personalised developing French dictionary, where they have words related to the topic to which they add, is also a strong feature in their increasing knowledge of words. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 3, in Year 9, pupils create simple web pages in French using sentences about themselves, such as *Je m'appelle.....*, *J'habite un appartement à Londres*, *J'ai une soeur*. They ask and answer questions about their personal health and can write simple sentences about sport and their hobbies. They are more confident in speaking and

respond well to encouragement for longer responses. Topics are designed and presented so as to interest and motivate pupils, such as using ICT to create a good 'shopping conversation' in written form from a bank of phrases, such as *Je voudrais un jean....de quel couleur?.....* Some build on this and develop more complex ideas such as relating to size using *de quelle taille?* Higher attaining pupils, in preparation for the Certificate of Achievement course, use models well to improve their pronunciation and simple language structures such as *je me lève à sept heures*. They tell the time using language such as *il est douze heures moins le quart*. They listen with increasing effectiveness, trying hard to adapt their pronunciation closer to their teacher's. The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' general speaking and listening skills in this way.

155. The quality of teaching is consistently good with very well planned lessons and a good range of quality resources carefully chosen to help pupils benefit well. Although the co-ordinator is not a specialist, she has worked well to update her knowledge of French developments and liaises well with Monk's Walk school to improve her own knowledge of the language and curriculum. Occasionally, during lessons, not enough target language is used and pupils' pronunciation is not always consistently corrected. However, lessons build well upon pupils' previous learning and teaching well supports their individual and linguistic needs. Pupils are clear about what they are to learn and do and although for some learning a language is a struggle, the teacher's perseverance, and calm supportive style means that they try hard. There is a good range of questions and this often leads to pupils working out or remembering what key phrases such as *qu'est-ce que tu fait ensuite* means in a Year 9 lesson on 'home life'.

156. Liaison with mainstream modern foreign language teachers is very good and very good tracking records are kept of pupils' experiences, strengths, support needs and attitudes. There are strong links made within the subject to European understanding and citizenship. Pupils with English as an additional language are also very well supported to wards high levels of attainment in the subject, which makes a very strong contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills.

157. The French curriculum is well planned and is interesting and motivating, using a variety of materials and resources. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who has worked hard to find suitable approaches to help the pupils learn as effectively as possible and who is responsive to changes in the curriculum required, such as an increased emphasis in grammar. It is also recognised that the current French programme needs to be extended beyond Key Stage 3, because of the needs of some higher attaining pupils and because of the new requirements for Key Stage 4 from September. Although some pupils are taught French and German elsewhere, good liaison is maintained with support assistants who work with such pupils, and these pupils' progress is carefully monitored and tracked, including scrutiny of their workbooks as well as informally through tutorial periods at Knightsfield. Assessment is very well developed through end of unit tests and pertinent recordings of pupils' linguistic skills.

MUSIC

158. Only two lessons could be observed in music during the inspection, although an analysis of teachers' files, pupils' records and folders and videotapes that were made available, in conjunction with discussions with staff and pupils, support the judgements made.

159. The school's provision for music is good overall and has a number of very good features. Although music is only taught within Knightsfield at Key Stage 3, a range of musical experiences are available to all pupils at both key stages and the school makes good use of visiting companies and visits to support pupils' musical understanding and performance. In addition, although some pupils do have opportunities for individual tuition, the take-up by pupils is generally limited. The specialist music teacher is currently exploring ways in which the subject might be developed into Key Stage 4, with appropriate accreditation.

160. Pupils make very good progress in all aspects of music taught during their time in Key Stage 3. Some are, initially, very reluctant singers and have limited rhythmic skills. Although

some individual pupils are more experienced at making music and recording their compositions, very few have a music vocabulary on entry or formal playing skills. By the end of Year 7 pupils listen intently to Mendelssohn's *Nocturne* and can identify simple contrasts within it. They use words like *rhythm*, *melody* and *mood* and are keen to compose their own piece of music. They sing *Lord of the Dance* and similar songs with enthusiasm and improve their voice control and pronunciation noticeably with each chorus. When listening to each others' compositions they make helpful suggestions as to how the 'mood' might be changed by changing instruments or rhythms. In their folders they record their response to music and use simple notations to record rhythms and melodies. By the end of the key stage pupils know the names of a number of composers. Some state how much they enjoy classical and pop music and can name a composer or piece that they like. Pupils sing a range of English traditional and contemporary songs as well as those such as *Nobody knows* from other cultures. Higher attaining pupils understand what 'Gospel' music is and say that it has 'feeling.' Pupils work collaboratively to devise group rhythms and think carefully about how their own contribution fits in. They record their rhythm confidently and play it back with pride and care. They use words like *tempo*, *pattern*, and *soften* when describing what they have done and how they can improve it. Pupils' music files and records demonstrate that they make progress in a range of recording techniques and explore a good range of listening, appraisal, performance and composing activities.

161. The teaching in music is very good. The teacher is enthusiastic, understands the pupils' levels and needs very well and sets them challenging but realistic tasks that are well linked into National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Lessons are well prepared and there is a very good emphasis on self- and mutual-evaluation, which supports pupils' listening and reflecting well. Pupils' responsiveness and support for each other in music is very good. They praise each other readily and celebrate each other's contributions, as in a Year 7 lesson, when a pupil exclaimed 'That's the best he's done-wow!'

162. All aspects of the subject are taught and the emphases developed within them reflect the pupils' starting points in music and the value that is placed on it as support for their speaking and listening skills. The music specialist and speech and language therapist often work together in the sessions and there is much use of singing, attention to rhythm, pitch, intonation and stress and melody. This supports pupils' speaking and listening programmes very well although more use could be made of amplification equipment to support this even further. In addition, the small groups and good range of resources allow pupils to experiment and compose and also gives them confidence in their own performing skills. They are keen to play back what they have created and listen with interest to others' compositions. They evaluate them with respect, saying what they particularly enjoyed.

163. The curriculum for music is appropriately balanced and takes very good account of pupils' special educational needs. There are very good detailed ongoing records of pupils' experiences and achievements and outside music groups are used well to support these. Resources are good. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic teacher, who has a clear vision for the development of the subject, and a commitment to high standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

164. The provision for personal, social and health education is a significant strength of the school. Work within the subject is very well planned and there is a valuable and very effective link between the subject and the individual learning targets.

165. Personal, social and health education is taught to all classes and is a major focus of the school's work. The school has developed very well-planned programmes that have had a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and as a result they have made very good gains in their personal development and social skills at both key stages. As they progress through the school they develop their confidence, their self-esteem and their maturity in line with their individual abilities through the effective opportunities offered them. The successful inclusion

policy with the local school is evidence of the success of this progress in personal and social development.

166. Pupils' achievement is very good in PSHE. Pupils often experience a range of difficulties in their lives, connected with their disability, and they benefit considerably through exploration and discussion of these problems. In addition, through the social programme, some pupils who have significant difficulties in understanding the effects of their actions on others develop the necessary social skills required to avoid conflict and how to deal with pressure and anxiety. In this context, for some, PSHE is a very important area of learning. The school has a policy and a well planned programme to assist the pupils in their personal development. The discussions in the PSHE lessons on a wide range of problems and sharing of ideas go a long way to give the pupils an insight into their own personal problems. Pupils understand the importance of good social behaviour when they join their peers in subjects like art and physical education in the local school. They accept competition in physical education and comparison of their work in art as was evident in a Year 9 class.

167. Work experience is well organised for all pupils in Year 10 for one week in a variety of establishments. The pupils are well prepared in a number of ways. For example, an excellent health and safety lesson was observed for those pupils embarking on work experience in the forthcoming week. Also, awareness training is given to the company where pupils are attached so they are aware of the hearing needs of pupils and possible effect of their disability on the work they are to carry out. Additionally, pupils were given very good guidance and role-play preparation as to their personal and social attitudes in the workplace.

168. The quality of teaching within the subject is very good overall. It ranges from excellent to good. The specialist teacher has a detailed knowledge of individual pupils needs, coupled with a very good range of teaching strategies to sustain the pupils' interest in the lessons. These lessons provide a good variety of activities and help pupils to develop their self-confidence in speaking in a group and to an audience, as well as their social use of language. An example of this was observed in a lesson on alcoholism when the pupils were shown different kinds of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The teacher worked with pupils in a circle with everyone developing a knowledge and understanding of the dangers of drinking too much alcohol. By being open with pupils and treating them as adults, trust is developed and pupils feel able to raise worries and express satisfaction about personal aspects of their life. Pupils appreciate the positive feedback given by staff and provide good support for each other in these lessons. The interest in lessons generated by the teacher captivates the pupils' interest. As a result, their behaviour and enthusiasm within lessons is very good. Pupils' views and concerns are genuinely listened to and addressed and this is respected, adding to the pupils' willingness to participate in lessons and support others. In the one lesson where the teaching was excellent, there was highly effective team teaching to prepare pupils for their forthcoming work placement. The energetic pace and lively interaction with pupils, using carefully thought out questions meant that pupils concentrated excellently and responded superbly. They worked very hard and learned a great deal about what their expectations from the placement could realistically be.

169. The curriculum is planned in modules over the two key stages. Care is taken to ensure in lesson planning that as new topics are introduced key vocabulary is introduced in order for the pupils to understand the key language involved. There is constant reference to previous work studied to reinforce that aspect of work and also to use it as a base to introduce the new topic. For example, when introducing the topic on alcoholism staff referred to the previous lesson and the laws governing the sale of alcohol.

170. Pupils' progress is assessed and clearly recorded. There are very close links established between pupils' individual education plans and the content of the PSHE lessons. In this way, each pupil has a clear target for personal development, which arises from their statement of special educational needs, and the aspects for social and personal progress. New targets are set on an individual basis from the pupils' achievement records and these are also used for their long-term plans when external agencies are brought in to advise pupils at Key

Stage 4. The contribution of one of these agencies, the careers service, in advising and guiding the pupils on a choice of a work that suits them during Years 10 and 11 enhances the programme of studies. The combination of advice and guidance, together with the school's assessment of the individual pupils' aptitude, interest and achievement prepares them very well for the next stage of their life.

171. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding and knowledge of the subject and what aspects of the subject are the priorities for the pupils. She liaises with other members of the staff on its delivery and aspects of the programme is reinforced in other subjects. The co-ordinator is well qualified to teach PSHE, seeking advice from LEA advisors and others to enhance her knowledge and with a high level of understanding of specific issues relating to pupils' special educational needs. She also provides good leadership by establishing close contact with other members of the staff. She is planning to develop accreditation at Key Stage 4 that embodies a broad-based personal, social and health education programme which further includes citizenship. A major strength is the integration in the neighbouring Monk's Walk school where pupils are taught alongside their peers in a number of subjects. This strengthens their self-confidence and self-esteem. This progress represents good improvement since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

172. The provision for physical education and the strong inclusive links have a significant effect on improving pupils' skills and on their achievement overall. Arrangements for the teaching of physical education are shared with the neighbouring Monk's Walk School, which provides the teaching and provision for this subject. All Knightsfield pupils are, therefore, taught there by Monk's Walk teaching staff. As a result of this, and the very good teaching, pupils' progress and their achievement in physical education is very good overall. The element of competition with mainstream pupils and the very good quality of teaching supports their progress very well.

173. During the inspection period it was only possible to observe games and athletics at Key Stages 3 and 4. Scrutiny of pupils' records, however, shows that pupils make very good progress in gymnastics and all the pupils can swim at least 25m with the majority being able to swim 100m. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also gain accreditation in life saving. In athletics pupils compete with their peers and are relatively successful in a number of activities. These include all the field events. A number of pupils have achieved levels equal or in certain cases better than their peers. One pupil is a member of the Monk's Walk school football team. Progress is not only measured by pupils' physical education achievement, but also by the development of their personal skills, for example, playing as a member of a team in baseball as well as developing a spirit of good sportsmanship if you lose the game.

174. Pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 are learning a range of physical activities, which include individual and team sports. The areas of activity are gymnastics, swimming and games. The school on its own also organises an activity week in the summer term. This includes orienteering, sailing and canoeing. During the two key stages pupils are given the opportunity to improve and develop their personal experiences and performance levels. In swimming there is accreditation for pupils in the distances they can swim as well as their life saving skills. There is currently no accreditation linked to gymnastics, football or the athletics national body. Over the two key stages pupils achieve a sense of enjoyment through swimming, athletics and gymnastics. An example of this can be observed with the record of the number of pupils that use their swimming skills either in the school or in their local swimming pools in their own time. They also show a greater understanding of these activities in discussion.

175. The quality of teaching is very good overall; the teaching in one lesson observed was excellent. Pupils are aware of the warm-up and cool-down routines. The pace of lessons is excellent with appropriate challenges to improve skill and confidence in a variety of tasks. One pupil with physical difficulties, as well as hearing impairment, participated with the rest with

determination and great success. This opportunity to compete enhanced her confidence and self-esteem. Relationships between the pupils of both schools during the lessons are very good and the inclusion of the hearing impaired pupils with their peers is very successful. Teachers pay good attention to safety issues. For example, when teaching sprinting pupils are taught the importance of staying in their lane to avoid knocking into each other as well as the importance of the head and arm positions. Staff set high expectations, so that pupils' achievements are very good. Techniques of good performance are emphasised. The skill levels expected are appropriate both to challenge individuals and to develop the self-esteem of the low attaining pupils. A feature of the teaching is the good relationship built on humour, high expectations and positive encouragement between teacher/coach and pupils.

176. Facilities on Monk's Walk site are extensive with high quality outdoor play areas for football, netball, tennis, gymnasiums and a swimming pool. The Knightsfield co-ordinator for physical education also acts as liaison between the mainstream school and Knightsfield School and as a result of his enthusiasm, a very good relationship has been built up between the two schools. This has a significant impact on the success of the integration process. The contribution of the learning support assistants that accompany the pupils to the physical education lessons makes a significant contribution to the success of the lessons. They ensure that the pupils understand the instructions given and interpret any difficult key vocabulary involved in the instructions.

177. Good records are kept of the pupils' achievement and these are included in the Annual Report for the pupils' annual review meeting.

178. The management of the subject is the joint responsibility of the Knightsfield School co-ordinator and the head of department of Monk's Walk School. They meet regularly to organise the groups and to monitor the progress of pupils. They are both highly committed to the process of inclusion of the hearing impaired pupils with the mainstream. They ensure that there is equal opportunity for all pupils to all the activities available and also that every pupil has opportunities to achieve their full potential.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. Pupils achieve well overall, and sometimes very well, in religious education lessons and over time. Younger pupils make very good progress in developing their knowledge of the common features of the world's main religions, such as special places and celebrations, and their understanding of more complex ideas such as the meaning of rituals, symbols and beliefs. Pupils in Key Stage 4 extend their understanding of a range of moral and personal issues as they follow a newly introduced Certificate of Achievement course which the first pupils will take in 2002. They also make good progress in acquiring the analytical skills that enable them to investigate complex social issues and in the communication skills required to discuss and report on them.

180. During Key Stage 3 pupils consider a number of aspects of Christianity and also the beliefs and practices of other world religions like Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. They do this by studying themes that are common to all religions, such as signs and symbols, and rituals. Learning is reinforced very well through trips to sacred buildings such as a church, a Hindu temple and a synagogue. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have studied Jesus as the founder of Christianity, know about the Bible as a special book, and have examined the importance and significance of different festivals in the Christian year. Their study of other world religions means that pupils understand, for example, the significance of kosher food to Jews, the important promises in Buddhism and that Islam is based on five pillars of faith. In addition to studying the details of different religions, pupils also begin to give thought to the qualities of modern inspirational leaders such as Martin Luther King.

181. Older pupils extend their appreciation and understanding of a number of personal, social and moral issues. Pupils have examined the idea of different types of suffering and its causes, and its implications in terms of suicide and euthanasia. They also explore complex

social matters such as peace and justice through considerations of race, religion and gender and know how groups may engage in violent and non-violent protest. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have also developed some analytical skills through examining influential people and how they use their gifts. They extend this to self-analysis of their own characteristics and worries and which aspects of their personalities they might wish to change.

182. All teaching of religious education is good or very good and is good overall, although on some rare occasions instances of unacceptable behaviour are not dealt with sufficiently quickly and this can result in some minor disruptions of pupils' learning. Teaching of such overall high quality means that pupils learn well because lessons are very well planned and pupils understand fully what they are required to do. A striking feature of all lessons is the teacher's very high expectations and the degree of challenge that is presented to pupils through a variety of activities and tasks. In particular, the teacher's very good oral communication skills engage all pupils extremely effectively so that they contribute maturely and responsibly showing respect for the views of others. These characteristics featured in a lesson when Year 9 pupils were learning about the importance of Jerusalem for Christians, Jews and Muslims. The teacher used video resources very well to compare the peace of the city as shown in a travel log video with a taped television news clip from the previous evening showing the present conflict. The teacher's secure knowledge of the subject meant that the lesson had a clear oral introduction during which the aims of the lesson were discussed with pupils, and questions were used very effectively to check on pupils' knowledge. The teacher's skilful use of combining the video and questions resulted in pupils making excellent thoughtful and perceptive responses so that they were able to make significant progress in their understanding of a very complex world problem.

183. Religious education is well managed and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of recent developments in the subject. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education has been implemented well and the subject curriculum is well planned with effective schemes of work. Therefore, pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, that is supported with satisfactory school resources and artefacts which are supplemented well from the local education authority central resources. There are effective assessment procedures in place, including pupils' self-evaluation of their learning at the end of each taught module. This ensures that the teacher has very good knowledge of what pupils know, understand and can do.