

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BISHOPSWOOD SCHOOL**

Sonning Common

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123345

Headteacher: Miss Valerie Northfield

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence  
22629

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 July 2002

Inspection number: 243632

Full 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 for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grove Road Sonning Common Reading Oxfordshire
Postcode:	RG4 9RJ
Telephone number:	0118 972 4311
Fax number:	0118 972 1019
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jolyon Harrington
Date of previous inspection:	1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Personal, social and health education	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
22729	Robert Arnold	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education Special educational needs	
15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Geography History Music Equal opportunities	
18206	Elizabeth Mildner	Team Inspector	English Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
1224	Graham Todd	Team Inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Modern foreign language (French)	How well does the school care for the pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bishopswood is a special school with places for 49 pupils between the ages of two and sixteen, with additional capacity for children to attend part-time in the Nursery. Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs, including severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The vast majority of pupils are from a white ethnic background, and a small number have a black heritage. Ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, a broadly average figure nationally. The school is part of three mainstream schools; two primary and one secondary school. The school's main accommodation is on the shared site of a local primary school. Primary aged pupils attend school on this site. The nursery (including reception) and assessment unit is an integral part of a nursery at a primary school at nearby Henley-on-Thames. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 attend the local secondary school, where Bishopswood School has two classrooms. In addition, the school has a separate role in the 'Outreach Support Service', supporting pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools in Oxfordshire. Recently, there have been major building works at the primary school site, with Bishopswood School now housed in new accommodation. There has been a high staff turnover, with many long standing and experienced staff having retired. The school has struggled to recruit permanent staff with appropriate skills and experience. There was a full complement of teachers at the time of the inspection, although this has been hard to achieve. The headteacher, after many years at the school, is leaving at the end of term.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Bishopswood School is effective in its work. There are many good features and several outstanding strengths. The headteacher's leadership is good, and pupils have flexible opportunities to learn alongside other pupils in mainstream schools. Teaching is good overall, and pupils achieve what could realistically be expected of them in relation to their starting points in many areas. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher's vision and educational direction, supported by a very able governing body, is having a very positive impact on the educational opportunities for pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The good teaching and learning in many parts of the school, are having a direct and positive effect upon the pupils' achievements.<sup>1</sup>
- The high quality provision for children in the nursery ensures that they have a very positive start to school life.
- The excellent relationships with other local schools supports an outstanding partnership, enabling pupils to be included socially and academically with other pupils in the local nursery, primary and secondary schools.
- The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, supported by a very effective personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), helps them to grow in confidence and independence.
- Learning support assistants make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology( ICT) are low.
- Standards in English, although sound, are limited by teaching that is only satisfactory overall; curriculum planning is variable in quality between classes and year groups.
- Science is not yet planned for consistently, or taught systematically through the school; the pupils' achievements are hindered as a result.
- Some subject leaders, particularly in English, science and physical education, have limited understanding of the role, including how to bring about further improvements.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

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<sup>1</sup> Inspectors do not judge pupils in relation to standards nationally. The judgement 'achievement' is like progress, and says whether standards are high enough for particular pupils, given their starting points.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection in 1997. The pace of change has been hindered more recently by staff recruitment difficulties, and many subject leaders being new to their roles. Despite these challenges, many areas of strength have been sustained, including links with other schools, pupils' attitudes, the high quality provision in the nursery and the care for pupils. The quality of teaching has improved, with more good and very good teaching reported. Weaknesses in teaching have been eradicated effectively and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, unlike at the time of the last inspection. Key issues from the previous inspection have mostly been addressed, although there is still more to be done to improve provision for ICT. The accommodation for primary pupils has improved significantly with a new, purpose built school building now in use.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	By Year R	By Year 2	By Year 6	By Year 9	By Year 11	<b>Key</b>  Very good    A Good         B Satisfactory C Unsatisfactory D Poor         E
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	B	
Reading	C	C	C	C	C	
Writing	C	C	C	C	C	
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	B	
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	A	
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	A	

### Strengths in standards include:

- children achieve very well in the nursery in all areas of the curriculum;
- the pupils' good achievements in mathematics, religious education, design and technology, music, and communications, including speaking and listening;
- the pupils achieve well in developing and using numeracy skills in many practical situations;
- the pupils' very good achievements in their personal and social skills, developing maturity, confidence and independence.

(Strengths and weaknesses in achievements refer to pupils throughout the school by Years 2, 6, 9 and 11 unless otherwise stated.)

### Areas for improvement:

- the pupils' achievements in ICT are unsatisfactory in Years 1-11, as their skills are not developed systematically;
- the pupils' achievements in English, although sound, could be higher, if teaching were more consistently good;
- the pupils' achievements in science, particularly in Years 3-6, are not built upon consistently, as the subject is not planned for systematically.

The school has suitably challenging targets for the wide range of pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils achieve well overall, and there are good opportunities where they are challenged further; for example, when attending classes in the mainstream schools. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties have activities that are adapted and well matched to their individual needs overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils are keen and eager to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils behave well in class and around the school. They show consideration and respect for one another as a matter of course.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils grow in confidence and maturity. The good relationships between pupils and with adults are based on trust, respect and kindness.
Attendance	Good; pupils attend regularly and in most cases arrive punctually.

Pupils' personal development is a strong feature, and helped considerably by the many opportunities they have to work and play alongside other pupils in the mainstream schools. This creates genuine situations where pupils have to socialise, follow routines, and find their way around in the everyday hub of school life.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The most effective teaching observed during the inspection was in the nursery and reception, Years 1-2 and Years 7-11. There were very good features in the nursery and in Years 7 – 11. In otherwise satisfactory teaching in Years 3-6, strengths and weaknesses were finely balanced in some instances, where pupils were not sufficiently challenged, and the pace of lessons was slow, leading to pupils losing interest and motivation. Overall, the school is effective in meeting the pupils' wide-ranging needs. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties have activities that are suitably adapted, and higher attaining pupils are challenged, sometimes with the benefit of learning in the mainstream school's classes.

#### Strengths in teaching and learning include:

- highly effective teaching in the nursery and reception, enabling children to make rapid gains in all areas of learning;
- good teaching and learning in mathematics, including effective numeracy teaching, enabling pupils to use skills in practical contexts;
- good teaching in communications helping pupils to develop good levels of speaking and listening;
- very good teaching in PSHE leading to pupils developing very effective personal and social skills to thrive in school and the wider community;
- good teaching in design and technology, religious education and music leading to pupils learning a range of new skills.

#### Areas for improvement in teaching and learning include:

Teaching in English, including the National Literacy Strategy, although sound, has room for improvement; literacy targets for individual pupils are not reflected consistently, and for some lower attaining pupils, activities do not present sufficient challenge. This leads to some lack of interest in the lessons. Teachers are not making effective use of computers in lessons and the pupils' technology skills are underdeveloped as a result.

Although individual lessons in science are at least satisfactory and sometimes very good, the lack of systematic planning and provision for science, particularly for pupils in Years 3-6, reduces the effectiveness of science teaching over time and hinders the pupils' learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; very good for the nursery and reception, and good provision for activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development, good provision for moral development and very good provision for pupils' social development. Provision for pupils' multicultural awareness is underdeveloped.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care for pupils is very good; procedures for monitoring progress and methods for assessment are sound.

The school has a positive partnership with most parents, and many express a high degree of satisfaction about the school. The curriculum is relevant, and the emphasis upon including pupils in mainstream schools adds breadth to their educational experience. The strategy for literacy is sound, although there is scope for further improvement in the quality of teaching and curriculum planning. The strategy for numeracy is good and ensures that pupils achieve well. The curriculum for ICT is unsatisfactory, and the science curriculum, particularly in Years 3-6 is not planned for consistently or taught systematically. These weaknesses limit pupils' achievements. The care and attention for pupils' well-being, health and safety is very good. Procedures and practices show much sensitivity and dignity for the pupils. Procedures for monitoring progress and methods for assessment are sound rather than good because targets for pupils could be reviewed and revised more regularly between annual reviews.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher provides clear educational direction and vision, and is supported by effective senior managers including the deputy head teacher.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very effective; governors are led very ably by the Chair of Governors, and fulfil their responsibilities very efficiently. They hold the school to account rigorously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; there are useful informal discussions, although the strategies and outcomes are not rigorously identified or recorded.
The strategic use of resources	Good; staff are well deployed, resources used efficiently and finances prioritised carefully.

The headteacher provides good leadership, senior managers are effective and the governing body is very effective. The leadership of some subjects, including English, science and physical education, currently lacks the necessary rigour in identifying priorities and strategies for further improvement. There is a suitable number of staff, although not all are entirely familiar with the English education system, national initiative and strategies. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, however, the nursery is cramped, and some facilities in the secondary school are in need of redecoration and refurbishment. The newly completed accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value to its decision making and, as a result, operates efficiently.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like more activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Some are not happy about the amount of homework.</li> <li>• Some would like the school to work more closely with them.</li> </ul>
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Inspectors agreed with the positive comments expressed by parents. The amount of activities outside lessons was considered to be good, and the level of homework appropriate. A small minority of parents are dissatisfied with most aspects of the school. Inspectors could not concur with them. Some parents are in dispute with the local education authority about the content of their child's statement. The school is making every effort to build partnerships with parents who are dissatisfied with the provision.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school is effective in enabling pupils of all ages to achieve well in many areas in relation to their special educational needs. In communications, speaking and listening, mathematics, numeracy, religious education, design and technology and music, pupils throughout the school achieve well. All pupils achieve very well in their personal and social education and other personal targets. This is in the light of a changing school population with a higher proportion of pupils having more complex, severe and profound learning difficulties than before. Older pupils follow courses leading to nationally recognised awards; for example, the Transition Challenge, and some follow modified courses and modules that form part of GCSE courses. The school ensures that all pupils are included, regardless of their individual differences or special educational needs. There is a strong emphasis upon including pupils in a mainstream school setting, wherever realistically possible. This provides rich and diverse opportunities for pupils to achieve, and benefit from provision that would otherwise not be available to them; for example, when using specialist facilities and equipment. The opportunities for pupils to mix socially with pupils from the other schools, has a significant impact on their self-esteem and willingness to take on new challenges. This in turn has a positive effect on their academic achievements There has been satisfactory improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
2. By the time they leave the nursery, children achieve very well in their development in all areas of the curriculum. They make very good gains in their personal, social and emotional development and become part of a group from an early age. The children achieve very well in communication, and literacy skills, and learn successfully to communicate with one another, respond to those around them and listen attentively. Children achieve very well in their mathematical development as they learn to recognise shapes, match objects and develop their number skills. The children achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding of the world through a wide range of opportunities, as they discover and explore their surroundings. Children achieve very well in their physical development and where possible become active and gain increasing confidence in their movements. For some children, their achievements are only in small stages, but nevertheless this represents great strides in their individual circumstances. Children achieve very well in their creative development and learn to use a range of materials to paint, model and use their imagination.
3. By Year 2, the majority of pupils are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Their achievements are satisfactory in English, science, art and design, geography, history and physical education. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, religious education, design and technology and music. In personal and social health education, the pupils achieve very well.
4. By Year 6, most pupils are working towards Level 2 of the National Curriculum, although a significant minority are working appropriately in small steps at levels most appropriate for their individual needs. Their achievements are satisfactory in English, art and design, geography, history, music and physical education. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, religious education and design and technology. In personal and social health education, the pupils achieve very well. Pupils could achieve better in science, if the subject were taught more systematically.
5. By Year 9, some pupils are working towards Level 3 of the National Curriculum. Pupils with more severe and profound learning difficulties achieve what could realistically be expected in relation to their starting points. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, science, art and design, geography, history and physical education. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, religious education and design and technology. They achieve very well in music and personal and social health education.

6. By Year 11, pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, science, art and design, geography, history and physical education. They achieve well in mathematics, religious education and design and technology. Pupils achieve very well in music and personal, social and health education.
7. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in communications, speaking and listening. They learn to express their views and opinions in a variety of ways, including representing the views of others on school councils.
8. In English, the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented satisfactorily. It has been adapted appropriately, and increasingly modified for the pupils' individual needs. The strategy is satisfactory rather than good, because some teachers have limited experience of the initiative, and pupils' literacy targets are not always reflected fully in practice. Pupils develop a good understanding of how they can influence others; for example, they represent others on different school councils.
9. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in developing reading skills. Children in the nursery enjoy stories and many understand that print has meaning. Pupils build upon these skills, and some higher attainers identify individual words and sort them into the correct sequence to make a sentence. Some pupils by Year 4 can read a simple text from a familiar story and in some instances, they talk about the different characters and their moods. By Year 6, some pupils recognise rhymes and read simple poetry with meaning. Older pupils develop further their skills in reading. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties learn to use signs and symbols effectively and with increasing accuracy, whilst higher attainers express their views and opinions appropriately. In writing, pupils develop satisfactorily, although for some, the task itself is unrealistic. Younger pupils begin to develop control of their pencils and make marks on paper. Older pupils in Year 6 write and copy simple words, and some higher attainers manage to write a simple sentence with correct letter formation. Pupils in Year 9 complete and save their written work to a good standard for their special educational needs. Pupils with more severe learning difficulties use signs and symbols with increasing accuracy, and higher attainers express their views and opinions appropriately. Pupils by Year 11 use their reading skills to follow simple instructions, and recognise everyday signs in school and the local community.
10. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented effectively. In mathematics, pupils achieve well and use their mathematical skills in a wide variety of practical situations. This helps to develop and increase their independence, and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Children in the nursery recognise simple shapes, match and count objects, and recognise simple numbers. Some higher attainers use computer programs to match shapes and numbers accurately. By Year 2, some pupils count numbers one to five using familiar objects and begin to recognise the concept of subtraction as objects are removed. Several pupils in Years 7-9 were able to join with other secondary pupils to learn about ratio, and did so with a sound level of understanding. They were able to use the three, five and ten times tables with understanding. By Year 11, many pupils use their mathematical skills to work out money required to make purchases, use weights with increasing accuracy to weigh and measure ingredients and understand the school timetable and the order of daily events. These skills have an obvious and positive impact on their personal and social skills as they become increasingly confident and independent.
11. In science, pupils achieve satisfactorily in lessons throughout the school as they develop an understanding of basic scientific principles. They achieve satisfactorily rather than well because the curriculum for science is not sufficiently formalised or given the emphasis required currently on the timetable. Pupils' achievements in science over time, particularly in Years 3-6, could realistically be higher. Currently, their scientific skills are not built upon consistently. There is scope for pupils to achieve more in science with suitably rigorous curriculum planning and provision.
12. The pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory throughout the school. Their skills, knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped and there

are few opportunities for them to use and practise such skills across other subjects of the curriculum.

13. Pupils achieve very well in other targets for their learning and development. They achieve very well in their personal and social targets as they grow in confidence and show much resilience, patience and courage in overcoming the challenges of daily life. The pupils' achievements are often in very small steps, taken over a long period of time, nevertheless this represents great effort, perseverance and hard work by pupils, teachers, parents, support staff and therapists.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Pupils' attitudes and values are good, and their personal development is very good. The good picture at the time of the previous inspection has been well maintained and, in the case of personal development, has improved. Nearly all parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and this was borne out during the inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They enjoy coming and taking part in all the activities; they have good attitudes to their learning. Routinely, in lessons pupils try their best. From the very youngest, they become absorbed in their learning and start to develop the attitudes of interest and enquiry that will enable them to become effective learners. They enjoy the trips out that they make, the visitors who come to school and the residential trips offered, some with their mainstream peers.
15. Behaviour in and out of the classrooms is good. Pupils benefit from the clear overall guidelines in the school's behaviour policy, although the management of behaviour for some is, rightly, completely individual to that pupil and appropriate behaviour plans are devised. These are used consistently by staff and the effect is positive. Pupils generally respond well to reminders about behaviour, because the teachers know them very well, and manage their behaviour effectively and confidently. They enable pupils to learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour within their abilities. One pupil was excluded last year for three short periods. Bullying is not regarded as a major problem. The open atmosphere within school and the vigilance of staff means that pupils feel confident in reporting problems; these are often discussed in circle time.
16. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is very good. Most parents say that the school helps their children to become responsible and take responsibility. Lessons in personal, social and health education contribute well to this. The good relationships that develop between staff and pupils also contribute by making pupils confident, friendly and courteous. They mix well with each other. They work together when they are asked to and can share resources. They willingly talk about what they are doing. They take part in the daily routines within school and sometimes they show initiative, such as the pupil who realised that her classmate needed the ball she had been using, and rolled it over to her. They are happy to clear up independently after lessons. In parents' comment sheets for the annual review, improvements in independence and concentration are often noted. Pupils' confidence and maturity are further enhanced as they move from the primary setting to the secondary department. The school plans very well for the management of change; for example, between the nursery and the primary setting and the move from primary to secondary school. Parents spoke very highly of this provision, particularly for the younger age group.
17. Pupils' personal development is greatly enhanced by the school's provision for inclusion. At play-times, pupils on all three sites mix with their mainstream peers; indeed it is often impossible to pick them out. A 'Friendship' club is in place at the primary school; it is greatly enjoyed by all who are involved. During the inspection, a primary aged pupil was collected by her friend from the mainstream school, to take part in a regular swimming lesson. They left the school building, unsupported, chatting away together, perfectly at ease in each other's company. In the senior school, two pupils in a maths lesson with their mainstream peer group were fully involved in the lesson, supported by the teacher and the pupils. Both enjoyed the lesson and were at ease in the class, because everyone was familiar with the situation. In both that lesson and a music lesson, great respect was shown by the mainstream pupils, giving Bishopswood pupils the time to answer, and applauding their success. Although the school does not have its own school council, pupils from the school are on the school council of both

the primary and secondary school on which they are sited. All this provision has a very positive effect on the personal development of the Bishopswood's pupils; as important is the positive effect it has on their mainstream peers.

18. Attendance is good. The level is above that of similar schools, with a very low level of unauthorised absence. Although the school discourages taking holidays during term time, some parents take their children away for short trips. The school tries to capitalise on this by viewing it as a new challenge for the pupils; they are encouraged to bring back postcards and other objects that can be talked about in class. Pupils generally arrive in school on time so that a prompt start is made to the day.
19. The school makes as effective use as possible with the limited provision for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and seeks to build upon their work at other times of the school day.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In more than one half of the lessons observed, teaching was good, and in just under one quarter of lessons, teaching was very good. In almost one quarter of lessons, teaching was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching in the nursery and reception was very good; in Years 1-2, teaching was good and in Years 3-6, teaching was satisfactory. In Years 7-11, teaching was good overall, with some very good teaching observed. More satisfactory teaching was observed in Years 3-6, and occasionally, strengths and weaknesses were finely balanced in lessons judged satisfactory overall.

(The following strengths and weaknesses refer to all age groups unless otherwise stated)

Areas of teaching and learning where the school is effective include the following:

- children in the nursery and reception have very good teaching, leading them to have a very positive start to their school life and achieve very well in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum;
- teaching and learning in mathematics is good and the National Numeracy Strategy is taught effectively; pupils have many good opportunities to use their mathematical and numeracy skills in practical situations, which helps them towards increasing independence;
- teaching and learning in communications, speaking and listening is good and pupils become increasingly willing to express themselves in small and larger groups;
- teaching and learning is good in religious education and design and technology throughout the school; pupils achieve well due to the effective teaching strategies;
- teaching in music is good overall and there are very good features in Years 7-11;
- teaching and learning in personal, social and health education is very good; the pupils develop a genuine self-confidence, growing maturity and independence as they move through the school.

21. Areas of teaching and learning where the school could improve include the following:

- teaching in English, including the National Literacy Strategy, although satisfactory, has scope for improvement; literacy targets for individual pupils are not reflected consistently in lessons, and in some examples there was insufficient challenge for pupils with the most severe learning difficulties;
- teachers are not making effective use of computers in lessons to assist the pupils in their learning;
- teaching in science, particularly in Years 3-6, is not supported by secure planning, and pupils' scientific skills are not built upon systematically.

22. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall throughout the school in English, art and design, geography, history and physical education. In mathematics, religious education and design and

technology, teaching and learning are good. In personal, social and health education, teaching is very good. Teaching in music is good in Years 1-2, satisfactory in Years 3-6 and very good in Years 7-11. Teaching and learning in science are satisfactory on balance, although the lack of rigorous planning and provision hinders the pupils' learning and achievements. Teaching over time in ICT is unsatisfactory, as there is limited use of ICT to enhance the pupils' learning. This in turn is hindering what they could realistically achieve. Teaching in literacy is satisfactory and teachers ensure that they help pupils in their reading and writing skills. Teachers pay good attention to developing the pupils' communication, speaking and listening skills in lessons as there are regular opportunities for pupils to talk about the activities, listen to one another and discuss what they are learning. There is good teaching for the basic skills of numeracy overall, and teachers help the pupils to use these skills across other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils, for example, weigh ingredients, measure liquids and count beats and rhythm in music.

23. The very good teaching and learning are characterised by the following features:
- activities are very well matched to the pupils' differing needs; this was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 9, where pupils had tasks specifically for their individual needs. Higher attainers had work of a higher order and pupils with more severe learning difficulties used a variety of mathematical resources to help them to recognise numbers one to ten;
  - questions are used rigorously to develop and challenge the pupils' thinking, and skills are built upon systematically from the pupils' previous learning. For example, in a lesson for religious education, where Islam was being discussed, pupils had to think hard about the purpose of clothes, and the concept of modesty in covering the body. They thought about the reasons for wearing clothes, recognising that there are clothes for different occasions. The activity was developed systematically from the previous lesson and pupils made useful connections from past learning;
  - lessons where pupils are included with their mainstream peers are in many cases highly effective in enabling them to take part as fully as possible in the activities; they are well planned for, and pupils make great strides in their personal and social skills in the process. In a music lesson for older pupils in the secondary school, they became thoroughly absorbed in a session on 'blues' music. The very effective support from the learning support assistant enabled pupils to take part fully. Pupils were very attentive to the adult's guidance. As a result, they sequenced notes and learned to improvise to obtain a 'blues' effect. Pupils from Bishopswood worked seamlessly alongside other pupils from the secondary school, with mutual benefits to everyone;
  - learning support assistants are very effective in supporting the pupils, managing to maintain an appropriate balance between support and independence, whilst ensuring that pupils have opportunity and dignity in the process. They make a strong contribution to the pupils' learning, and work flexibly and creatively, helping pupils to understand further and join in purposefully.
24. There has been good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. There is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than previously reported, and weaknesses identified in teaching have been eradicated successfully. This is in the context of a changing group of teachers and some only recently appointed to the school, new to the education system, and new to their areas of responsibility.

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

25. The school has made a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection in developing and enriching the curriculum. It has made sound progress towards its aims of providing opportunities for pupils to learn and achieve, and to prepare pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of life.
26. The previous report identified a number of key issues for action that related to the curriculum. Each subject now has a scheme of work that is related to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and a start has been made on establishing an assessment system related to each

scheme. Satisfactory progress has been made towards improving the teaching of reading and handwriting, with more work still to do in raising pupils' quality of writing for a range of purposes. The development of ICT has been less satisfactory and remains a priority for the school.

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good for the children in the nursery and reception, and satisfactory in all other parts of the school. The curriculum has satisfactory breadth, balance and relevance for pupils in Years 1-11, and it is very good in the nursery and reception. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs follows the same pattern. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum 2000, and all National Curriculum subjects are taught. Religious education (based upon the locally agreed syllabus) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are taught to all pupils. In addition, pupils receive a wide range of therapies to meet their individual needs. The 'Waldon Approach', a way to develop 'learning to learn' skills, is available for many pupils and there is a sensory room and a hydrotherapy pool. A good number of pupils go to Riding for the Disabled and they are able to prepare for the Stable Management and Riding Proficiency tests. The location of each phase of the school, within the sites of three mainstream schools, gives numerous opportunities to enrich the curriculum for all pupils, both on a group and individual basis. This is a major area of support for pupils' academic and social development.
28. Each subject of the National Curriculum has a scheme of work statement, and there is a whole-school, long-term plan that states in broad terms what topic should be taught in each subject each term. Medium-term planning in some subjects is variable in quality, with insufficient detail of what should be taught and to what depth. This means that teachers are unclear as to the expectations for their own class planning. This is particularly true in English and there is also insufficient emphasis given to the teaching of science. The allocation of time for each subject is not consistent. At present, insufficient time is given to the teaching of ICT. As a result of these weaknesses, the pupils' achievements are only satisfactory in English and science overall, and in ICT their achievements are unsatisfactory.
29. The senior department makes full use of the flexibility available for older pupils who study for a national Transition Challenge (ASDAN), as well as the Country Stewardship scheme at a local nature reserve. The provision for careers is good. Work experience within the school, helping the caretaker with maintenance, for instance, starts in Year 10, and last year, Year 11 pupils successfully completed work experience in a local supermarket and at Wittenham Nature Park. There is a college link course for these pupils with the local further education college so that they are all well prepared for the move to college when they leave school.
30. The school regards PSHE as an important element in nurturing the pupils' social and personal development and preparing them for adulthood. The provision for PSHE is very good and includes sex education, drugs awareness and citizenship.
31. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and that for the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory. There is scope to improve the Literacy Strategy, by ensuring that teachers' planning is more effective, and to provide more training, so that the teachers can use the strategy to its full advantage.
32. Provision for activities outside lessons is good. Since most pupils live a distance from the school, it is difficult to arrange after school events. Despite this, some educational visits may extend beyond the school day, and pupils have had the opportunity to attend theatre workshops, swimming galas, as well as productions at Chiltern Edge Secondary School. Senior pupils have lunch-time clubs for ICT and a disco, that are open to both Bishopswood and Chiltern Edge Secondary School pupils. A residential outing is arranged for Year 4, and a number of pupils go on residential visits with pupils from the mainstream school. Often Bishopswood staff make this possible through giving of their own personal time. There is a play scheme for younger pupils in the summer holiday.
33. The school's links with the community are good. The school makes consistent use of places of historical and geographical interest to enrich those subjects and has good relationships with



local churches, the police and other services to enrich religious education and PSHE. Local businesses are very supportive of the school in allowing classes to visit as well as their generous help in fund-raising.

34. The school's relationship with partner institutions is excellent, giving pupils the opportunity to be included in the life and facilities of their partner schools. This is of mutual benefit to all school and college communities involved. Bishopswood also welcomes secondary school pupils on work experience, and nursery nurse students on placements. Speech and language therapy students also visit the school and the University of Birmingham has published research sponsored by Mencap, a national organisation for disability, on the school's unique practice for including pupils.
35. The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The values and principles set by the school give support to the pupils' spiritual development. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to reflect on different faiths and beliefs, and to consider the thoughts and emotions of others. There are visits to local places of worship and celebrations are held for Easter and harvest. Pupils on all sites join in with their peers in the mainstream school for assemblies, and occasionally contribute. In lessons, occasionally, staff enable pupils to reflect and think deeply about issues that are being discussed, but this is not a regular occurrence and there is very little planning of spiritual development either across the school or by individual teachers.
36. The provision for moral development is good, which is an improvement from the situation described in the last inspection report. Pupils have a good understanding of what is right or wrong, and some make good progress in managing their behaviour. The pupils know how to behave and are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour when on school trips. This was observed on a trip to the local swimming pool when behaviour was very good. They understand and accept the consequences of their actions, and some will spontaneously volunteer an apology if this is necessary. During the inspection there were few incidents of inappropriate language and no bullying. The school has policies concerning bullying, ensuring equal opportunities, and a Charter of Child Rights, and these combine to give all teachers and learning support staff a framework inside which to plan for any moral issues or individual pupils' needs. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum contributes well to pupils' moral development.
37. The provision for social development is very good. This shows considerable improvement since the last inspection. The personal, social and health education curriculum affords a wide range of opportunities to explore social issues and situations. Pupils are expected to undertake responsibilities for themselves. This was seen in a lesson for older pupils, where they were encouraged, but not told, to set-up, participate and then clean-up in an art lesson. All pupils are provided with every opportunity to mix with their peers and are encouraged to integrate with mainstream pupils during break-times, which some readily accept and obviously enjoy. One older pupil has become an active member in the secondary school council, and others have participated in whole-school theatrical productions. There is a deliberate and planned course of action for each pupil to enhance their social skills and these form part of individual education plans. Circle time lessons also enable pupils to explore a wide range of social situations. There is a 'friendship' course for lower attaining pupils, and shared mainstream lessons for those pupils who have the academic ability to enable them to participate. The 'friendship' course links individual pupils with more severe learning difficulties, with pupils from the mainstream school. Pupils from the mainstream school learn a little about the pupil with whom they will spend time, and meet regularly with them on a social basis during break-times. Regular 'Bring and Buy' sales, which raise money for a variety of charities, are held, and staff and pupils jointly run these. The annual harvest festival has involved older pupils in visiting local charity locations to distribute the food, and was reported as being a valuable opportunity to show the pupils another side to life in their own community. Some pupils share residential trips with the local mainstream primary school.
38. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In some areas such as religious education and personal and social education, there is a good level of cultural links made with the subjects. For

example, pupils consider the way of life for an Indian family, which expands their knowledge of different cultures. However, the art, music, humanities and design and technology curriculums do not plan for activities or experiences that will improve pupils' understanding of their own or different cultures. The 'Comenius' project, which is designed to help and encourage links in European countries, will help to broaden pupils' knowledge, but generally this is an underdeveloped part of the school's curriculum. Additionally, opportunities to develop their knowledge of multicultural issues are missed. There are visits to places of cultural interest including local museums to study, for example 'The Romans', theatre trips and local places of historical importance. Visitors to the school have included theatre companies who specifically work with pupils with profound difficulties and people who serve the local community; for example, a nun and policeman. Pupils have also been afforded the opportunities to join with mainstream classes when their peers have had visits and visitors.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. The school's attention to the health, safety and welfare of its pupils is very good. This area of the school's work was a strength at the previous inspection, and remains so. Pupils feel safe, valued and secure in school. They are respected and very well cared for. Arrangements for child protection are good and well established. The level of supervision throughout the day is very good. All staff are very aware of possible dangers and are very vigilant. A particular strength of the school is its very good procedures for the risk assessment of its pupils. This aspect is always discussed at annual review meetings, so parents can express any of their concerns, particularly if the pupil is to approach new situations. Thus, for example, parents can express fears, such as possible dangers from traffic as their child moves to secondary school, and the staff can take necessary action. The school keeps good medical records of the pupils, and there are very clear arrangements for the administration of drugs, both routine and occasional. All accidents are very well recorded. They are monitored by the health and safety co-ordinator to see if there are particular areas or times when or where more accidents occur. Alarms, appliances and equipment are regularly checked and fire drills held, at least termly.
40. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating any form of harassment are good. The behaviour policy is based, primarily on building a positive self-image and reinforcing positive behaviour. However, for many pupils, a more individual approach is required and this is provided through behaviour plans. These are clear because they give precise details of the behaviour, the reasons behind it, and actions needed to modify it, with practical approaches to take. The school sometimes needs to approach outside agencies about behavioural issues. Because many pupils mix with their mainstream peers at times when bullying may occur, the school takes due regard to those schools' procedures, and abides by them. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss bullying or any other concerns during circle time, and in this way, problems can be tackled. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are infrequent, but when they do occur they are recorded accurately and in detail in the incident book; this is monitored appropriately by the headteacher.
41. The procedures to support, promote and monitor pupils' personal development are very good. All staff have very good levels of knowledge of the pupils, both those they work with regularly, and many others. This means that they can help the pupils to get as much out of their lessons and other experiences as possible. For example, a learning support assistant was able to engage a pupil more fully in the lesson because she was able to relate the lesson to something he had done the previous weekend, making it much more relevant. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop and use their personal skills. These are greatly enhanced by the school's promotion of inclusion that encourages pupils to be part of everyday life within mainstream settings. The opportunity to play with their peers means that they are not given a second glance, allowing them to experience and enjoy the company of children of their own age. Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible, and emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' abilities to communicate. Pupils' personal development is carefully monitored through personal, social and health education; every year progress against the targets set the previous year are reported and discussed at annual reviews, and new targets are set. The pupils'

personal profiles, both individual and for PSHE, record their personal development very effectively.

42. The procedures for promoting attendance are good. The school receives good support from the educational welfare service, which visits the school termly and checks the registers to ensure that the reasons for absences are correctly identified. The headteacher has a detailed knowledge of the attendance patterns of all the pupils and the reasons for absences. These generally relate to major on-going medical conditions or for other occasional illness. There are occasions when the school negotiates individual attendance programmes with parents. A comment is made about attendance in each pupil's annual review report.
43. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress. Since the last inspection, the school has improved in the way it uses assessment to inform curriculum planning; this is because the medium-term planning is now in place and it has provided objectives against which teachers can assess.
44. The school has introduced the 'P Scales' (small steps of learning for the pupils) and these are being used satisfactorily to measure small gains in learning. However, further work and staff training are required to refine them more. Individual education plans are reviewed annually and sound targets are set in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education and personal, social and health education. Progress against the targets in pupils' individual education plans is considered at the annual reviews. Most new targets show specific reference to the previous targets and individual education plans are based securely on these.
45. Whilst the quality of the annual reviews are good, 12 months is too long before reviewing progress. This is particularly true for the higher attaining pupils, some of whom are integrating in the mainstream settings and making rapid progress with certain aspects of their learning. For these pupils, the procedures currently in place lack the rigour necessary to systematically track their progress as they move through the school, and to ensure that they are challenged appropriately.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The parents' views of the school are satisfactory overall. The school works hard to develop and maintain good relationships with its parents and in most cases it is very successful. There are a few who it is more difficult to convince that the school tries to do the very best for their child. This is sometimes because parents are in dispute with the local education authority about the provision made in their children's Statements of Special Educational Needs. However, the school keeps channels of communication open with these parents, and is doing all it can to work with them to make the best of the provision available. Meetings have been held at which the views of all could be heard, and this was welcomed by many of the parents involved. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very positive, with much useful support to the benefit of the children and pupils.
47. Analysis of the questionnaire sent to parents before the inspection, and notes from the meeting held, show that many parents have a positive view of the school. They generally agree that their children like school, they are kept well informed, they are comfortable to approach the school, the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and they are expected to work hard and achieve their best. Inspection findings bear out these positive views. Parents expressed concern about some aspects. They would like more activities outside lessons. However, these were found to be good when residential trips, visitors and trips made to places of interest are taken into account. Parents are not happy about the amount of homework set for their pupils, although it is discussed with them at the annual review meeting. In many cases the work set for pupils to do at home is not the more traditional subject based ones, but may relate to establishing routines and behaviour. Parents would also like the school to work more closely with them; the school tries hard to involve its parents as much as possible. Parents are always welcome to discuss such issues as these, either in person or on the telephone. The school's

intention to have termly formal meetings between teachers and parents is aimed at trying to resolve such concerns.

48. The general information provided for parents is good. Parents are kept well informed about events and activities at school through letters, diary dates and class information. Regular 'Newsletters' are produced; these provide a good round-up of what has been going on as well as about forthcoming events and dates. The annual reports for individual pupils are written before the annual review meeting; they are of good quality. They give parents the information they need, that is, the progress their children make, especially against the previous year's targets. They also give details of what the pupils can do and have experienced. Day-to-day contact is promoted well through the home/school diaries that many parents find useful. These are read first thing in the morning for any messages, and a member of staff always tries to write an answer or comment during the day. Where a real dialogue evolves between home and school, this is found by both parties to be very helpful and supportive. There are home/school agreements between teachers and parents about aspects of the pupils' education. This helps to support the pupils more fully at home and school.
49. Parents are consulted through questionnaires about aspects of the school's work. For instance, an evaluation was completed by parents on their views about school assemblies. Parents are consulted through questionnaires, such as one about the way in which the transfer from the nursery to the infant classes had been handled. The school recognises that it is often difficult for parents to get into school to attend meetings. However, most parents attend their child's annual review and the headteacher uses this opportunity to discuss everything in as much detail as possible. The school has recognised that this annual meeting is insufficient to meet the needs of many parents and has put in place the opportunity for termly meetings from next term. The school has in the past organised evenings to keep parents informed about what their children are being taught, but the attendance was poor. However, it does give parents the opportunity to join any relevant staff training sessions; for example, about national initiatives, communication strategies for the pupils, and about learning how to learn (referred to as the 'Waldon' approach by the school).
50. The school has a small group of parents who organise events at which funds are raised for the school. The major events are the Christmas fair and the barbecue held in the summer. These give parents a good opportunity to meet with other parents as well as to raise funds for the school. With the very diverse range of backgrounds and the large catchment area, it is difficult to get the parents together regularly. The school was successful recently in meeting its target of raising £50,000 towards the new school buildings. It also supports the running costs of the school's two minibuses. The school enjoys the confidence of all communities represented, and is held in high regard by the local primary and secondary schools who share the sites.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51. The leadership and management of the school is good overall. The good leadership provided by the headteacher has been forward thinking and innovative in helping pupils to be included in mainstream school settings, whilst being supported where appropriate, by more specialist provision in a special school environment. The headteacher has clear aims and vision for the school, sustained over many years. The deputy headteacher has complementary skills to those of the headteacher, and has done much to strengthen the partnership between Bishopswood School and the local secondary school where senior pupils are situated. The highly effective leadership provided by the senior teacher, responsible for the nursery and assessment unit, has been sustained over many years. This ensures high quality provision for young children with severe learning difficulties and rigorous assessment of their needs from an early age.
52. There is considerable emphasis upon including pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or differences. The senior managers, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher make an efficient and effective team. They provide very good role models for others to follow in their leadership and teaching. The headteacher has managed considerable change in staff, overseen the design and development of a new building and sustained direction and

momentum in the school at the same time. This is in conjunction with maintaining positive working links with three other schools and supporting the 'Outreach Service' for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools across much of Oxfordshire. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages her work effectively, ensuring that the pupils' individual needs are considered carefully and planned for accordingly.

53. Some teachers with responsibility for leading subjects are newly appointed, new to their roles, and a few also new to the English education system. Some subject leaders, for example those leading English, science and physical education, are not yet able to communicate with sufficient clarity about their areas, including priorities and strategies for further improvement. As a result, senior managers are providing support to strengthen these areas of weakness. The headteacher who is currently responsible for the leadership of ICT, as a temporary measure, does not have sufficient expertise to provide direction for the future of the subject.
54. The governing body is very effective and active in the life of the school. Governors are led by a very able Chair of Governors, and committees are organised efficiently to maximise governors' individual strengths. Governors understand clearly the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many governors have areas of professional expertise that are relevant to the school; for example, in monitoring and inspecting standards, education, curriculum management, finance and technology. Governors use these skills well, and their time is deployed effectively to track specific areas of school life. This means they are well prepared to ask strategic questions, challenge the senior managers and hold the school accountable for its actions. Governors maintain a fine balance between supporting the school and challenging its practice. In addition to governors' responsibility for Bishopswood School, there are other aspects to their work, in maintaining and building positive working relationships with three other governing bodies whose schools accommodate pupils from Bishopswood. There are many areas such as finance, accommodation and rents that have to be negotiated annually across the schools. This is managed sensitively and openly, and results in pupils from all schools gaining benefit from the working partnerships at such a senior level. The governors ensure that they follow the principles of best value for money in their decision-making, use of resources and deployment of staff. They have, for example, ensured best value, in the process of overseeing the design and development of a new school building.
55. The headteacher and senior managers have a sound and systematic schedule for monitoring the quality of teaching. The impact has been to improve the amount of good or better teaching and to eradicate the amount of unsatisfactory teaching reported at the last inspection. This is an achievement in the context of changing staff and some with limited experience in the sphere of special education. The quality and impact of performance management is sound, although within the context of a changing staff, has proved challenging. The senior managers and other staff spend time regularly discussing and reflecting upon their work. This ensures that new initiatives are evaluated and plans revised where necessary. The activities for evaluation have scope for improvement as they are not well documented in the school's development plan.
56. The school's priorities for further development are good. Actions taken to address the issues within the improvement plan have been effective. Senior managers keep up to date with new initiatives; for example, by producing an appropriate policy to ensure racial harmony in all areas of school life. There is a good level of commitment amongst staff throughout the school, with a strong sense of team, co-operation and support. The strength of the team means that there is good capacity for further improvement. Staff who are experienced and long-standing remain enthusiastic to improve further. More recently appointed staff are similarly keen to learn, and willing to contribute their skills and expertise. New staff have a sound programme of induction, ensuring that they are briefed appropriately about the school's procedures and practices. Some newer staff are not wholly aware of the school's current priorities and require further training to develop their understanding. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported with a detailed and systematic schedule of support and monitoring of their professional development. As a result, teaching from newly qualified staff is developing from strength to strength within a very short time.

57. There is good use of resources, including effective deployment of staff and efficient use of finances and accommodation. The budget is allocated carefully and ensures that there is a close match to current educational priorities. The school has responded positively to any issues from external auditors. Grants are used appropriately for their purpose. Finances that have been carried forward are entirely appropriate and marked for specific purposes linked to building developments. The use of new technology by the school is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory overall. Whilst the school seeks to minimise bureaucracy wherever possible, there is scope to reduce this even further with better use of technology; for example, in curriculum planning, assessment, recording and reporting. The day-to-day administration of the school is efficient and effective. There is a calm and warm welcome for everyone who arrives, adding positively to the atmosphere and environment.
58. There is a suitable number of teachers, although not all are qualified sufficiently for their areas of responsibility; for example, in developing science and ICT. The school has experienced difficulty recruiting enough teachers, and although there was a full complement of teachers at the time of the inspection, this has been hard to achieve, and the school anticipates it will be a challenge to sustain. This challenge has impacted upon the pace of change and what could be realistically achieved; for example, by the more recently appointed subject leaders. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although there are variations in quality as the school is on three sites. The nursery is quite cramped in its design and the senior school classes have scope for refreshing and refurbishing. The new building for primary pupils is bright, spacious and designed for the purpose. The school makes best use of all its available spaces. Resources are satisfactory overall.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

**(1) \*Raise standards in information and communication technology by:**

- planning for pupils' ICT skills to be developed systematically across the curriculum;
- ensuring that the subject has effective leadership;
- using new technology more extensively, including the Internet;
- developing further opportunities for pupils in Years 1-6 to use ICT for communications;
- ensuring that teaching is at least satisfactory, and staff are more confident in the use of ICT.

(As referred to in paragraphs 12, 21, 22, 26, 28, 53, 58, 74, 87, 100, 105, 113, 119, 120-126, 133 and 137)

**(2) \*Raise standards further in English by:**

- ensuring that teaching is more consistently good or better;
- improving the medium-term planning to provide more guidance to teachers;
- enabling all teachers to understand fully the National Literacy Strategy, including what to teach and to what level.

(As referred to in paragraphs 8, 21, 28, 31, 53 and 70-78)

**(3) Raise standards in science by:**

- ensuring that the subject is planned for consistently;
- teaching systematically upon the pupils' previous learning;
- assessing the pupils' scientific achievements and using the information for future planning.

(As referred to in paragraphs 4, 11, 21, 22, 28, 53, 58 and 89-95)

**(4) \*Improve subject leadership in English, science and physical education by:**

- ensuring that subject leaders have a clear understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses in the subjects;
- identifying and implementing appropriate strategies for further improvement.

(As referred to in paragraphs 78, 95 and 137)

The school may also wish to address the following aspects for further development:

- liaise further with those parents who are not satisfied with their children's education;
- review pupils' progress more often to ensure that targets are up to date and challenging, particularly for higher attaining pupils;
- ensure that provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is planned for more systematically, including provision for multicultural development.

(As referred to in paragraphs 38, 45 and 88)

\*indicates these issues are already identified as part of the school's development plan

## **INTEGRATION, INCLUSION AND SUPPORT OF PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

59. The school is very effective in integrating and including pupils wherever possible into mainstream schools. Children start in a nursery that provides education that is entirely integrated within a mainstream nursery. Pupils with profound and severe learning difficulties learn alongside their mainstream friends from the earliest opportunity. The high quality organisation means that they continue to be supported individually, whilst having the opportunity to take part fully in group and class activities. Children may move on to Bishopswood School if appropriate, or after assessment, move to another mainstream primary school. The location of Bishopswood School, on the site of another primary school, means further opportunities for pupils to mix with mainstream pupils, socially and sometimes in lessons, where most appropriate. Pupils, when they reach secondary age, move to provision on the site of a nearby secondary school, and learn and socialise alongside their mainstream peers.
60. The organisation and arrangements create maximum flexibility for pupils to join mainstream classes, or continue to be supported in smaller groups within the provision at Bishopswood School.
61. The excellent professional relationships, that have been built and sustained over many years between headteachers on all sites, is an outstanding feature of the integration, ensuring much goodwill and determination to make the most of the initiative at every level. This means that pupils from all schools benefit, as they learn to understand the issues of disability themselves in natural and everyday situations. There are many very positive relationships between pupils, helping to overcome the barriers of misunderstanding, and creating a genuine community where pupils learn and play alongside one another, regardless of their individual differences or circumstances. The initiative has been far-sighted and pioneering in the sphere of including pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	23	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	20	57	23	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	56
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	2

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	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: Nursery – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	5

**Education support staff: Nursery – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	438.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	00/01
	£
Total income	592,527
Total expenditure	610,706
Expenditure per pupil	12,463
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,914
Balance carried forward to next year	8,735

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	41
Number of questionnaires returned	32

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	48	39	13	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	58	6	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	67	19	4	0
The teaching is good.	53	34	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	16	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	31	3	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	32	10	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	47	31	19	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	35	16	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	36	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	31	10	7	10

**Further comments about the parents' questionnaires may be found in the report under the heading 'How well does the school work in partnership with parents?'.**

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

62. The nursery provision is part of Valley Road Primary School in nearby Henley-upon-Thames. Children attend the nursery and reception from two years of age onwards, for the purposes of assessing their individual needs. They become fully integrated with other children from the mainstream primary school. Teachers and learning support assistants from Bishopswood School work in partnership with staff from the primary school. The nursery is managed by a member of the senior management team of Bishopswood School. There is a very strong partnership between Bishopswood School and Valley Road Primary School, which has been long established and sustained very effectively over many years. Both schools' staff and parents value the partnership, which is seen to have mutual benefits for all the children. Some children move on to the main site at Bishopswood School at the end of their time in the nursery, whilst others continue in a mainstream school setting. These decisions are made entirely according to the children's individual special educational needs. Some children continue in a mainstream school, and return to the more specialist provision at Bishopswood at a later stage. This provision is both flexible and creative, providing a range of options and routes for children and their parents. In all areas of learning, children are working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. For many children, this may take them well beyond their time in the Foundation Stage. The nursery is led and managed very effectively. There is a strong team, where teachers, nursery nurses, learning support assistants and other specialists work seamlessly together. The teaching observed during the inspection was very good in all areas of learning, and children achieve very well over time.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

63. The children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the very good teaching, and is assisted further by the nursery's organisation and location. Children learn from an early age that they are part of a group and belong. All adults know the children very well, and they are sensitive to their needs. There is an atmosphere of calm and well-being in the nursery and children settle quickly to the established and effective routines. Activities are structured carefully to help the children to co-operate, share and learn. There are daily times when all children come together to have a drink and snack and to share news, and also many opportunities for working and playing in groups. The children listen attentively during these times sharing news and offering their own ideas. The rich range of activities, including visitors, outings, picnics and the opportunity to care for living things, all add to the children's development personally, socially and emotionally. There are highly effective, and thoroughly well-organised strategies to ensure that children from Bishopswood have individual support, whilst being as fully integrated into the nursery's activities as possible. This approach means that children live, play and learn alongside others, and are surrounded by lively and vibrant surroundings. Staff in the nursery take great care to maintain regular and daily contact with parents, using a home/school diary. The close and highly effective links between home and school in the nursery add to the children's emotional well-being. Children settle quickly into school life. Children develop a sense of pride about their achievements and learn to persevere, even when tasks are challenging. This very positive foundation helps to build their confidence, self-esteem and security from the start of their school life.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. The children achieve very well in communication, language and literacy. They are encouraged successfully to communicate with one another, respond to their names and greet one another. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to use switch technology to make their preferences known. Many children learn the principles of taking turns within the context of a vibrant nursery framework. They learn to become part of groups where the use of language is more advanced than their own. This adds to their learning and provides helpful role models for them to copy. Children show genuine delight when a story is read, and enjoy the illustrations and repetition of

actions. They listen attentively and point to pictures and well-known characters in books. The very good teaching in this area ensures that every opportunity is taken throughout the day in other activities to reinforce these skills. There is, for example, highly effective planning to ensure that children are encouraged to communicate with one another, discuss their ideas and talk about their learning. The creative range of activities where pupils use their imagination in role play adds further to their language. During the inspection, activities centred around 'Treasure Island'. Children became thoroughly absorbed as they learned about treasure maps, followed trails outdoors, using familiar landmarks to identify where they were on a large map, and discovered treasure in the gardens. The climbing frame became part of the ship's galley and children expressed delight and anticipation as they climbed carefully up the plank to see what was inside. At snack time, they prepared baguettes in the shape of boats, with small pieces of salad vegetables, tomatoes, cucumber and mushrooms to taste. This added further opportunities to talk together and with adults about their likes and dislikes.

### **Mathematical development**

65. The children achieve very well in their mathematical development. They learn to recognise simple shapes and patterns using puzzles, objects and matching games. The use of ICT programs helps children to match shapes, identify numbers and match objects with increasing accuracy. A few children count with help and recognise written numerals. The very good teaching ensures that children use their numeracy skills in a variety of ways throughout the day, thus emphasising their learning. Children recognise certain times of the day and remember certain routines that have sequences, such as snacks and drinks. Some children can count how many drinks and cups are needed for the group.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

66. The children achieve very well as they gain knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They learn about themselves and their families, and investigate interesting objects and materials using all their senses. The treasure chest during the inspection, became the centre of interest, as children were amazed by the range of objects, trinkets and jewellery to touch and feel. They were delighted by frozen ice blocks, with gold chocolate coins embedded, floating in the water tray. Children hastened the process of thawing ice by chipping away at the blocks in order to reach the coins more swiftly! The range of interesting activities recorded in photographs included learning about pumping up tyres and mending a puncture, making bricks from paper and understanding a little about how homes are built. The trip to the local garden centre assisted the children to develop their own garden outside and they made their own observations about man-made and natural features in the nursery environment. The nursery garden during the inspection was vibrant with flowers and plants, grown and watered by the children over time. They have also planted seeds, and realise that some plants have a strong smell; for example, herbs.

### **Physical development**

67. The children achieve very well in their physical development. They follow regular routines during the day, which help their movement and mobility. There is a meticulous and considerate approach to ensure that the children move their bodies. This includes the use of massage oil to further assist their mobility and suppleness. These routines are carried out discretely yet effectively, often whilst other activities are underway. Children with higher levels of mobility have every opportunity to climb, cycle and balance on a range of interesting equipment. The outdoor surroundings have been developed thoughtfully to provide many different areas for exploring. There are also useful links between the children's physical development and music. Children, for example, have made their own musical instruments and respond to a range of sounds using their bodies in different ways.

## **Creative development**

68. The children achieve very well in their creative development. They learn rhymes, use puppets and enjoy painting, modelling materials, dough and a wide variety of other objects. The activities are very well planned to include a wide variety of experiences across the curriculum. The teaching is very good in this area and the learning environment is colourful, interesting and inviting for children as they learn new creative skills. Children and adults came to school dressed from a pirate theme for one of the days of the inspection week. The children made their own eye patches and flags for the 'Jolly Roger'. Children used cooked spaghetti, dyed green to look like seaweed and underwater plants, as they explored the feel and touch to rearrange an underwater scene with shells, small model divers and fish.
69. The nursery is a bright, attractive and purposeful room with carefully chosen resources to support the children's learning. Learning support assistants are thoroughly well informed about the children and their individual needs. They make a very strong contribution to the children's learning and have many useful insights and observations that add to the quality of assessment information gathered over time. There is a high degree of consistency in handling and managing the children, as all adults know them so well. They maintain a careful balance between supporting the children, whilst encouraging them to become as independent as possible. Support staff work as a cohesive team. Their time is used efficiently and the children benefit greatly from their contribution. There are very positive relationships developed between adults and children that create a relaxed yet enjoyable atmosphere for learning.

## **ENGLISH**

70. The pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Many pupils achieve good levels of communication, speaking and listening. Pupils at Bishopswood experience a wide range of learning difficulties and hence there is a wide range of potential attainment within each class or year group. The school's priorities are in helping pupils to develop a range of communication skills, with each pupil having a personal target, and teachers an emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills in all lessons. This is of benefit to pupils as they not only learn strategies to express their ideas and needs, but it also give them the social confidence to interact with their friends both at Bishopswood and in the partner schools of Valley Road Nursery, Sonning Common Primary and Chiltern Edge Secondary School, in both lessons and at play-times. The strong emphasis upon including pupils regardless of their individual differences or special educational needs supports their literacy skills, particularly in communications, speaking and listening. Teachers plan satisfactorily for the pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
71. The higher attaining younger pupils, up to Year 2, are able to speak clearly, when, for instance, recounting the story of the 'Three Little Pigs', whilst pupils with more complex needs are beginning to learn some simple signs so that they can join in games and say 'Good morning'. They are able to listen and follow simple instructions and make choices. By Year 6 those pupils with complex needs have longer periods of concentration and can focus on tasks as the teacher or classroom assistant talks with them. Higher attaining pupils are confident to give their opinions, for instance, about what may happen next in the story. They are developing an increasing range of vocabulary. Some of these pupils have the confidence to use their signing to 'speak' to others in their class to help them; for example, at lunch-time in the school hall. In Years 7-11, those higher attaining pupils are very confident to initiate a conversation with each other or with visitors. Their behaviour is appropriate and they take turns with consideration and politeness. Those pupils with complex needs may use signing or pictures to make themselves understood. In the sensory room, for instance, a pupil was keen to tell the teaching assistant which of the features he liked best, and hence was able to make an independent decision about the activity. All pupils enjoy drama and many have taken part in presentations at Chiltern Edge Secondary School, including two seniors taking major parts in the musical 'Grease'.
72. Reading has been a priority development in the school since the previous inspection. Improvement in this area has been satisfactory. There is now a wider range of reading material

and interesting books in the libraries and classrooms. Reading record books are kept regularly, but comments still do not have sufficient focus to ensure that reading skills are consistently developed. Pupils are keen to look at books and read to adults. Those up to Year 2 enjoy following a story and the higher attainers are able to identify individual words and sort them into a sentence order. Other pupils enjoyed a sensory story with effects, and they are beginning to respond to the changes of mood in that story. By Year 4, higher attainers are able to read simple text from a known story. They can say what might happen next and can discuss the mood of the characters. They are dependent on adult support, and some recognise initial sounds to help them with new words. Other pupils enjoy finding themselves in photographs. The school now uses the Picture Exchange Communication System to support these pupils in developing their choice making, but ICT is underused in the teaching of reading skills. By the end of Year 6 pupils working on poetry are able to recognise rhyming words and read them in a poem with understanding and expression. In the senior department higher attainers are confident to read stories using a range of clues to help them on new words such as the illustrations or the general meaning of the sentence. Many are confident to read worksheets in other lessons. Pupils with more complex needs also enjoy books; they can point to words or specific pictures in the book when asked and can read signs and symbols around the room. By Year 9, pupils show increasing independence in their choices of reading materials, including magazines, and by Year 11, many pupils read simple instructions and signs used around the school and in the wider community; for example, reading simple timetables.

73. There has been satisfactory improvement in handwriting throughout the school, as it is now taught in a consistent way, but there is still room for improvement in pupils' writing of sentences and prose for a range of needs. The younger pupils up to Year 2 are beginning to develop control of their pencils so that they can make marks on the paper. Some pupils have developed further into forming letters, which are legible and correctly formed. By Year 6 pupils have progressed from writing over letters, to copy writing, and some higher attainers are beginning to copy sentences with evenness of size with both capital and lower case letters. Lower attainers and pupils with more complex needs find these activities difficult and some use symbols more appropriately to 'write' a word or phrase. By Year 9, some pupils have collections of their own written work, and by Year 11, higher attaining pupils can write their own simple prompts, lists and reminders when doing practical tasks such as shopping lists.
74. The development of writing sentences and prose is less consistent, with a few younger pupils up to Year 4 writing short repetitive sentences as part of their 'news'. By Year 6, pupils are able to recognise the individual lines of a poem and put them in the correct order, and senior pupils who are learning about newspaper reporting showed that they could consider the vocabulary used in an article and look up those words in a dictionary. Spelling is encouraged for higher attainers. Pupils in Year 6 were able to remember a range of rhyming words and write them accurately. Overall, however, the blending together of pupils' skills in reading, handwriting, spelling and vocabulary is not incorporated sufficiently to help pupils to begin to write down their own ideas in sentence form. This is particularly true in the junior part of the school. The work of a few senior pupils by Years 9 and 11 showed examples of a range of writing including accounts of visits or activities, letter writing, poems and book reviews. Although computers have been used to type out writing with symbols as well as words, there is insufficient use of ICT to help pupils to develop the habits and skill of constructing sentences.
75. Pupils' response to their lessons is at least satisfactory and when they are interested and stretched in lessons it is good. There were examples of pupils showing good levels of sustained concentration, for instance, in a group of younger pupils working with the teacher and speech therapist. Because of the range of resources used, plus clear signing, the pupils were supported to work together taking turns and responding with awareness to the rest of the group. Pupils in Years 3-6 show some initiative in thinking of rhyming words and senior pupils are able to share their ideas in a sensitive way. The majority of pupils are, though, very dependent on adult support.
76. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory throughout the school, with some examples of good teaching. Learning by pupils follows the pattern of those lessons. When teaching is good

there are clear, challenging expectations of both attention and achievement. There is a crisp pace and precise use of resources with, for instance, the teacher being very active in bringing a story or poem alive with expression and a sense of excitement. For some pupils this was achieved with herbs to smell and spray water to feel. When signing is clear and continuous throughout the lesson all pupils are supported in understanding and this is backed up with photos and symbols. In the good lessons the deployment of teaching assistants is focused to specific pupil targets and they are able to use their considerable skills to the full.

77. Teaching in the majority of lessons was satisfactory rather than good, because lessons were not planned with sufficient challenge or detail to ensure that each pupil's individual literacy targets were being met. This was particularly true for some lower attaining pupils. The pace of these lessons was not sufficient to motivate pupils, particularly those who found it easy, and they became bored and lost concentration. The current medium-term planning is not specific enough to ensure that teachers know what should be taught or to what level, hence teachers find it difficult to plan for the range of potential in each class. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are being incorporated into English lessons, but teachers are not confident in using it to its full advantage. The school is aware that this is an area for development. There were examples in pupils' previous work of writing using the computer, but computers were not used in lessons to consolidate the objectives of that lesson.
78. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and standards have been maintained. The subject leadership is satisfactory, although there is scope for greater clarity in identifying and communicating current priorities for further improvement in English. There is now a policy and scheme of work statement in place as well as a long-term plan of expected texts used by each year each term. This ensures that books are appropriate for the pupils' ages and levels of maturity. Teachers keep records of pupils' skill development in spelling and reading and the school now grades work against the nationally accepted 'P Scales'. This is a developing area and teachers now need to incorporate this assessment standard into their teaching planning so that they can judge the pupils' progress over time with more precision. Resources are satisfactory with a suitable range of books and other materials. The pupils have very limited opportunities to use ICT in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in mathematics. This is due to the consistently good teaching and the implementation of strategies from the National Numeracy Strategy. The curriculum has been extended and improved to include a wider range of work. A strong feature is the practical teaching of mathematics. Accreditation has been introduced in Years 10 and 11; the pupils follow a course of practical mathematics that helps them to develop independence. The pupils enter the school with very weak mathematical skills; they achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are included regardless of their differing special needs and the work with pupils in the mainstream classes adds further to their mathematical opportunities.
80. The pupils enjoy mathematics and their work is carefully integrated into classroom activities. Teachers involve them in the registration process by counting the number present at the beginning of the school day, and sequencing the days of the week. Teachers make good use of resources. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils' understanding of numbers from one to five was reinforced by counting yellow toy ducks. The teacher used song effectively to introduce the concept of subtraction - 'There were five currant buns...'. The lesson progressed well and yellow, blue, red and green two-dimensional squares were introduced. The higher attaining pupil helped a pupil who was less able than herself, to match objects in the room with colours nominated by the teacher.
81. The majority of lessons start with good mental arithmetic sessions. In a sound numeracy lesson in Year 4, the pupils clapped in time with the teacher as they counted up to twenty. They were confident doing this, but found counting backwards from 20 to be far more difficult. However, the effective use of number lines and number squares helped them to make satisfactory progress



with their learning. All teachers are conscious of the need for pupils to develop a basic mathematical language. In this lesson the focus was upon using dice, to add up and compare numbers that were 'more than' or 'less than', the other. Some time was lost from teaching towards the end of this lesson, because two pupils ignored the instructions of the teacher and chatted far too much; this disturbed the concentration of others.

82. Two higher attaining pupils, one from Year 7 and the other from Year 9, were integrating with pupils at Chiltern Edge School. They were observed listening well and paying close attention to what the teacher was saying about ratio. When working out answers they showed confidence in using their three, five and ten times tables. The pupils were helped effectively by a member of the learning support staff from Bishopswood School. A strong feature of all the mathematics lessons observed, was the high quality contribution made by learning support assistants. They have clearly defined roles with individual and small groups of pupils. In Year 9, pupils with complex needs were learning how to count and order numbers up to ten. The teacher had made good 'flash' cards with numbers and drawings of spiders on each. Effective use of song; for example, 'Ten green spiders sitting on the wall...' was used to teach pupils how to order numbers and take them away. The teacher signed effectively to non-verbal pupils, giving them instructions about developing a pattern using drawings of spiders that were three different sizes.
83. The teacher's very detailed planning, for pupils with complex needs in Year 10, ensured that the work they received was well matched to their ability. In the mental arithmetic session the teacher beat out the rhythm and sang, 'Ten Little Indians'. The pupils showed obvious enjoyment and responded well to the questioning of the teacher; for example, one pupil showed three fingers when the teacher wrote the number three on the white board. Objects of reference are well used in teaching mathematics; for instance, one pupil recognised the number seven and banged seven times on the drum whilst one used his Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to show that he understood the number two. The 'Waldon' system is also being successfully used to help pupils to learn. For example, in this lesson pupils were sorting models of hot air balloons according to the colour of their canopies.
84. Good teaching builds successfully on early learning and by Year 11, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are being developed well. Good planning and the successful application of teaching techniques from the National Numeracy Strategy are influential in helping pupils with their ASDAN accredited course - Transition Challenge. Mathematics is integrated into much of their work; for example, purchasing, weighing and measuring ingredients when making a pizza, looking at key times of the day, understanding the school timetable and sequencing days of the week and months of the year.
85. Numeracy skills are applied well in other subjects. Some examples of this were: measuring balsa wood for wheeled vehicles in design and technology, sequencing events in history and measuring the length of the shot putts and timing sprints in physical education.
86. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. They work hard and when asked, they collaborate very well in small groups. They show interest in their work and most sustain their concentration for lengthy periods of time. A mutual trust and respect can be seen between teachers and pupils.
87. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and teachers liaise very closely with learning support assistants in planning pupil's individual work. Features of the best teaching are: planning, showing clear learning outcomes and targets based on the assessment of previous learning and pupils' individual education plans; challenge for higher attaining pupils and work that is very well matched to the needs of all pupils. However, the use of information and communication technology is not well established across the school; insufficient thought has been given as to how computers can be used to enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for pupils.
88. The leadership of mathematics is good and the co-ordinator has been given the opportunity to do some monitoring. However, the support and reinforcement of work for pupils who are

integrating in mainstream schools, is an area that requires further development. Since the last inspection, the school has trained teachers in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has provided a good curriculum structure, which was lacking at the time of the last inspection. However, the school is aware that more training is required due to staff changes and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy for pupils at Chiltern Edge Secondary School. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. Teachers are starting to use 'P Scales' for assessment and target setting, but more work is required to refine these. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but the assessment of higher attaining pupils is not regular enough to measure their progress and set challenging new targets.

## SCIENCE

89. Due to the organisation of the science curriculum, only a few lessons were available for observation. The school does not currently consider science as part of their 'core' curriculum and the organisation and planning reflects this, consequently, the achievement of pupils, although satisfactory overall, is not as high as it could be. Improvements since the last inspection include the maintaining of satisfactory pupil progress, some teaching has improved and all teachers now use investigative work. However, there is still too little time devoted to science especially in Years 3-6; the science curriculum does not yet provide teachers with a useful way of ensuring that pupils' scientific skills are built upon systematically.
90. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can plant seeds and have carried out investigations into bending, twisting, magnets, forces and measuring. They have visited a local farm to see how different animals live. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties explore, through their senses, the same areas of investigation as their class friends. They are encouraged to experience the materials, sounds and smells associated with the visit to the farm. They learn skills associated with scientific investigation of touch, observation and making choices. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils watch a rolling ball, experience water play and undertake simple sorting of animals into families with adult help. Higher attaining pupils can create simple circuits and make lights work, sort wood, metal and plastic into families, and know that wood comes from trees. The higher attainers, some of whom are working within Level 2 of the National Curriculum, have the opportunity to be included with their peers in the local primary school, which has a beneficial effect on their motivation and level of knowledge.
91. By Year 9 pupils are using their skills in a variety of different circumstances. They have studied microbes and moving and growing. They can separate solids from liquids and make simple recordings of their investigations. They make simple, but accurate predictions. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties manage to complete the investigations with help from the learning support assistants. The highest attaining pupils join with the mainstream classes, and follow their schemes of work for part of the week. They are able to visit a local pond, identify creatures that live in this habitat and then remember information for use back in class. They can use books and aids, with adult help, to research further information. They identify creatures from the picture and description and then record their results. The oldest pupils also participate in national courses (such as ASDAN), where they complete modules about themselves, friendship, differences in people and mixing different substances. Some use their scientific knowledge on a course designed to utilise their skills in working with nature, which leads to a certificate in woodland management. All pupils are included in science activities regardless of their individual differences or levels of special educational needs.
92. Pupils' enjoy science and their attitudes in lessons are good. From the earliest years pupils are very interested in the topics they study and are often excited by the tasks with which they are presented. They are keen to share their ideas with the rest of their class and most are prepared to listen carefully to the views of others. Behaviour in science lessons throughout the school is mostly good. Pupils particularly enjoy practical, investigative activities.
93. All teaching was at least satisfactory, and in one lesson, was very good. In the best teaching, planning ensures a good focus. Objectives are always made clear to the pupils at the beginning

of a lesson, so that they know exactly what they are hoping to achieve and know when they have been successful. Discussions are open-ended and challenging, and a good range of different kinds of activities within a lesson maintains pupils' interest. Discipline is positive, but firm and has very effective outcomes in terms of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships. This was seen in a class for Years 5 and 6 where pupils were finding out 'What makes plants grow'. The teacher had a good range of resources, and by skilful questioning led the pupils into discussing plant growth. They then compared their own plants, discussing growth, death and care of the plants and this resulted in good learning by the pupils. Lower attaining pupils followed the same general format for the lesson, but were required to identify, by pointing, parts of a plant. This they managed with the help of learning support assistants. Generally, however, teachers do not plan well and work is not sufficiently well matched to what pupils know and need to learn. No individual pupil targets are set in science so progress in skill and knowledge development is difficult to track. There is a conscious effort by some teachers to link scientific knowledge to appropriate vocabulary. Lesson objectives are not always shared with pupils, limiting the opportunity to participate in and assess their own learning. Some lessons do not sum up what has been covered or help pupils to understand and clarify what they have achieved.

94. The science policy is good, and details specific entitlements with regard to taught time for the subject. However, current practice indicates that pupils in Years 3-6 are not receiving this entitlement. Curriculum planning does not ensure that pupils' skills are built upon systematically. However, some teacher's medium-term planning has strengths that could be further built upon.
95. Assessment is currently unsatisfactory and does not provide information to inform planning. Individual targets are not yet identified in science, and pupils' work is not marked against National Curriculum criteria or 'P Scales'. However, the school recognises that this is unsatisfactory and from next September an improved system is planned. The subject leader has not been at the school for very long, and is also new to current national initiatives. As a result, leadership in science is currently unsatisfactory. Very limited use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in science especially in developing research skills and the recording of investigations.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. There were few lessons available for observation during the inspection. Only one was observed in the secondary department and, therefore, judgements are based on talking to teachers and viewing their planning, scrutiny of work, displays around the school and talking with children. This shows that standards have been maintained since the last inspection and that pupils' achievements are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 are learning how to paint, cut out shapes and choose materials to make collage, which they use to make Christmas decorations. They use sponges to produce colourful paintings. Year 6 pupils have had experience of using their hands to create art work; they have worked with the artist in residence to produce work, some of which has won prizes at local festivals. They regularly draw self-portraits, which show that their skills are improving with each passing year. By Year 9 they are using these skills to produce full-length self-portraits, exploring a variety of techniques including pottery, printing and drawings involving line and tone. The oldest pupils have the opportunity to use all these skills in modules connected to the ASDAN scheme. Older, higher attaining pupils integrate successfully with GCSE classes in the mainstream where they undertake practical modules making coiled pots, which are colourful and interesting in shape and design.
97. The pupils' achievement in art is satisfactory. Teachers' records and the pupils' portfolios and work on display around the school all indicate that the teachers' enthusiasm and relationships with the pupils and their ability to co-operate all combine to produce satisfactory learning.
98. Older pupils say that they enjoy their art, and observation of a lesson supports this. Their attitude towards the subject is positive and they try very hard to carry out the instructions given to them by the teacher. Their attitude and behaviour during the lesson seen was never less than

very good. All pupils are included fully into art activities, regardless of their level of special educational needs.

99. Teaching of art is satisfactory across the school, similar to the judgement at the previous inspection. In the one lesson seen, the teacher organised the lesson well, and this enabled pupils to improve their skills systematically. He provided useful demonstrations that helped pupils to learn new skills and to understand what is required. He gave clear instructions, expected pupils to respond promptly and was vigilant in matters of safety. He used appropriate vocabulary to ensure that pupils extended their knowledge. This was observed in a Year 10 lesson when pupils improved their performance after the teacher had instructed them how to use the materials they were using to produce a print using a polystyrene tile. Some pupils in Years 3-6 have the opportunity of working successfully with their mainstream peers.
100. The subject leader is new to the role and the leadership is satisfactory. The art policy is currently in need of updating, as it does not reflect fully the more recent national developments. The scheme of work consists of a list of things to be done rather than being a document to guide teachers in developing the skills and experiences of art. Some teachers' planning is good especially where they consider skill development linked to the specific needs of the ability of pupils. The lack of three-dimensional work described in the last inspection has been improved, with pictorial examples of a range of artefacts being produced using clay, paper, card and material to support this. Teachers' reports to parents are often very brief and do not contain details of experiences or progress made. Teachers do, however, have a very good understanding of their pupils and this helps when planning experiences, but does not ensure that the planning of art skills and techniques are systematically and progressively taught. The contribution of art to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is underdeveloped, as is the use of information and communication technology.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Pupils' achievement and progress in design and technology is good throughout the school. Since the last inspection the school has developed a good scheme of work that fully meets the needs of the pupils at Bishopswood School. The National Curriculum is fully implemented with work being planned in each year for resistant materials, textiles and food technology.
102. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but the scrutiny of pupils' work over time, teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator indicate that teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Artefacts and photographic evidence show how some of the youngest pupils were involved in designing and making a hat for cold weather, clay pots and a gingerbread man. The work of older pupils shows that more thought has been given to the design process and good evaluations indicate how disassembly has been used to develop this process. Examples of their work were four-wheeled vehicles made from balsa wood. Their evaluations showed how they had used different tools and materials such as saws, glue guns and paint. Other design and make projects were a lighthouse, and in food technology, vegetable soup and pizzas. Higher attaining pupils integrating at Chiltern Edge School had been very involved in tie and dye work with tee shirts. All pupils are included fully into design and technology activities regardless of their level of special educational needs.
103. In the lesson observed, Year 6 pupils were involved in a project to make a soft toy for a baby. The previous week they visited a local shop to look at different types of soft toys before developing their designs. Pupils' folders showed clearly how the work had progressed from the initial design to sewing the ends of the material. The teacher had planned very well and all the learning support assistants had clearly identified roles. They gave effective help to the pupils in such things as selecting stuffing for the soft toys, making a choice of seeds to make them rattle and tying on ribbons. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and were well supervised, with staff taking care to ensure that they followed instructions and were careful to observe safety rules. Effective use was made of the plenary session at the end of the lesson to reinforce the skills they had learned and to evaluate their soft toys.

104. In their final two years at school, pupils follow the accredited ASDAN course, Towards Independence. Last year the examiners gave good feedback to the pupils about the flower troughs and gingerbread cake that they had made.
105. Design and technology is well managed and assessment is good. However, insufficient thought has been given to developing the use of ICT, although digital photography is starting to be used to record achievement. Resources at Chiltern Edge for resistant materials, food technology and textiles are unsatisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. Only one lesson was observed in geography during the period of the inspection. Evidence gained from this lesson, from reviewing pupils' previous work and profiles, and an evaluation of the school's documentation, indicates that pupils' achievements and learning in geography throughout the school are at least satisfactory. This is the same judgement as in the previous inspection. Pupils are fully included in geography lessons, regardless of their individual differences or levels of special educational needs.
107. By Year 2 in their learning of 'their world' pupils have visited farms, shops and rivers. They are able to recall locations around the school and also the people who work in them. They are able to compile a daily weather chart with help.
108. Pupils are able to understand by Year 6 that people travel to school by different means of transport. They are able to make graphs of how junior children and staff travel to school, using building blocks, or sticky squares, with the higher attaining pupils using a computer program 'Starting Graph' to produce bar charts.
109. By Year 9 pupils, in their study of Celtic, Roman and Saxon settlements, are able to state the physical differences between the settlements and the major factors in choosing a village site. In their study of holiday destinations, pupils are able to interpret data to find the most popular destinations, to look at the characteristics of a tourist island and the impact on the island that tourism makes.
110. By Year 11 pupils have studied what life in a Japanese village is like. They learn that Japan is a land of contrasts between rural and urban settings. In their study of floods they learn its cause and the affects on human and animal life.
111. Although a judgement as to the pupils' attitudes and response throughout the school cannot be made, in the one lesson observed, pupils' attitude to the subject and their responses to the teaching were satisfactory. They are mostly keen to answer questions and help their teacher to draw a plan of their local surroundings. They work well in pairs at the computer using 'Writing With Symbols' to write about the places they have recently seen.
112. Similarly, in the one observed lesson the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The resources used are appropriate to the activity and at a level that matches the pupils' abilities. However, the, at times, quick pace to the lesson did leave pupils' learning insecure.
113. Although the school has a scheme of work, this is not referenced to either the National Curriculum or 'P Scales' level descriptors. This makes the tracking of pupils' learning a difficult task. The leadership of geography is satisfactory, although there is a lack of monitoring of the planning and assessment of the subject to ensure quality of provision. While resources are satisfactory, the use of ICT to support the teaching and learning of the subject is underdeveloped.

## **HISTORY**

114. Due to the termly rotation of history with geography, only one lesson of history was observed during the period of the inspection. Judgements on the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes

to learning cannot, therefore, be made. However, evidence gained from the lesson, reviewing pupils' previous work and profiles, and an evaluation of the school's documentation, indicates that pupils' achievements and learning in history throughout the school are at least satisfactory. This is the same judgement as in the previous inspection. Pupils are fully included into history lessons, regardless of their individual differences or circumstances.

115. By Year 2 pupils, by looking at their own families and communities, are developing an awareness and interest in the past and things that change over time.
116. In their study of the Ancient Romans pupils, by Year 6, are developing their concept of the way of life of people living beyond their living memory. In the support of their learning of the types of clothing, food and common household objects used by the Ancient Romans they learn to make Roman toga's, to give an opinion of Ancient Roman food by tasting food such as honey and dates, and to produce drawings of Roman artefacts.
117. By Year 9, pupils in their study of life during Queen Victoria's reign, learn of the poor, overcrowded living conditions people in urban districts endured and the long working hours of farm workers. In their learning about the Ancient Greeks pupils identify and draw Greek oil lamps. They dress as Ancient Greeks, prepare Greek food and hold award ceremonies for Olympic winners and at a Greek museum are given the opportunity to spin wool.
118. By Year 11 pupils, in their study of India, can recognise where it is on a map and learn facts related to Indian nursing such as cleaning teeth with charcoal. They learn of life in World War Two Britain, the need for gas masks, air raid shelters and air raid drills.
119. Pupils study a modified National Curriculum. Leadership of history is satisfactory, although there is no monitoring of the planning, teaching and little assessment of the subject modules. While resources for the subject are satisfactory there is little use of ICT.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. Their skills, knowledge and understanding of various programs and the use of the new technology are underdeveloped. This is because the curriculum they receive is too narrow. The use of ICT for communication by pupils with complex needs is also a significant weakness. Since the last inspection, the school has made insufficient improvement and the pace of change is far too slow. All pupils are included into what is currently very limited provision.
121. In the few lessons observed, pupils made good progress, but from a very low base. However, their achievement over time is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not use computers enough in lessons. Since the last inspection, there has been no significant improvement in teachers' planning for the use of ICT in subject schemes of work.
122. Some of the best work is done with paint programs and word-processing using a combination of words and symbols to aid pupils' understanding. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 2 were working with the learning support assistant. She was using their home contact books and talking to them about the weekend; building words effectively using initial sounds and blends and then developing short sentences. The pupils were able to use the symbols to recognise words; this helped them to read the sentences back to her.
123. Year 10 pupils, developing independent living skills as part of their accredited ASDAN course, Transition Challenge, were observed taking photographs with a digital camera. They enjoyed transferring the pictures to the computer, experimenting with changing the size of the picture and thus altering some of the effects. Good subject expertise by the teacher helped pupils to make choices to develop their ideas and enhance their understanding of digital imaging.

124. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. The above were a few of the rare examples of good practice observed during the inspection. The scrutiny of work across the school contained few examples of ICT being used to enhance pupils' learning. There are too few opportunities for pupils to have 'hands on' experience with computers and they have very limited access to the Internet and email. Their knowledge of different types of graphs and the interpretation of data is very limited. Only a few pupils have any real understanding of the application of ICT in everyday life. There has been insufficient training to develop teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT, although there are plans for this to happen in the future.
125. The headteacher has been co-ordinating the provision on a temporary basis for too long. In addition to running the school, it has been difficult for her to manage the subject and provide training with her limited knowledge of ICT and communications aids for pupils with more complex needs.
126. Currently, most pupils are disadvantaged because the majority will leave school with inadequate skills for the next stage of their education or the world of work.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (French)**

127. It was noted that a modern foreign language is part of the curriculum, although at the time of the inspection, there was very little French to observe. No judgements were made, therefore, about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in French. It was, however, judged that the subject makes a valuable contribution to the overall quality of the curriculum.

### **MUSIC**

128. Pupils' achievement and learning in music are good overall. Pupils in Years 7–11 achieve very well. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when achievement and learning were judged to be satisfactory, although very few lessons were observed. All pupils are included fully into musical activities, and the opportunities to work alongside other pupils in the mainstream schools adds to this sense of taking part.
129. By Year 2 pupils are able to identify and make a choice between different instruments and some are beginning to sing with confidence. In one lesson observed pupils used an acoustic amplifier to make loud and quiet sounds. In this lesson the good relationship between teacher and pupils helped to enable their learning.
130. Pupils by Year 6 sing well known songs with confidence. In one lesson pupils selected a PEC symbol of an animal, placing it where others could see it, which was then included in their singing of 'Old MacDonald'. Pupils learn the names of various types of instruments (mainly percussion) and are able to recognise their sounds from a taped recording.
131. Pupils by Year 9 are developing their musical learning by exploring the sounds produced by varying the volume and tempo of musical instruments. Pupils in one observed lesson were able to copy a given rhythm and, through the teachers very good planning and management, were able to alter the volume of their singing as the sheet, the edges of which they were all holding, was varied in height. Year 10 pupils join in these lessons to consolidate and, by differentiation by task, extend their learning.
132. The quality of teaching is often good throughout the school with some examples of very good teaching. The teachers know their pupils well and have positive relationships with them. Where teaching is good or better, teachers' lessons are well planned and the emotional outbursts at times from some pupils are managed well with a minimum effect on the learning of other pupils. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of the lesson is sometimes too slow resulting in some pupils becoming restless. The learning support assistants are an invaluable resource for teachers. They work well as part of a team and provide positive support for both teaching and learning.

133. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards music are good. They enjoy their lessons, are generally keen to answer questions and work well in small groups. The leadership of music is satisfactory, and provides sound guidance for developing the subject. Resources for teaching the subject are satisfactory, but limited use is made of ICT to support the teaching and learning of the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. There were only a few lessons observed during the inspection. Only one was observed being taught by a teacher in the secondary department plus a swimming session and two integrated movement sessions led by learning support assistants, therefore, judgements are based mainly on talking to teachers, viewing their planning and talking with children. This shows that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. No judgement can be made as to the pupils' achievements in Years 1-6, but planning indicates that a full range of physical education activities and experiences exist for all pupils. Lower attaining pupils have good additional and specialised help from learning support assistants who carry out the programmes of integrated movement using the targets in pupils' individual education plans to guide their actions. Reports to parents indicate that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in meeting those individual education targets. The pupils' achievements in horse riding are good, and many pupils gain awards connected to riding ability and stable management. All pupils are taught water skills, and a few of the current older secondary pupils can swim more than 25 metres. All pupils are included in physical education activities whatever their level of special educational needs.
135. Pupils' achievement in physical education in Years 7-11 is satisfactory, but this is based on only one lesson observed. Pupils' individual portfolios and work on display around the school all indicate that enthusiasm and attitudes to physical education are satisfactory. However, in the swimming session, pupils' attitudes, enthusiasm and behaviour were very good and led to very good working relationships and a high level of sustained effort from the pupils.
136. Teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Years 7-11. In the one lesson seen, pupils tried very hard to improve their performance in running and shot putting. They were keen to learn and tried to carry out all the instructions from the teacher. The lesson was well organised, skills were taught progressively and the learning support assistant was very well supported the teacher.
137. The subject leader is new to the role and has limited knowledge of what current priorities are for the development of physical education. Currently, leadership of physical education is unsatisfactory. There have been opportunities to monitor planning. All pupils have targets connected to physical education development in their individual education plans and reviews of these indicate some good progress. 'P Scales' are used to accurately establish these targets combined with the teachers' good knowledge of individual pupil's needs. Some teachers' planning is good especially where they consider skill development linked to the specific needs of the pupils as identified by these individual targets. There is no evidence to indicate that information and communication technology is considered when teaching or planning physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. The pupils' achievement in religious education (RE) is good throughout the school. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus for RE as the basis for the subject planning and aims to teach both factual information about Christianity and other religions as well as developing the pupils' capacity to consider their own values and beliefs. All pupils are fully included into RE activities, regardless of their levels of difficulty or specific needs.
139. The youngest pupils up to Year 2, in a lesson about the Creation were able to think of the variety of animals God created and realised that they too were part of that Creation. Pupils up to Year 6 have read the story of Solomon and they knew that he taught in a temple, which is a special and holy place like the church they had visited. They were also able to empathise with



his ideas of wisdom and could consider the needs of their friends in designing a special place for them in the classroom or sensory room. Older pupils in the senior department, up to Year 10, have been learning about Islam. They are aware of the beliefs and practices of Islam and can discuss accurately and sensitively why those beliefs are important to Muslims. A good example was their discussion about modesty, and a realisation of why Muslims have rules about the clothes they wear.

140. The pupils' response to their RE lessons is good. They are interested and well motivated. They are keen and confident to discuss issues and can consider the views of others. Behaviour is invariably good.
141. The quality of teaching is overall good with examples of very good teaching. Pupils' learning follows that pattern. When teachers' subject knowledge is secure, teaching is good because they can develop the discussion easily. Work is well planned over the topic to give pupils experiences that develop systematically so that they can build understanding and consider issues knowledgeably. In the examples of very good teaching, each lesson is evaluated carefully and improvements made to the next lesson's intended outcomes. Teachers are confident to help pupils to explore sensitive issues and use a suitable range of explanation, artefacts, visits and visitors to bring the subject alive. Photos from pupil profiles showed pupils trying meditation as part of their work on Buddhism; in this way making the teaching and learning relevant to real life.
142. The subject leaders have worked well to improve the standards since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning, has improved as has the response of pupils, so that they now look forward to RE lessons with enthusiasm. The subject has been taught as part of humanities in the past, but from the next academic year will be taught each term to junior pupils and integrated into the humanities in the senior department. Medium-term planning is at present satisfactory and the subject leader has plans to develop this further to ensure a secure and developmental content so that pupils progress as they move through the school. Resources are adequate, but the use of ICT in teaching religious education is underdeveloped.